

Test Rules and Policies for Professor Kuhn's classes

rev. May 15, 2011

Please understand that I am required to implement the tests such that the result is a true measure of each student's personal work. So, be prepared for any of the following:

- (1) Randomly assigned seating
- (2) Variations of the test
- (3) Other methods known only to me

Adhere to the following:

- ✓ Do all work on the test. Use the backside if necessary. **Extra paper is not allowed.**
- ✓ Equations/data are supplied on the test. You may have no other notes.
- ✓ **All sheets of the test must remain stapled – do not remove any page.**
- ✓ You may have 1 approved calculator as described later in this document. However, for some tests it is possible that no calculator will be allowed.
- ✓ All other papers, books, purses, bags, etc. must be off the desk and on the floor out of site.
- ✓ You may have no cell phones, pagers, etc. in view. Any devices you have with you must be OFF unless approved by the instructor.
- ✓ Your desk must be free of anything not approved – thus you have only three items: the test, your calculator (if permitted for the test), and your pencils/erasers – none of which can contain any notes.
- ✓ Caps or any kind of head gear are not allowed.
- ✓ Nothing can be in your lap or off the desktop, even if legitimate for the test.

Cheating: *Cheating is not allowed.* I believe the overwhelming majority of students will do honest work without any measures from me. That has been the case during my last twenty years of teaching. However, I am mean-spirited enough to thwart anyone trying to sneak by the course. Technology has made it possible to cheat in interesting ways that were not possible in the past. The class will be watched for any evidence of communication or unusual activity during tests. Unusual head gear, coats, etc. will attract scrutiny. I always watch the test close. Because we live in an age where ethics are totally lacking by some, ***I will be extra vigilant and may inspect your test, desk, etc. at any time during the test.*** If I discover test rule violations your test is subject to being immediately seized and your score could be 0. The rules are simple and clear. Take care to follow them and you will have no problem. But do not press your luck – I am ruthless when it comes to cheating and have no problem failing students, kicking them out of class, or initiating academic misconduct proceedings. This is not an idle threat. I have given zeros and have failed a number of students in the past for cheating. My verdict is final and **there is no appeal.**

General Policies

The following are the general policies for tests. Appropriate exceptions will be made for

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students with bona-fide disabilities – a letter from UAB Disability Services is required.

Seating: I expect students to space themselves as far as possible from fellow students. Ideally, there would be a blank seat between each student but large class size makes this generally impossible. But this should be done to the extent possible. *Seating may be assigned by me so be prepared to move from your normal place.*

Communication Devices: Any type of cell phone or other communication device is not allowed to be on the desktop or available for use. They must be turned off and out of view in your pocket, purse, etc. If you have a possible emergency situation and must be available to receive a call then let me know. I will accommodate special arrangements but I will be very suspicious if more than one person has an emergency. Devices capable of playing or recording sound or images are not allowed.

Calculation Devices: Only calculators approved for professional exams are allowed and it is possible that calculators will not be allowed at all for some tests. See the current list at http://www.ncees.org/Exams/Exam-day_policies/Calculator_policy.php. No modifications to the calculator are permitted. I can extend that list somewhat if you discuss that with me at least a week prior to the exam. Just for reference, your instructor uses an ancient HP32 scientific calculator with minimal storage to compute the answers for the key. A modern day equivalent is the new HP33s. Laptop, palm tops, portable, etc. computers are not allowed.

Acceptable calculators: FX115, TI30, TI36, HP33S, HP35S

Calculators not accepted include: HP28, HP48, HP49, HP50

Concepts to keep in mind about computation on tests:

- My tests do not require extensive calculations. Computational horsepower will not help if you are not prepared. The key to making a high score on the test is knowing what to do rather than computational horsepower.
- All you need is a calculator that can perform basic arithmetic including square-root, perform standard trig functions, perform standard logarithmic and exponential functions, and hyperbolic functions in a few special cases.
- Your focus should be on knowing the material rather than trying to use technology to "get by."
- Observation in classes previous to this policy showed that virtually all students were in compliance so this policy really only affects those who would try to be "cute."
- If you want to legitimately maximize your computational advantage I recommend that you use an HP33s or HP35s and become proficient in RPN. This can save a

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lot of precious time on tests as well as minimize errors. This is how your instructor made it through engineering school.

