

Syllabus Letter

Every student is entitled to and capable of experiencing success and joy in mathematics.

(Mastery Grading Conference, June 2020)

Dear Student,

My name is Dr. Marcela Chiorescu, and I will be your guide for your journey in this math course. Teaching is one of my passions, and I've been doing it for about 20 years. At Georgia College, I've been teaching since 2009. I teach core courses such as Precalculus, Quantitative Skills & Reason or courses for math majors such as Foundations of Mathematics, Abstract Algebra, Geometry and Capstone Projects. Before Georgia College, I taught in Romania for four years and then at Florida Atlantic University while I was studying for my PhD for 6 years. My big goal for you is to improve your thinking, problem-solving skills and learning skills, **to leave this class a better version of yourself.**

"Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten."

- B. F. Skinner

Probably for most of you this is your first math course in college. You need to understand that college courses require a lot more time and effort from your part, but YOU can be successful and I'm here to help you do that.

Every semester I asked my students at the end of term to write a message for future students. Here are some of these for you:

*"My message to a future student who enrolls in this course is, take the homework and studying seriously. **Leave memorization in high school and retain information in college**, because I promise you it will reappear. Homework is a large part of this course, and it's actually not to punish you. It truly is for your own benefit to take the homework seriously and to TAKE YOUR TIME. Not only does your professor allow you to ask questions, but she also grants you with the opportunity to go back and fix your answers after receiving help. Take notes when people ask questions because you might realize later that you were struggling with the same concept. Take good notes in class, redraw your graphs at home, charts, etc. Her quizzes and tests are pretty short, so make sure to answer the question fully. Accidentally skipping a step or two can affect your grade tremendously, take it from me. Last, in addition to studying problems, study definitions! It's important that you can verbally explain what you're doing in addition to solving with numbers and formulas. My last piece of advice is, good luck! You are in great hands, just make sure to do your part."*

"If you show up to class, do the graded work, and understand the concepts you will do fine in the class. If you don't understand any concept (little or big), Dr. C is more than willing to help so don't hesitate to ask. If you are struggling with a concept, I recommend doing the extra homework assignments Dr. C assigns. Then you will know what you do and don't understand, so you can either email Dr. C, go to her office hours, or ask her in class. For tests, study the quizzes and homework she assigned throughout that unit. Dr. C wants to see us all succeed, so as long as you put in the effort your grade will reflect it and you will understand the course well."

"I would tell future students to never zone out in class because of the fast pace class is in and to use all their available resources to their benefit. Go to office hours, email Dr. C with questions, make friends in class so you can do homework with them and study with them. And as always, practice makes perfect. Lastly, do not think because you took this course in high school, it will be easy."

"You will learn so much in this class so make sure you stay on top of it. Don't ever talk back to Dr. C because she always has better comebacks. Study even if you feel like you know the course material. Try your best always. Listen to her study skills... LOOKING OVER NOTES IS NOT STUDYING. Most importantly enjoy this class because it's fun."

*"My advice to students who are planning on taking this course in the future is to not study more, but to study more **efficiently**. You will need to put many hours into this class if you want a good grade, but these hours should be distributed fairly evenly throughout the week. I think that*

reviewing your notes is imperative, but more importantly, you need to practice implementing the concepts introduced in class after you understand the basics. Annotating your notes would be a great strategy to understanding the basics of the concepts introduced but practicing them is imperative if you want to truly master them. Keeping up with assigned homework should be enough to practice these concepts, but you also need to recognize how well you learn each concept and put in the extra work if you feel that you need it. I also recommend asking lots of questions during class and seeing the professor during their office hours if you need more help. The professor is there to teach you, and they will most definitely help you if you ask for it. You have tons of resources available and you should use all of them to your advantage before it is too late. “

Each student in this class is vital to the success of the classroom community, which why it is important that we all respect each other, carefully consider one another's ideas, and value each other's contributions. All students are equally welcome and valued in this class, regardless of background, identity, or beliefs. Hate, racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination (implicit and explicit) are immoral and have no place in this community. As your instructor, I will do my best to foster a culture of equity and justice in this class and in the school. By joining this classroom community, you are committing to taking a growth mindset to this work, which means we will work together to learn from each other and become more compassionate.

Looking forward to knowing each of you,

Dr. CHIORESCU

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Syllabus MATH 1113: Precalculus- Fall 2020

Department of Mathematics
Georgia College and State University

Course Information

CRN: 80129
Course Classroom: Atkinson Hall 108
Instructor: Dr. Marcela Chiorescu
Instructor Office: A&S 126
Instructor Email: marcela.chiorescu@gcsu.edu
Instructor Office Phone: 478-445-0847 (for voice messages)

Virtual Student Hours

For our virtual meetings we will use WebEx. Here is a link to my WebEx meeting room:

<https://gcsu.webex.com/meet/Marcela.Chiorescu>.

I'm available on Monday and Wednesday: 3:00-4:00 pm and Thursday 11 am- 2 pm or by appointment.

