

SYLLABUS — UTK – M251 – Matrix Algebra
Spring 2010, Jochen Denzler, MWF 11:15–12:05, HSS 56

Textbook: Howard Anton: Elementary Linear Algebra, 9th ed.

Course contents: Basically, Ch. 1–7 of the book, with a few omissions, and Sec 9.9 right after Ch. 1. I will cover chapter 3 *before* chapter 2, which is logically possible and will allow to get a motivation for determinants. See special notes for an overview. I'll cover Ch 4 with a more concrete and geometric focus.

Grade: We'll have 3 in-class and one final exam, and homework. They count towards the grade as follows: each in-class exam with weight 1, the final with weight 2, the hwk with weight either 1 or 2, whichever gives the better average for each individual. This formula may change in case our class does not get a paper grader.

Note: I will NOT give an extensive review before in-class exams. This would encourage ineffective learning strategies. Make sure to assemble the material in your brain as a coherent and meaningful entity, not as a bag of single tricks and skills. That's more rewarding and prepares you better, and you'll need to relearn less before the comprehensive final.

Homework: Each homework problem will be graded with either 0, 1 or 2 points, unless otherwise specified. This puts the responsibility on you to hand in decent solutions and do calculations correctly. You will typically not be able to find solutions in the back of the book, because I will make up my own problems. However you will find very similar problems (with different numbers) in the book. You can use them as needed; I will not assign gazillions of cloned problems for training ad nauseam; this should leave you time to think and breathe. But be aware that you must do some independent thinking.

Depending on how the class proceeds, I may occasionally schedule a brief quiz. In that case a quiz question will count as a homework question.

Be sure that you understand, rather than just memorize, facts. Material is understood when you can draw simple conclusions from it. Feel free to use the office hours if you have questions.

Sample solutions for all hwk are available and will be posted on the web. Make sure you compare these web-solutions with your own. This may give you additional insight even if you handed in a correct solution.

Class Attendance: I do not take attendance formally; however you are responsible for the class contents and should therefore strive at regular attendance. Relying on reading the book alone will not stimulate conceptual thinking and is therefore strongly discouraged. However, read the book sections in preparation for the lecture covering the material. If you miss class for a good reason, I'll be helpful in catching up, but it shouldn't be a regular habit.

Special Attendance and Homework policies: (1) I want you to be able to do homework well. For this purpose I will be flexible in extending deadlines on request, but not as a regular liberty for procrastination. However, in contrast, if I have made 3 fruitless attempts to return your graded homework, then I'll discount it 50%.

(2) In the UG catalog, the rarely enforced stipulation is found: "Students who fail to attend the first class (or laboratory) meeting without prior arrangements with the department concerned may lose their space in class to other students." — I reserve the right to enforce this policy, but will do so only in the following relaxed version: Consistent no-shows during the first 3 class meetings may lose their space to other students, if a waitlist for the section exists.

Office Hours are posted on my website <http://www.math.utk.edu/~denzler/>. You are also welcome to request an appointment at other times or drop in. I accomodate drop-ins, whenever feasible, even though I cannot always guarantee immediate availability. My office is Aconda 410B (use the staircase marked 'Tower 2') my office phone is 974-5325. Email is denzler@math.utk.edu, but I may read it only once or twice a day.

Course website: <http://www.math.utk.edu/~denzler/M251-Sp2010> I am posting some material here, and it is publicly accessible and meant that way. I do NOT use UT-online Blackboard system in this course, except for administrative purposes.