# Homework Policy

This document describes the purpose and policies of all written work in this course, including policies on due dates, collaboration, and grading.

## Purpose

The purpose of homework is to help you learn the course material, to sharpen your problem-solving skills, and to practice communicating your ideas in technical prose. One of the most effective ways to learn—and especially to learn mathematics, science, and engineering—is by solving problems. Each problem is a gem through which you can enrich your knowledge and mind.

## Schedule

The schedule in the syllabus summarizes all due dates. Each assignment is handed out at least one week before it is due, to be graded and returned within one week after it is due. This schedule gives each student an opportunity, before each assignment is due, to ask questions about the assignment in class and to visit the instructor during office hours. Note that homework is never due during the week of any exam, and homework is reduced before projects are due. Please carefully read each assignment soon after it is handed out so that you will be able to ask questions about the assignment before it is due. Homework is always due at the beginning of class on the day it is due.

This semester, homework is due at the beginning of class on Wednesday. Graded papers will be returned during Monday's class, five days later.

To make it possible for the instructor to comment about the homework in class on the day it is due, to encourage each student to keep up-to-date, and to enable the instructor or TA to grade each homework in one sitting, *late homework will not be accepted.* If you miss a deadline, you should nevertheless complete the assignment late for the learning experience.

## Collaboration and Academic Misconduct

Joint study with other members of the class is permitted and encouraged. In addition, for this course, you may work jointly with other members of the class on homework problems; however, *each student must write up the solution to each problem independently with all help acknowledged.* You must always organize and express your solution in your own words. Copying will not be tolerated. *Under no circumstance should you give or receive help on any in-class or take-home test.*

To help clarify the boundary between legitimate and illegitimate collaboration, you should adhere to the following rules. First, while writing up any solution, you should be alone and you should not discuss the problem with anyone. Second, you should never look at any other person's written solution nor allow anyone to look at your written solution before it is handed in. Third, when solving problems, there should be a two-way flow of information—it is improper for one person simply to tell the other how to solve the problem.

Each student is expected to be familiar with the University policies on academic misconduct. Please note, that when improper collaboration occurs, both parties are in violation. If you are not familiar with these policies, please contact the Advisement Center or the Dean for Student Academic Affairs to obtain a copy of these policies.

**Homework Grading Scheme**

Each homework assignment consists of one or more homework problems. Every solution to each homework problem will be assigned a score between 0 and 10 according to the criteria given in Table 1. Unless otherwise stated, all problems carry the same weight.

The grading criteria classify solutions into four main categories: student solves problem (9–10), student makes significant progress but does not solve problem completely (7–8), student makes a serious attempt (4–6) with little or no progress, and student does not try (0–1). These criteria place a strong value on solving problems and on making a serious attempt to solve each problem. For a discussion of what it means "to make a serious attempt to solve a problem," and for useful advice on how to do homework, see the handout "How to solve and write up homework problems." This handout describes in detail what the grader will be looking for in each homework solution. The instructor expects each student to make a serious attempt to solve every problem; the instructor does not expect every student to be able to solve each problem. In-class examinations are graded using an entirely different scheme in which points are awarded by criteria specific to each examination question.

Although there is no strict predetermined correspondence between homework scores and letter grades, the approximate correspondence is: A (9–10), B (7–8), and C (4–6).

The instructor will grade all exams, projects, and quizzes; usually, the TA will grade all homework assignments. For questions about the grading of any homework, you should first contact the TA. If, after speaking with the TA, you still have a question, then you should contact the instructor. For questions about the grading of exams, projects, and quizzes, please contact the instructor.

Table 1: Grading scheme for homework problems.

| Score | Meaning |
|---|---|
| 10 | *Excellent.* Correct and complete. No mistakes. |
| 9 | *Very good.* Correct and complete, except for a small number of minor mistakes. |
| 8 | *Good.* Significant progress. Mostly correct, but with at least one major mistake or omission or many minor mistakes. |
| 7 | *Good.* Moderate progress heading in a productive direction. |
| 6 | *Fair.* Some progress. Heading in an apparently unproductive direction, or little progress made in a productive direction. |
| 4 | *Room for improvement.* Serious attempt made without any progress. |
| 1 | *Please try harder.* Something handed in without any evidence that a serious attempt was made to solve problem. |
| 0 | *Please try.* Nothing handed in. |