What You Need to Know About Math 110 Spring 2013

by your instructor, Lisa Grilli

Hi everyone! As you have probably already noticed, these spring sections of Math 110 are a little different from some of the other Math 110 courses NIU has had in the past, in that they only meet for an hour in lecture once per week, rather than meeting for an hour in lecture 3 times a week, plus a weekly recitation (for homework help and quiz-taking with a teaching assistant), which is what the other sections do.

This is because NIU is using a new version of Math 110 in Spring 2013, wherein rather than sitting passively in lecture taking notes, you are continually engaged with the material by having to work problems at a computer and receive immediate feedback on your work (the vehicle for this is MyMathLab). We’ll also be taking our quizzes and tests (except for the final departmental exam) via MyMathLab.

How Will I Succeed Within This New Class Format (and what are the additional requirements)?

Since you’ll have less classroom time to see the concepts summarized, it is absolutely imperative that you use all of the resources available to you whenever you need help or have questions. You will need to do the following:

- Spend at least 3 hours per week in the Math Lab, located in Graham Hall Room 235 (this is a dedicated math computer lab which will be staffed by graduate teaching assistants and myself on weekdays from 9:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m.) This is not optional. These 3 hours per week are part of your attendance/participation grade, which is worth 100 points. Your attendance in the lab will be recorded by a OneCard reader where you will swipe your card when entering and leaving the lab.
- Visit Blackboard to view my Math 110 lecture notes from previous semesters. They will be broken down by chapter, and will be uploaded to the “Content” section of our course Blackboard page.
- Keep a notebook and take careful, organized notes (separated by chapter) when working problems in MyMathLab. It’s also a good idea to label each problem you’re working on with the section and name of the concept it’s associated with in the text.
- Get at least an 80% on every MyMathLab assignment (both section A and section B): this is a requirement for being able to take the weekly quizzes. You get to rework homework problems until you get them right, and you also have access to help in the Math Lab, so there is no reason why everyone cannot achieve this.
- Ask questions while working in the lab, and attend mini-lectures as they’re offered in the lab (this will help combat the feeling that you have to “teach yourself” everything). Also, don’t forget to come to lecture!
For information on the grading scale and schedule of assignments, quizzes, and tests for our class, as well as textbook and MyMathLab registration information, please visit the “Information” section of our Blackboard page.

**Quick facts about the lab version of Math 110 at NIU**

- C100 students in Spring 2012 took the same final exam as the A100 and B100 students (C100 was the math lab version of Math 110, while A100 and B100 were the traditional versions). The average scores on the comprehensive departmental final exam were higher for the C100 students than they were for the A100 and B100 students, by more than 5 percentage points. This result was repeated in the Fall 2012 semester (lab students on average outscored traditional students on the final by 8% or more).

- Every person who earned an A in Math 110 C100 also had an A for their lab participation points. In other words, no one who “blew off” the math lab earned an A.

- Every person who earned an A in Math 110 C100 also earned a homework score of A (90% or better). No one who ignored the MyMathLab homework component earned an A in the class.

- The majority of the students who failed Math 110 C100 averaged less than 1.5 hours per week in the math lab. Over 80% of the students who failed Math 110 C100 had a homework score of less than 70%.