

Dear Math 131 Student,

Howdy! Welcome to **Texas A&M University** and to Math 131. I am excited to get to know you and work with you this semester. I love teaching mathematics. Below is information and answers to frequently asked questions.

Supplies: Our textbook is an online text which you will access through WebAssign, our online homework system. If you want a hard copy of the text book, you can print the textbook yourself or purchase it at a local bookstore. You are required to have a **TI84 Plus, TI83 Plus, TI84** or **TI83** graphing calculator for this course. No other calculators are allowed, period. You must have your name engraved or written with a permanent marker on your calculator, *besides* on the lid or battery cover. Please put your name on your belongings (textbook, notes, calculator, etc.); you would be surprised at how often students leave their belongings in class. Online homework will be based in the online system WebAssign; see <http://www.math.tamu.edu/ehmwk/> .

Web Site: Please visit my personal web site, see what is available, and download the appropriate Math 131 handouts and notes (just follow the link to Math 131).

<http://www.math.tamu.edu/~sherry.scarborough/>

On my web site you will find my office hours, the Math 131 first day handout, the chapter notes, and Week-In-Review (WIR) problems. I suggest you do the WIR problems before looking at the solutions.

Bring to Class: On Wednesday, January 20th you will need to bring to your lecture class your Math 131 Chapter 1 notes found on my Math 131 web page. Always bring the appropriate chapter notes with you to class so you can work the problems along with me. On all class days you will need your notes, your TI 83/84 calculator, your TAMU student ID, a pencil and the knowledge of your section number for this class. In fact you can sometimes get points for correctly indicating your section number on certain assignments!

Attendance: You are required to attend ALL classes for the full time allotted. It is hard to understand why a student would choose to handicap him or her-self by not attending his/her class, especially a math class, for the full amount of time. Plus you could miss an in-class quiz, and leaving early or arriving late would be disruptive to others in the class. Please realize that I know that sometimes there are extenuating one-time circumstances and we would rather have you part of the time than none of the class time. Please get your investment (time, and yours or somebody's money) out of this class by attending class, asking questions, attending office hours, and doing the week-in-review problems provided online.

Exams: The three regular exams will be a combination of multiple-choice and work-out, and you will be able to use an approved calculator. You will need a Scantron form 882E for your comprehensive multiple-choice final exam which will be taken in the lecture room.

No Walks: The mathematics department policy does not allow its instructors to give *walks*, that is, all classes must be held. If I have to miss class for any reason (jury duty, illness, conference, or a meeting), there will be a qualified substitute instructor.

Shhh! Exam and quiz contents are confidential until the exam or quiz is returned. You may not discuss the contents of an exam or quiz until they are returned; to do so violates the Aggie Honor Code. Even the fact that there is an in-class quiz is confidential.

Make-ups: No make-up examinations or assignments will be given without a university excused absence. An absence for a non-acute medical service or regular check-up does not constitute an excused absence. To be excused you must notify me (acknowledged email or written) prior to an excused absence if such notification is feasible. You are required to notify me by the end (5pm) of the second school day after missing an examination or assignment. For injury or illness too severe or contagious to attend class, you must provide written confirmation to me of a visit to a health care professional affirming date and time of visit. You must also give the health care professional permission to verify this information when contacted. The sooner you contact me regarding an absence, the better. The Texas A&M University Explanatory Statement for Absence from Class Form will NOT be accepted.

Class Interactions: Since I appreciate having an active class, I encourage you to ask questions, to **'pause'** me when I get too excited and go too fast, and to **'rewind'** me when I need to go over a step or problem again. I really appreciate those who ask questions in class, and volunteer answers (right or wrong!) in class. The only dumb questions are the ones you do not ask. Even if you cannot figure out how to ask the question, just tell me to run it by you again. It is my job to be the translator --- to figure out what you are trying to ask, so the more information you give me, the better I can figure out what to say. One of my guidelines in life is to learn from my mistakes. We can learn a lot from wrong answers, so please blurt out answers. I can say and enhance your learning so much more from offered comments and answers, than I can to silence. I also appreciate when you can help your neighbor find the appropriate buttons on his/her calculator or point out a needed thought in the notes. However, please be courteous and respectful to your classmates and to me by not randomly chatting during class time so I will not need to use the virtual **'mute'** button!

