

More on Expectations

John McCuan

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Here is what I posted for the course expectations for MATH 6702 next semester:

If you sign up for this course, I expect you to want to try to learn some mathematics related to describing physical problems and something about partial differential equations in particular. That is my only expectation. I am planning to give lectures which will be recorded and you should be able to view them at any time. It would be nice if you "attend" those lectures using video conferencing software/bluejeans when they are given live (and recorded). It would be nice if you would turn your microphone on and ask questions during those recorded lectures, letting me know what you understand and what you do not understand. I don't necessarily expect you to do that, but if you really want to learn something, I think that would be a good idea. I plan to write up some assignments and exams for you. You will officially have about a week to work on these, but I have no plan to stop you from working on them any time you wish to. You can turn them in using Canvas. There will be no proctoring. I will try to offer feedback on your work, especially when you ask me about it.

It has come to my attention that a significant number of students sign up for this course with no intention of meeting my expectation of wanting to learn something. A significant number of students, it seems, have been tricked into taking this course for some other reasons having nothing to do with me or with learning mathematics. I do not really know what to do about this. It wouldn't be a problem for me really, except that these particular students seem obsessed with badgering me about grades while giving no suggestion whatsoever that they are interested in the material of the course. This confuses me, and makes it extremely difficult to interact with these students. For this reason, I wish they would go find something else to do rather than abusing me for failing to meet *their expectations* of providing them a steady diet of anti-intellectual pablum they feel comfortable translating into a grade. Having said that, I have no motivation or intention to retaliate against such students. And, just to get it out of the way, if you sign up for the course, then you can count on getting

a "B" or an "A" for a course grade. If you are not happy with a "B," then let me know and I can probably see my way through to give you an "A." For me the grade is essentially irrelevant for a host of reasons. I won't go into those. But do me a favor, and if you are one of these students, please don't sign up for my course.