

## Tips for Success in College Math<sup>1</sup>

- A solution manual (or other help source) can be a crutch. Students must address this weakness. A person cannot learn to play the piano by watching! Suggestion - if you find you needed help to solve a problem, mark the problem and return to it in a day or two. See if you can now work the problem on your own. If you find you need help again, get the help. However, mark the problem and return to it again. Continue this until you have mastered the concept.
- Attendance records indicate that students who miss class generally receive lower grades. Suggestion - ATTEND CLASS!
- Detailed class notes, especially if feeling lost during lecture, must be taken (or downloaded if your instructor has them on the web). Review the notes after class (before the next class period) to be sure you are ready for any new material. If there are questions on the material covered in class, get help (office hours or someone else) on understanding what was covered.
- Read and re-read notes. Think about what each example is asking in terms of the concepts presented and why it is solved in a particular way. Instructors tend to ask exam questions that will cover the same concept in a different way. Therefore it is important to understand what is behind the question.
- For every hour spent in class, 3 hours outside class should be spent working problems and studying. The piano is learned by practicing daily, not one evening before the recital.
- Practice positive self-talk about math - a positive attitude about the subject helps studying which helps grades.
- Outside help is available through your supplemental instructors, review sessions, other UMECSS students and professor office hours. Use these resources!
- Don't get behind! The classes all move at a fast pace and today's lecture will likely build on the previous lecture. Even if you miss class you should try to look at the material that was covered during the class you missed.
- A point is a point. Students often take homework and quiz points less seriously than exam points. However, they are all added up at the end of the semester and can make quite a difference (for better or for worse) in your final grade.
- Test taking is a skill. You should look through your entire exam and work the questions you think are the easiest first. Then go back and work the more difficult ones.
- Wishing that a bad test will go away doesn't work. If you do badly on an exam you should not throw it away (tempting as that may be). You should rework the exam and then go to your instructor's office and discuss the test and what went wrong. Simply hoping that the next test will be better is rarely effective.
- Don't pin your hopes on the final. Miracles rarely happen on the final. Rather the final is often a low grade due to stress and exhaustion, be sure your grade going into the final is strong enough to withstand a lower than usual performance. However, occasionally a student studies hard enough for the final that it does work to raise their grade.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from; <http://www.math.tamu.edu/~janice.epstein/tips.html>