
Differential Equations

Math 341 Fall 2013

MWF 12:50-1:45pm Fowler 307

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<http://faculty.oxy.edu/ron/math/341/13/>

INSTRUCTOR Ron Buckmire ~ Fowler 313 ~ x2536 ~ ron@oxy.edu ~ MadProfessah

SYLLABUS The official syllabus for this course is on the web at
<http://faculty.oxy.edu/ron/math/341/13/>.

OFFICE HOURS I am in my office (Fowler 313) most week days until around 5pm. My official office hours in Fall 2013 are MWF from 3:00 to 5:00pm, T 3-4pm.

I am readily accessible by electronic mail at ron@oxy.edu and by phone at 323-259-2536. My Twitter handle is **MadProfessah** and my G-Chat name is **MadProfessah**. If you need to see me at a time not specified here, do not hesitate to contact me and make an appointment and I'll be happy to meet with you. I think out-of-classroom student-faculty interactions are important. You are also strongly encouraged to visit me in office hours several times during the semester or chat with me whenever you have a question. If you don't interact with your professors individually you really aren't getting your money's worth at Occidental College! In addition, you should work together with your classmates.

CLASSROOM We will meet in Fowler 307, MWF from 12:50pm-1:45pm.

TEXTBOOK *Differential Equations*, Fourth Edition by Paul Blanchard, Robert L. Devaney and Glen R. Hall, (Brooks-Cole, 2012).

COURSE GOALS By the end of the class you should be able to: Solve differential equations and systems of differential equations using direct techniques; Analyze solution behavior (without knowing or computing solutions) using qualitative techniques; Discuss the implications of parameter variation on solution behavior (i.e. bifurcation); Prove existence and uniqueness of solutions of some differential equations; Analyze the equilibria of a system; Utilize computer technology to appropriately analyze solution behavior; Integrate these techniques to analyze physical systems described by differential equations.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND EXPECTATIONS This is a first course in the study of differential equations. I will expect familiarity with (and basic understanding of) the main ideas found in Differential and Integral Calculus as well as recall of some material from Multivariable Calculus and Linear Algebra. Differential Equations is a huge, varied and fascinating field of study. I will expect students to come to class prepared so that we can use class time as efficiently as possible to facilitate learning the course material. We will not be able to "cover" the entire subject, but I should be able to give you a substantive introduction to the most important topics in the field. Since I am an applied mathematician, the style of the course will be skewed towards practical application of the material, and will generally not be very theoretical in nature. However, this is a 300-level math class and I will expect a corresponding level of mathematical rigor, individual responsibility and student maturity. This class entails a lot of work, if you are not prepared for this, you should probably consider taking an alternative course.

COURSE WORK We will be making regular use of computers to help us visualize information that can be obtained from differential equations, which includes approximating their solution numerically and representing them graphically. We will often use the textbook's software package (DETools), web-based Java applets and occasionally a computer algebra system like Mathematica. (See the Resources section of the Course Website for a list.)

PARTICIPATION I expect (a lot of) participation in class from every student in the class and will facilitate this through the use of daily class formats (worksheets), group work, in-class computer exercises, abbreviated lectures and online communication. One strategy I use to encourage student engagement is to use "classroom voting" using electronic devices known as clickers. The goal of classroom voting is to encourage participation by all members of the class and to foster a class environment where all students are engaging with the concepts and ideas in the class; one of my teaching goals is to foster a classroom in which students realize that they can (and do) learn the course ideas from each other and not just from the professor and class materials.

HOMEWORK Homework should be completed **neatly**. Before the beginning of each week you will be given the homework problems for that week. Homework should be done after every class but will only be collected once a week. Homework should be written legibly and multiple pages should be stapled together with the student's name on each page. You are **strongly** encouraged to work on homework with your classmates. Whatever you hand in **must represent your own understanding of the material**. Copying homework is cheating and will be dealt with accordingly.

QUIZZES There will be various kinds of quizzes in this class: take-home quizzes, in-class quizzes, reading quizzes, and bonus quizzes.