Zebras: If after you give an answer (for example you say the answer is 5), then I will ask "5 zebras???" meaning, "What are the units?" Oh 5 meters!

Funny Face: Sometimes when I am asked a question, I must have this really funny face (some have said mad or stern face); something like :-| . This expression means you have asked a really good question, I am trying to figure out how best to answer it, or I am trying to figure out the logistics for what is being asked. I am just concentrating. I am not mad, nor do I think you are stupid --- it would upset me greatly for you to think that I thought that! I have learned to tell my students to not misread my expression. I really care about you and work really hard to best answer your questions. :-)

Emails: You need to daily check your TAMU email, as I will often send the class important information. When you email me please put your name, course, and section in the *subject line* so I can best help you (example: *Beth Smith, 131-504*). I teach 6 sections of Math 150 at one time, plus teach 3 sections of Math 131 at 3 different times. You are important to me, and I would like to give you personal attention so I need to know who you are, what course, and what section so I can best answer your questions! If the answer to your question will benefit most students, please wait until class time to ask it, so I am not answering the same question multiple times in emails!

Homework: It is critical to do all the text's exercise problems before the next class and before your online assignments. You will not turn in the *text* homework. There will be graded online homework. At the *end* of the semester two of your lowest online homework grades will be dropped. I will help you with your homework or math concepts if you come to my office hours. Please bring your class notes with you when you come to my office hours so I can best help you. You cannot afford to get behind in a college math class. After I am set up in class and before class starts or after class, I can answer homework questions or other questions.

Note Card Assignment: Your "getting-to-know-you" note card assignment is due no later than in lecture on Friday February 5th. You need to have a picture of yourself that is about 2 inches by 3 inches that you will attach to a colored 4-inch by 6-inch index card, which I will provide. Please attach the picture with staples or with tape (**no paperclips**). On one side of the index card, you are to put your name, your picture, Math 131-section number, spring 2010, phone number, your email, your career plans, your hobbies and interests, something interesting or unusual about yourself, and other things you would like me to know. On the back of the card put 4 of your Math 131 classmates' names, emails and phone numbers. Please also record your classmates' names, emails and phone numbers on the first page of your class notes so **you** will have this information readily available! I strongly suggest that you form study groups and help each other learn the material. This note-card assignment grade is not one of the grades you can drop since it is very important to me to get to know you, however if you follow these directions, it should be an easy 100 quiz-grade. During our first week's 131 classes, ask me how you can earn a **10-point bonus** on your note card assignment, so that there is a maximum grade of 110 possible. Below is the note card grading rubric:

- 5 pts Appropriate colored note card
- 10 pts Picture of self
- 10 pts Name
- 10 pts Math 131-50x (appropriate section number)
- 10 pts Spring 2010
- 5 pts Phone
- 10 pts Email
- 10 pts Career plans
- 10 pts Hobbies/Interests

10 pts Something interesting or unusual

10 pts On back of note card: names, phones, and emails of 4 other Math 131 classmates (from any section this semester)

What should you be doing? You should be skimming the notes and textbook ahead of the lecture so you are ready for the lecture. You should be doing the homework problems from the textbook on what we have already covered so you will be prepared for the next class and in-class quizzes! You should be doing the appropriate week-in-review problems each week.

In-Class Quizzes: There will be some in-class quizzes. They will be unannounced. Please do not ask if we are having a quiz (not in class, not in emails); just always expect and be ready for one. This helps students keep up with the material. You may not borrow from or share calculators with anyone during quizzes or exams, so please remember to bring one to class. While the note-card grade is a quiz grade, it will not qualify to be a dropped grade. Due to privacy issues, you may only pick up your graded paper. Even if someone asks you to pick up his/her paper, you may not.