Prerequisite

Grade of C or better in MATH 1111 (College Algebra) or equivalent

Technical Requirements

You need a computer with internet access. It is your responsibility to make sure you have access to internet especially when assignments and exams are due. Please make sure you have back-up plans for your internet access.

Textbook

Precalculus by OpenStax, available for free at <https://openstax.org/details/books/prec calculus>.
I recommend to you downloading the PDF version of the textbook, since the online version doesn't have pages and I will refer to the PDF textbook's pages when I assign assignments.

Course webpage

We are going to use Georgia View (<https://gcsu.view.usg.edu>) to house the webpage for this course. Here you will find your syllabus, notes, assignments, announcement and grades. Please check it daily!

Course Materials

You can use a scientific calculator. You are not allowed to use a graphing calculator, especially when you need to graph functions.

Course Description

This course provides students with a foundation in functions including exponential, logarithmic, and trigonometric functions, preparing them for Math 1261, Calculus I. In each case, properties, graphs, and applications will be studied. Technology will be incorporated as appropriate. This course can be used to satisfy the mathematics requirement in CORE Area A or to satisfy the mathematics requirement in Core Area D.

Course Learning Goals

- Students will become more confident about their ability to learn the concepts of this course.
- Students will engage in quantitative reasoning, that is, understanding the problem and applying knowledge to determine a solution.
- Students will make key assumptions to model data, produce results, and then interpret the results that feed back into understanding the problem.
- Students will build a relationship with classmates and know that the students and the professor are co-constructing knowledge and the professor is a facilitator of students learning.

Course Objectives

- Students shall become acquainted with definitions, examples, properties, and applications of various classes of functions.
- The student will be expected to distinguish between these classes and recognize situations, which require their use.
- Students will become acquainted with the definition, inverses, identities, graphs, and applications of the standard circular trigonometric functions.
- The student shall develop problem solving skills and learn to communicate using proper mathematical terminology and notation.

Course Content

We will cover part of Chapters 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7 in OpenStax Precalculus, which includes:

- Exponential and logarithmic functions;
- Exponential and logarithmic equations;
- Exponential and logarithmic models;
- Trigonometric functions;
- Periodic functions.

Students Expectations

This is not a lecture-oriented class or one in which mimicking prefabricated examples will lead you to success. You will be expected to work actively to construct your own understanding of the topics at hand, with the readily available help of me and your classmates. Many of the concepts you learn and problems you work will be new to you and ask you to stretch your thinking. You will experience frustration and failure before you experience understanding. This is part of the normal learning process. If you are doing things well, you should be confused at different points in the semester. Your viability as a professional in the modern workforce depends on your ability to embrace this learning process and make it work for you. I believe that the best way to learn mathematics is by doing mathematics. Someone cannot master a musical instrument or a martial art by simply watching, and in a similar fashion, you cannot master mathematics by simply watching; you must do mathematics!

Furthermore, it is important to understand that solving genuine problems is difficult and takes time.

In this course, everyone will be required to:

- read and interact with course notes and textbook on their own;
- write up quality solutions to assigned problems;
- self-assess and reflect on his/her work;

- work in teams to solve problems;

I aspire you to . . .

- be an active, caring, and productive contributor in our Math 1113 learning community.
- improve in your ability to learn independently through reading the text on your own and interacting with peers in your team.
- grow in your written communication skills. Through regularly assigned written homework problems, team activities and written exams, you will be expected to communicate your thinking in writing: writing in complete sentences with proper spelling and grammar is an essential part of every written assessment in the course.
- work hard. Learning mathematics is challenging and demands hard work. There are huge benefits in this life to knowing how to work hard and be productive. This course presents a great opportunity for you to strengthen your work ethic.
- build conceptual understanding of the topics we study from several perspectives so that you gain greater ability to apply ideas in new settings, deepen your logical reasoning skills, and build an appreciation for the beautiful connections present in mathematics. Throughout the course, I urge you to ask yourself questions like “What is the big idea here?” “What do these symbols mean?” “Do the concepts we are studying make sense to me?”
- be successful in the course. By “successful” I mean that I want you to develop deep, personal understanding of fundamental concepts. Good grades are a consequence of being successful, not the definition of success. Ultimately, I want you to be able to describe yourself – for your performance in this course – as a creative and independent problem solver, an effective communicator, and a hard worker.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Student assessment will be based on the following categories:

Practice for understanding (PU)	20%
Collaborative activities (CA)	20%
Miscellaneous assignments (MA)	15%
Exams	30%
Final	15%

Letter grades will be assigned as follows: A [90-100], B [80-89], C [70-79], D [60-69], F [0-59]. Scores on the border will be assigned at my discretion.

Prior to mid-semester, you will receive feedback on your academic performance in this course.

No make-up for any of the assignments.

Practice for understanding

These will be written homework assignments assigned at most twice per week. For these assignments, I check to see if you really understand the concepts. Each problem will be graded on the following rubric:

Points	Criteria
2	You understand this!
1	You are not there yet.
0	You haven't tried it

If you score 0-1 points on problems, you can correct these and resubmit them to receive full credit. You will submit these assignments online in PDF format under assigned folders in Georgia View. In general, late assignments will not be accepted. None of these assignments will be dropped.

