

INFORMATION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW FACULTY IN THE SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS

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This is an unofficial list of facts and personal suggestions from me related to teaching issues in the School of Mathematics.

1. SYLLABI

Your course syllabus should include the following material, plus any other information that you deem important to the course.

- Your name, office, office hours, email address, and (if one exists) address for the course webpage.
- The course name, meeting time, meeting location.
- If appropriate: Teaching assistants' names, offices, email addresses, and (if possible) office hours.
- Textbook and topics or sections that will be covered in the text.
- A clear description of the grading scheme.
- Dates of exams. These can be identified as tentative, but students should know exactly how many exams there will be and a good idea of when they will be. Give your policy on missed exams.

2. USEFUL LINKS

- My DOTE page has many links, including various course webpages from previous semesters: www.math.gatech.edu/~heil/dote
- Helpful teaching-related information, including guidelines on Instructor–Teaching Assistant interactions, can be found on the Internal School of Math web page: www.math.gatech.edu/resources/internal
- School of Math core curriculum course materials page (information and sample materials for some lower-level undergraduate courses): www.math.gatech.edu/academic/courses/core
- T-Square, a gradebook and course management software package: t-square.gatech.edu
- Official school calendars: www.registrar.gatech.edu/home/calendar.php
- Georgia Tech honor code: www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu/integrity
- Course catalog and schedule of classes: oscar.gatech.edu
- Access to the secured login section, where you can obtain class rolls and enter midterm and final grades: oscar.gatech.edu
- Course instructor survey results: www.coursesurvey.gatech.edu/login.cfm

3. GRADING

- Every class should have a final exam. This final exam should take place during the officially scheduled final exam time for the course. The final exam schedule can be found at the calendar link given above. Final exams should be kept for one year after they are given.
- All classes should include a substantive grading element. For almost all classes, exams should be included in the grading scheme. These should be appropriate and substantial evaluations of the material in the course. It may or may not be appropriate to allow a notesheet or calculator

on an exam, but “open book, open notes” exams are not appropriate. Quizzes, homework, and other types of evaluation may also be appropriate.

- “Drop day” occurs midway through the semester. Before this time, a student may withdraw from a course and have a “W” appear on this transcript. After this day, students cannot withdraw from courses without special arrangements with the registrar. You should have a substantive assignment, preferably an exam, well before the drop day and have it returned to the students in time for them to make an informed decision about whether to drop your class or not.
- Midterm grades must be assigned in 1000 and 2000 level classes. These are “S” or “U” grades and are for informational purposes only: they have no impact on a student’s final grade. Students who receive a “U” must meet with an advisor in their major department.
- Especially in large classes, there will be students who miss an exam. You should have some policy in place to deal with these cases. Be aware that students do miss exams for justifiable reasons. Some justifiable excuses are predictable beforehand, e.g., religious holidays that fall on an exam date.
- Nondisclosure of grades: You *cannot* discuss a student’s grades with parents or anyone else without *prior written permission* from the student. A parent may call you on the phone and ask “how is my child doing in class?”, but you are not at liberty to discuss this with them!
- If, after your final grades have been assigned and submitted, you find that you made a mistake, see Sharon McDowell to fill out a grade change form. Note that this must be done *within one semester* after the course is completed.

4. PEOPLE

- If you have issues or problems with *graduate TAs*, take them to Klara Grodzinsky or the graduate coordinator, Luca Dieci.
- If you have issues or problems with *undergraduate TAs*, take them to Klara Grodzinsky.
- If you have grading conflicts with a student that you cannot resolve, consult the Associate Chair, Fred Andrew.

5. THE DOTE

The Director of Teaching Effectiveness (DOTE) is assigned the task of documenting tenure-track faculty’s teaching. The DOTE is also available for advice to any faculty, postdocs, or visitors. The current DOTE is Chris Heil. The DOTE webpage is www.math.gatech.edu/~heil/dote/

- In consultation with the DOTE, faculty will choose a faculty advisor (FA). The faculty should consult with the FA on the appropriateness of their course syllabi, exams, and assignment of final grades. The DOTE is also available for advice on any teaching issues.
- The FA should visit a class and fill out the DOTE’s report form regarding this visit.
- Faculty should maintain a “teaching portfolio” that includes a copy of all syllabi and exams.
- The DOTE has access to the numerical scores in the student course evaluations, but he does not have access to the anonymous comments that students can enter on the course evaluations.
- The DOTE reports to the Chair on tenure-track faculty’s teaching during the reappointment process each fall.
- The Junior Promotion & Tenure committee performs a “critical review” that usually takes place in the third year. A “teaching subcommittee” is usually formed that evaluates the faculty member’s teaching, separately from the DOTE’s report. A similar evaluation takes place when the faculty member applies for tenure.