TESTS There will be **two (2)** mid-term tests in this course. The mid-terms are currently scheduled for **Friday October 11** and **Friday November 22nd**. These dates are subject to change until 1 week before the scheduled date. You may not be excused from a test without notifying me at least 1 week before the scheduled test date.

FINAL EXAM The final exam is scheduled for **Monday December 9th from 6:30pm-9:30pm**.

GRADES Your course grade will be composed of the following:

- Homework and Participation **20%**
- Two (2) Tests **20% (10 % each)**
- Quizzes **20%**
- Course Project **20%**
- (Cumulative) Final Exam **20 %**

PROJECT There will be more information given to you about the Course Project within the first two weeks of the semester.

COURSE POLICIES This a (non-exhaustive) list of my course policies

- Make-up tests will not be given except for compelling reasons which have been communicated to me well-in advance (i.e. at least 7 days) of the test date.
- If you are late to a test, you will only be allowed the time remaining in which to complete your test.
- Late quizzes (or homework) will not be accepted under any condition since the solutions are made available on the same day that they are collected to be graded.

COLLEGE POLICIES Here are some official policies of the College which are in effect for this course:

Disabilities: Accommodation of disability-related needs is available on request. Students with documented disabilities who are registered with Disability Services are required to present their accommodation verification card to the instructor at the beginning of each semester or as soon as possible thereafter. Students who experience significant physical or mental impairments can contact Disability Services at (323-259-)2969 to learn about available services and support.

Honest Academic Work: No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated in this course. Any instances of cheating and/or plagiarism will be reported on the first offense. Oxy has policies regarding intellectual honesty in the student handbook or see <http://departments.oxy.edu/studentlife/studenthandbook/academic.policies/academic.ethics.html>.

Classroom Conduct: The goals of this course can only be accomplished in a setting of respect. Although differential equations rarely lends itself to too much controversy, we must still provide a safe environment that is conducive to learning. All are welcomed and encouraged to actively participate in the learning of differential equations, regardless of gender, race, nationality, native language, sexual orientation, gender identity, political ideology, and especially personal mathematical history. Any student who feels she or he is experiencing a hostile environment should speak to me immediately. Also, remember that common courtesy dictates turning off all electronic devices and cell phones (or place in silent mode) before coming to class; these devices can be a distraction for other students (and me!) in the class and thus should not be in use during class time unless I give you explicit permission.

EXTRA CREDIT There will be a limited number of extra credit assignments: 6. These assignments will not replace any of your grades, but they will be used to round your grade up at the end of the semester. Items that will count for extra credit: Attendance at a math department seminar talk and writing up a summary of the talk as well as reflecting on any connections between the talk and your life will count as an extra credit assignment. Watching an episode of a mathematically oriented television show and writing a 2-page (atleast 300 words) summary and reflection on the mathematics (not the drama) of the episode will count as an extra credit. Finding an article in the *New York Times*, or *Nature*, or some other similar publication that includes discussion of the use or application of differential equations, providing a copy of the article, and writing the same kind of summary will also count as an extra credit assignment. You may come up with your own idea as long as you clear it with me first. All extra credit assignments must be type written for credit and submitted by the last day of class. Getting credit for 6 extra credit assignments can increase your grade up to 1/3 of a letter grade (i.e. from A- to A).

ABSENCES We will not have class on Monday September 2 (Labor Day). Fall Break is October 14-15. Buckmire is out of town September 10-13 and October 24-25. I will let you know at least one week ahead of time if there may be other days on which I am absent or when class is cancelled. Attendance is not mandatory, but if you are going to be absent from a class, common courtesy suggests you should contact your professor by email or chat to apprise me of absences in advance.

ON-LINE MATERIALS There is a class mailing list, to which all registered students are subscribed, at math341-L@oxy.edu. I have produced a website for the course, where more detailed (and current) information about the class will be published. The URL is <http://faculty.oxy.edu/ron/math/341/13/>. I may put records of graded course work on Moodle.