Collaborative activities

These activities will be assigned to be worked in teams. These should be carefully, clearly, and cleanly written. Among other things, this means your work should include proper grammar, punctuation and spelling. You will almost always write a draft of a given solution before you write down the final argument, so do yourself a favor and get in the habit of differentiating your scratch work from your submitted assignment. In general, late assignments will not be accepted. None of these assignments will be dropped. You will submit these assignments online in Georgia View.

Miscellaneous Assignments

There will be a variety of additional assignments designed to help you think about your learning and gain skills that will be useful in this course and other college courses. Many of these will be graded on completion rather than accuracy, as there often won't be right answers to the questions. None of these assignments will be dropped.

Exams

There will be four written exams and the lowest score exam will be dropped. So, only your best three exam scores will count for your grade. There will be no make-up exams. The dates of the exams are:

Wednesday, September 2nd; Wednesday, September 30th; Wednesday, October 21st and Wednesday, November 4th.

Final Exam

It will be a mandatory final online on Wednesday, December 2, 8:00-10:15 am. Make up finals will not be given.

Rights of the Learner

As a student in this class, you have the right:

- to be confused,
- to make a mistake and to revise your thinking,
- to speak, listen, and be heard, and
- to enjoy doing mathematics.

Communication

Communication includes Announcements in Georgia View and individual e-mail.

1. Individual e-mail from the Instructor: Individual e-mail messages will be sent to your GC e-mail account. Please check your GC e-mail daily to be sure you are getting your e-mail (if you are having any technical issues with GC e-mail you must get assistance from TECH Support—contact information under the Faculty & Tech Support link in Georgia View; the excuse that your GC e-mail was not working is not acceptable). Please use only I will respond to e-mails within 24 hours on Monday-Thursday. E-mails received Friday after 5 pm -Sunday will be responded to the following Monday.

2. Announcements: You will receive regular communication via the announcements in the course. Check these each time you access the course in Georgia View to be sure you are up to date with the latest information (these are time stamped so if you know when you logged in last, you can determine if anything is new). In order to ensure you get the announcements, you can have notifications sent to you by email or text message. To do this, click on your name in Georgia View and then click on "Notifications". Then check the box next to "Announcements - new announcement available." You are responsible for reading announcements, whether posted on Georgia View or sent by email.

Getting Help

There are many resources available to get help. First, I recommend that you work on homework in small groups as much as possible and attend the virtual student hours when needed. I am always happy to help you. If my scheduled hours don't work for you, then we can probably find another time to meet. You can also contact the Learning Center for help with the material for this class. Don't wait until it is too late if you need help.

Changes to the Syllabus

Any changes to this syllabus made during the term will be properly communicated to the class.

Additional Syllabus Statements

<http://www.gcsu.edu/registrar/required-syllabus-statements>

COVID-19

Georgia College is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment for all students, faculty, and staff. Encompassed in our campus values of Reason, Respect, and Responsibility is the expectation that every member of the university community will follow specific guidelines to ensure the health and safety of everyone on campus.

Consistent with CDC and State of Georgia guidelines and directives from the University System of Georgia, Georgia College requires masks in all Georgia College indoor facilities and in outdoor campus areas where social distancing is not possible. In our modified face-to-face learning environment, you will be socially-distanced in assigned seats and wear the required CDC-approved face coverings. Face coverings will be used in addition to social distancing.

Below are additional considerations to mitigate the spread of COVID-19:

- All classrooms have been evaluated and arranged to achieve the required social distancing guidelines. Students should not move the furniture since that will disrupt our institutional plan for health and safety.

- Everyone must follow proper social distancing and personal hygiene measures. This includes: maintaining at least 6 feet of spatial distancing from others, washing your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds, utilizing hand sanitizer, covering your cough and sneeze with a tissue or the inside of your elbow, and avoiding close contact and congested areas without face masks. Anyone not using a face covering when required will be asked to wear one or must leave the area.
- Avoid congregating in commonly trafficked areas such as hallways, bathrooms, and common spaces to reduce people density at any given time.
- Exit the classrooms in an orderly and physically-distanced manner as soon as class ends so that entering faculty members and students have adequate time to prepare their work space (sanitizing if they desire) for the next class. Exiting the classroom and/or building in a manner that promotes physical distancing is important to avoid crowding.
- If you are feeling sick, please do not attend classes. Consult Student Health Services or visit your doctor. Please notify your professor prior to missing class. Faculty members will work with you to receive the necessary course content and assessments.

[GC Keeps Learning](#): To help students adapt to the changing learning environment, Georgia College has developed a website of resources, tips, virtual tools, and access to help. Included in this site are tutorials for GeorgiaVIEW, area access to Wi-Fi, academic support tools, and tips for online learning.

[GC's Campus Reopening Website](#): The Campus Reopening website will provide the latest information about our response to COVID-19. Check here for messages from President Dorman, as well as changes to the academic calendar, information about orientation, dining and residential life, important phone numbers, and the latest message sent to students, faculty, and staff.

Good luck!