Online Course Expectations. Online courses are very different from face to face courses, and require additional skill sets to be successful. It is highly recommended that you think about the following expectations very carefully when deciding whether or not to take a course online.

- **Time Requirements.** Face to face courses during a fall/spring semester require three hours of study outside of the classroom for each hour in class. Thus for a three credit course, each week during the regular semester consists of three hours in class and nine hours outside of class, for a total of 12 hours per week. For an online course, the numbers are the same, but (obviously) all 12 hours are outside of class. For a 5 week summer course, each week is really 3 weeks, so you should expect to spend 36 hours per week on this course. This is how we cover all of the material in 5 weeks. We do not cover less material because it is a summer course. Be aware of these time requirements for the semester in which this course is being offered.

- **Time Management.** A very important part of taking an online course is effective time management. Set aside specific time blocks during the week to work on this course. Think of these times as the “meeting times” of the course. Work on this course during the same times each week to keep yourself on track.

- **Communication.** In an online course, our primary method of communication is by email and the Online Course Portal (details below). It is essential that you be reachable by email, so if you do not currently check your official URI email every day, you must start. I will assume that 24 hours after I send you an email you will have read it, and you will be responsible for its contents. No exceptions. If your access to email is inconsistent, then an online course is a very bad choice.

Since this is an online course, you will communicate with me exclusively by writing messages. Therefore, you must be comfortable expressing yourself professionally in writing. You will need to communicate using proper grammar, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization; you will also need to avoid abbreviations and “text message–like” phrasing.
For my part, I will always answer any messages you post to me within 24 hours, generally including weekends. Often, I will respond quite quickly, but you should plan on having a response within 24 hours. This is another reason why you should expect to complete your assignments at least **24 hours** in advance of the posted deadline (see below).

**Important!** Make sure that the following email addresses are in your email contacts list to ensure you receive all emails from me about the course:

- tombella@uri.edu
- no-reply@professorbella.com

For an explanation of how to add contact email addresses in your URI Gmail account, visit [https://www.wikihow.com/Add-Contacts-in-Gmail](https://www.wikihow.com/Add-Contacts-in-Gmail)

- **Working On Your Own.** Working on an online course is inherently a solitary activity, as opposed to set meeting times when we all gather in one room. As this is a mathematics course, group discussions are not a means to meet course objectives, and thus we will not have discussion boards or forums of any kind for this course. You should be comfortable working on your own to meet our course objectives.

- **Reliable and Fast Internet Access.** It may sound obvious, but this course requires access to the internet. Dial up speeds are not fast enough, you need broadband access (cable, DSL, etc), as course materials may include large HD video files that need to be streamed. You will not be able to download the course materials and work offline; you will need to be logged in most of the time to do the work for this course. Before taking an online course, you should evaluate your current access to the internet. Does it go out a lot? Is it slow? What would you do if your internet goes out with a deadline approaching?

Since fast internet access is essential to the course, you should have **at least two backup options** ready to go should your computer crash or your internet go down. These may include a computer lab at URI (the library, the Memorial Union, etc), a local public library, a coffee shop with WiFi, a computer at a friend’s house, an iPad or Android tablet with a cellular data plan, etc. Seriously, stop reading this syllabus for a minute and think about how you would get access to the internet if your main internet connection went down. Deadlines cannot be extended due to your internet connection failing.

- **Technical Knowledge and Tools.** Your primary means of interacting with the course materials will be a website. You should therefore be comfortable using your computer, the world wide web, and the internet in this way. You should have a standard browser installed and updated (Chrome is recommended, but Firefox is supported, and other browsers such as Internet Explorer and Safari should also work, as should Android and iPad devices) as I cannot provide technical assistance using your computer.

You will also need the ability to upload copies of your hand-written work throughout the course. You may do this using a tablet and stylus, by writing on paper and scanning or taking pictures with your smartphone, etc. whatever your method, it must result in high-resolution files, as either standard image formats (JPEG, GIF, PNG) or a PDF. No other files, including DOC/DOCX are acceptable; it must be an image or a PDF.
Self–Motivation and Self–Discipline. To be successful in an online course, you must be motivated enough to keep up with your work without meeting with the class three times per week and being constantly reminded about deadlines. It is very easy to fall behind in an online course, and very, very difficult to catch up after having done so. Trust me on this. Keep up and don’t miss deadlines, they can’t be extended.

In particular this is NOT a self–paced course, where the assignments may be completed at your own pace by the end of the semester. There are specific deadlines for every assignment, and they cannot be extended under any circumstances.