Exams: You need to bring the following to all of your exams in here:

- Your TAMU student ID
 - Your #2 pencil
 - Your eraser
- Your TI-83/84 or TI83/84 Plus graphing calculator with your name permanently on it (besides on the battery cover) and without its lid and reset it
- To reset your TI-83Plus or any type of TI-84 Calculator:**
MEM (2nd +), Reset, ALL, Reset
- Scantron form 882E for your comprehensive final exam

Before you take an exam in lecture, you must reset/clear your calculator and show the calculator screen “Mem cleared” as you walk through the door to take your exam. “RAM cleared” is not acceptable. Please do not enter the classroom on exam days until you are cleared to do so. To enter the classroom, you must have in hand your #2 pencil, eraser, TAMU student id, your *MEM cleared* calculator with your name on it, and all other belongings (including all phones and electronic devices (which must be turned OFF), and your hat) in your backpack. After entering the room, you must drop off your backpack by the front or side wall and go to the seat indicated on your exam cover. Before turning in your exam in lecture, you must show me *MEM cleared* on your calculator.

Following Directions: Since students often miss points or questions by not following directions, I have decided to add this paragraph in hopes that it will help you! If the solution to a problem is a point, then give a point (for example: (2, 3) and not $x = 2$ or worse 2, 3 with no parentheses). If the answer has units attached to it, give the units (for example: 5 *apples* and not just 5). If you are asked to give a fraction in lowest terms, give $\frac{2}{5}$ and not 0.4. If you are asked to read an email or directions, please do so. I make a sincere effort to be very clear on what I expect.

Math Frustrations: Please spend at least 5 minutes on a math problem you do not understand before asking for help. Read your notes and the text on similar problems. However, please do not spend more than 10 minutes on one math problem you do not understand, as I do not want you to get unduly frustrated! If you do not understand a problem, you should go the online **Week In Review** problems from previous semesters, attend **help sessions** (great place to get help with your online homework) and come to **my office hours**. You should ask me questions before or after class, or form study groups. See HELP on the first day handout.

Personal: I am very happily married to Richard Talbert, a local transactional attorney, and we share four children, ages 21 to 27. Most weeks Richard and I ballroom dance, either during lessons or at local dances. I am the advisor of the Texas A&M Ballroom Dance Association (TAMBDA). They are always looking for new members and you do not need a partner to join. It is a great way to learn to dance and to meet other really interesting people. There is a link on my web page to TAMBDA. I also trick and slalom water ski. I play bridge, 42, and shoot the moon dominoes. I love to read, can ride a unicycle, love flowers and plants, like to hike in forests and in mountains, and like to do the morning Sudoku's with Richard. Our dog, Bentley, is a whippet. This past summer Richard and I went on a fabulous and relaxing vacation to Tahiti, Moorea, and Bora Bora in the South Pacific.

Enthusiastic: I sincerely look forward to meeting you and I strongly encourage you to visit me during my office hours. You do not need an appointment, nor do you need to email me that you are coming to my office hours. This is your open invitation to come! I just wanted to let you know that I am enthusiastic, energetic, and love teaching students mathematics.

Remember my goal is for you to learn the mathematical information to perform some calculus as it relates to the sciences!

Here's to a great semester!
Gig 'Em,
Dr. Sherry Scarborough, '80

P.S. What to call me?
Dr. Sherry (most students feel most comfortable with this one!)
Miss Sherry
Sherry
Dr. Scarborough (like Simon and Garfunkel's song "Are You Going to Scarborough Fair?")

(NOT "Mrs. Scarborough" as I am Mrs. Talbert since socially I am part of Richard and Sherry Talbert).

P. S. S. The Dr. title means I have earned a Ph.D.