Grading. Course grades will be based solely on evaluations of understanding of the subject material. This understanding will be evaluated in the following way: Each graded assignment in the course will be worth a stated number of points. Your grade for the course will be the total number of earned points (multiplied by 100) divided by the total number of points available. Grades are not rounded up or down, but the following table of grade ranges is used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numerical Average</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A 93–100</td>
<td>C+ 77–79.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A– 90–92.99</td>
<td>C 73–76.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+ 87–89.99</td>
<td>C– 70–72.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 83–86.99</td>
<td>D+ 67–69.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B– 80–82.99</td>
<td>D 60–66.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 00–59.99</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please notice that no outside factors, including any need for a certain grade for admission/retention in any academic program, scholarship or transfer credit, graduation requirements or personal desire for a specific grade appear in the above, and thus are not considered in any way in the determination of your course grade. Effort, improvement, class attendance and participation will all dramatically improve your grade in the course in that they will allow you to do well on quizzes, exams, and the final exam. They will NOT, however, actively participate in the calculation of your course grade. Any questions or concerns regarding your course grade should be discussed well before the final exam. Once the final exam is administered, your grade is final and no changes will be made. Additionally, incompletes will not be given to students who are dissatisfied with their grades at the end of the semester, and grades of NW will not be given to students who have completed even a single assignment.

Online Course Portal. I like to keep online course organization as simple as possible, and avoid complicated interfaces with unnecessary features that we will not use. To that end, we will use a custom Online Course Portal instead of Sakai/Brightspace. Everything that you need to do for the course will be organized on your To–Do List, and clicking on a To–Do item will take you directly to that item to complete.
Everything for this course (all quizzes and exams, any documents or videos beyond the textbook itself, all emails to and from me) is available in and must be completed through the Online Course Portal. You will get a login and password from me via email. The URL for the Online Course Portal is:

https://professorbella.com/mth215

It is recommended to access the Online Course Portal using the Chrome browser for best results, though other browsers should work properly as well. Note that the Portal is also accessible by smaller screens such as smartphones and tablets, though you may find some parts of the system more difficult on a smaller screen. I cannot guarantee that everything will work well and be usable on smaller screens.

**How the Course Works.** The course will be organized into weeks. For a summer session, there will be 5 weeks. Each week, you will log into the Online Course Portal and check the assignments for the week on your To–Do List. Things that may be on your To–Do List on a given week are:

- Sections from the textbook to read (with suggested due dates)
- Course material, such as lecture notes, video lectures, etc (with suggested due dates)
- Homework (not collected) from the textbook for you to attempt (with suggested due dates)
- Other announcements, current course grade updates, and items of interest
- Quizzes to be completed (with mandatory due dates)
- An exam/final exam to be completed (with mandatory due dates)

Once you log in for the week, you’ll be able to see that week’s assignments and make a plan for yourself for the week. Once completed, you can check items off of your To–Do List and move on to the next items.

You’ll typically be able to work on assignments the week before they are due, so you can get ahead on your work for the course should you choose to do so. This is optional, but a great idea!

**Homework.** For each section of the textbook we cover, several homework problems will be assigned from the textbook. The assigned problems will be posted on your To–Do List. It is highly recommended that you work through these problems, as graded assignments are written under the assumption that you have done so (do not interpret this statement as all problems will be taken from the homework problems). Beyond that, I will not collect, grade, or in any way verify that you have done it.

**Quizzes.** We will have frequent quizzes throughout the course so that you may check your understanding of the course concepts. These quizzes will consist of multiple choice or short answer questions about the material from the textbook and lecture in addition to some calculations. Quizzes will be administered online through the Online Course Portal (details below). Quizzes may be repeated (with possibly different questions and different numbers) as many times as you like, up until the deadline, and your final, graded score will be the highest of your attempts. This is a great way to raise your grade in the course, and I strongly suggest you take advantage of it!
Quizzes are meant to be completed in a single sitting, without interruption. If you begin a quiz and do not complete it right away in a single sitting, it will not be available to continue later. Incomplete quizzes will not be graded.

Exams. We will have three exams, plus a final exam, all of which will be administered online through the same system as the online quizzes. Exam questions will be similar to quiz questions, and also involve some more in–depth questions. The exams, like the quizzes, may be repeated (with possibly different questions and different numbers) as many times as you like, up until the deadline, and your final, graded score will be the highest of your attempts. This is a great way to raise your grade in the course, and I strongly suggest you take advantage of it!

Exams are meant to be completed in a single sitting, without interruption. If you begin an exam and do not complete it right away in a single sitting, it will not be available to continue later. Incomplete exams will not be graded.

The Final Exam. The final exam will be done just like the other exams, though it will be cumulative, and considerably longer than the shorter exams during the course. It will likely only be available during the final week or few days of the summer semester, unlike other assignments that may be done a bit earlier if desired.

Uploaded Work and Grading Modifications. For all quizzes and exams that you complete, you will need to upload your hand–written work for each problem. To be clear, there must be a fully worked–out, hand–written solution for absolutely every problem on every quiz or exam that you complete. These will be uploaded immediately after each quiz/exam is completed. As stated above, you MUST have the technical capability to take your hand–written work (on paper or on a tablet) and generate either image files or a PDF of that work, and upload that through a web browser. This is a crucial part of this course!

Any problem on any quiz or exam that is not accompanied by a worked–out solution, or that solution is incomplete, illegible, incorrect, or does not match the entered solution, will have its score changed to a zero, regardless of whether or not the “final answer” is correct or not. If no work is uploaded for an assignment, then the entire assignment will receive a grade of zero.

For some quizzes and exams, individual problems will have the work graded in detail. This may result in the automatically generated score on the quiz or exam going either up (due to small mistakes on an otherwise correct procedure) or down (due to mistakes in your work that coincidentally resulted in the correct final answer). The problems that will be graded in this manner will be selected by me, and done uniformly for all students. Please do not ask me to award partial credit on specific problems on your assignments; I am already doing this in a uniform manner.

All grades seen in the online system after completing an assignment are tentative pending review of uploaded work.

Online vs Proctored Assignments. All assignments for the course are given online (without any proctoring requirements) by default. You are on your honor to complete them using only the resources which you are permitted. This is a privilege, and it may be changed at any time. Specifically, the instructor may, at his/her sole discretion and with 24 hours notice, require that any assignments be given in a proctored environment. Proctored may mean remote proctoring (via
Webex/Zoom/Google Meet) or a physical location. These proctoring requirements may apply to the entire class, or individual students. Refusing to follow the instructions for taking proctored assignments in the manner described in the provided timeframe will result in a grade of zero for the assignment in question. No exceptions.

**Deadlines.** Each assignment given in this course will have a deadline. All of the quizzes and exams will have a due date listed in the Online Course Portal, and each assignment must be completed by 10PM Eastern Time on the due date. Note that they must be completed by the deadline, not merely begun by the deadline; current attempts will be cut off at 10PM.

I cannot make any exceptions to these deadlines, so I **highly recommend planning ahead!** In particular, each assignment should be completed **at least 24 hours before the posted deadline.**

Online courses offer tremendous flexibility in when during the week you decide to do your work, but it **MUST** be done during each week. Please do not wait until the last possible minute, as this reduces your options for help if you experience a problem.

Deadlines may vary from week to week, so it is very important to log in once early in the week to check when assignments will be due for the week. Missing an assignment due to not having logged in and checked your To–Do list will not be treated any differently than other missed assignments; deadlines cannot be extended.

**Extra Credit.** There will be absolutely no extra credit available in this course. To succeed in the course, you must keep up with the regular credit. Please do not ask for extra credit, ways to make up missed assignments, ways to “boost your grade” or other similar phrasings. The answer is always no.

**Course Grade Status Updates.** Periodically, a reminder to check your current grade in the course will automatically be added to your To–Do List in the Online Course Portal. Clicking on this link will show you an estimate of your current grade in the course, and the details of your score. Be sure to check your grades frequently to avoid any surprises at the end of the term. The time to start working on bringing your grade up is **now**, not a week before the final exam. Retaking quizzes and exams to raise your grade (see above) is an excellent way to raise your grade, but this can only be done while the quizzes and exams assignments are available, and under no circumstances will they be made available later in the semester. Rack up these extra points when they’re available!

**Last Day to Drop/Withdraw.** Pay careful attention to the academic calendar for important dates like the last date to drop/withdraw from the course.

https://web.uri.edu/enrollment/academic-calendars/

If you intend to drop/withdraw from this course, ensure that you do so by the posted deadline. **I will NOT sign a Late Drop form as a matter of routine without a real, legitimate reason for having missed the deadline.** Examples of reasons that do not warrant a late drop include: not doing well/failing the course (specifically mentioned on the form as not a valid reason), forgetting the deadline, etc. Handling this by the deadline is your responsibility!

**Sakai/Brightspace.** We will not be using Sakai or Brightspace for this course; no actual course materials for this course will be available there.
**Academic Misconduct.** The official definition of academic misconduct (aka cheating, plagiarism, etc) can be found on the university webpage; I do not include it verbatim here because we all know what it is. Suffice it to say that it will not be tolerated at any level.

In particular, by submitting any work for this course, you are certifying that that work was done by you alone without using any outside assistance of any kind. Anyone suspected of violating this requirement may be asked to complete future assignments in a proctored environment (see the section above on **Online vs Proctored Assignments**).

**Student Support Services.** It is helpful if you make students aware of special support services on your syllabus. Two important resources are the Office of Disability Services for Students and the Academic Enhancement Center. A helpful Disability Services for Students statement could be as follows: Your access in this course is important. Please send me your Disability Services for Students (DSS) accommodation letter early in the semester so that we have adequate time to discuss and arrange your approved academic accommodations. If you have not yet established services through DSS, please contact them to engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations in the classroom. DSS in Kingston is located in room 302 of the Memorial Union, 401-874-2098, uri.edu/disability/, dss@etal.uri.edu. DSS in Providence is located in room 239 of the Shepard Building, 401-277-5221. https://web.uri.edu/disability/providence/, dss@etal.uri.edu Students could be encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to enrich their learning through the Academic Enhancement Center as follows: This is a challenging course. Success requires that you keep pace with the work, understand course concepts, and study effectively. The Academic Enhancement Center helps URI students succeed through three services: Academic Coaching, Tutoring, and The Writing Center. To learn more about any of these services, please visit web.uri.edu/aec/ or call 401-874-2367 to speak with reception staff. In Providence, the Academic Skills Center (ASC) is at 239 Shepard Building, (401) 277-5221. Hours are posted each semester at http://web.uri.edu/ceps/academic-skills-center/