Noises: It is expected that students will not make disturbing noises and will turn off sound on their calculation devices. Failure to follow this may result in penalty points on the test. It is impossible to be perfectly quiet and reasonable noise is fine. Actually, this has never been a problem but it is a good rule to have anyway.

Work: *No work, no credit.* All work must be shown to receive credit for the problem. You do not have to show every micro detail – just sufficient information that convinces me you know what you are doing. It really helps if your work is organized.

Questions: If you do not understand something on the test or think that some important information may be missing from the test then come to me and ask a question. I do make mistakes and inadvertently leave things off. I will always post on the board any revisions that might be needed. I can not tell you if you are working a problem right or not nor give you any guidance. I never rig the tests to be intellectually cute. All problems are standard as have been worked in class examples but may require thought processes you can only develop by attending all classes and working the homework. I will often make certain choices for you to simplify grading. Be sure to pay attention to these and do not follow blind procedure and modify results I have already provided – that will cost points.

Test Style: *All tests are closed book and no notes.* Equations and data that I do not expect you to memorize are provided on the test. The tests are thought intensive and require only standard calculations to complete. Understand the material such that you can quickly derive something from a different point of view.

Test Length: *The tests are designed so that an exceptional student could probably finish the test with a score close to 100.* This means that most people will not finish. The test problems are not hard. There are enough problems so that time is the primary issue. **This means you must know the material well enough to understand what to do in a short time.** I always scale the final average as appropriate to prevent grades from being arbitrarily low. So do not worry too much if you did not finish the test. Your absolute score on the test may not be very significant. It is much more important to have a high score relative to the class. As long as you are in the upper group of scores then your final grade will most likely be in the upper group -- 'A' or 'B'. Traditionally, this class has a high number of 'A' and 'B' grades even though absolute scores may cause some to worry. Do the best you can and do not worry. In all of my years of teaching I have never seen a student who was actually working hard make a low grade for the course.

Test Grading: *Partial credit will be given as appropriate* although I am leaning more and more towards right answer only because sloppy, disorganized work makes it very time consuming to access partial credit. The most important thing to do is to demonstrate understanding of the concepts. Calculation errors do not cost you too much if you have

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demonstrated the right concept.

Time Limit: All tests have a time limit equal to the class time. I will announce that tests are due and *I expect all tests to be handed in within three minutes of my announcement*. I reserve the right not to accept a test handed in late -- the score will be zero. I might accept a late test but impose a late penalty -- it would be steep -- perhaps 10 points per minute.

Make up tests: *There are no make-up tests* except for rare TBD special circumstances. Since the final exam is comprehensive then your final will simply count the additional weight of the missed test – provided you promptly provide me with an acceptable and verifiable excuse for the missed test. Otherwise you will receive a grade of zero for that test. If you have to miss a test for a real reason then do not worry. Just tend to what you have to and provide the needed documentation as soon as you can. Keep in mind that I have had past experience with faked accidents, illnesses, and emergencies. For some people these things become predictable. There are ways to separate real from pseudo emergencies. I am very understanding about life's real problems – I have them myself on occasion. Just do not play me for a fool. Examples of valid excuses include illness, injury, some family or job emergency, or a conflict with some UAB function. Some years ago I had one student who was predictably “sick” on the day of the test. If you have a conflict with some scheduled personal event that life compels you to attend then talk to me in advance – we can probably work something out as I am reasonable – this could apply for only one of the two regular tests. Some students are on programs that require me to submit academic progress reports – those students may be required to take some sort of closely monitored make-up so that progress or lack thereof can be documented. There is always one student who specializes in crafty schemes instead of studying so I have to have policies to thwart those.

Missed final exam: If the final is missed and the student has a failing average of the two regular tests or a failing lab average then a grade of 'F' is automatically assigned unless some prior arrangement has been made – there is no point in a make-up final. Passing students will receive an incomplete and may take a make-up final provided there was a legitimate reason to miss the final – documentation is required. Otherwise a grade of 0 will be assigned to the final and the grade will be computed normally – that basically means an ‘F’. As with the regular tests, if some emergency occurs the day of the test then tend to that and do not worry – all will be well if you provide the appropriate documentation. It is always a good idea to send me an email about the situation as soon as you can so I will know and can make plans for a make-up test. The make-up final will likely be different from the regular final and may be administered under very close supervision to thwart any attempt at cheating. It has happened before that a student claimed an injury and requested a make-up final and offered to supply documentation (bogus). I investigated and found out that the injury was fake and promptly failed the student. I had no doubt that his scheme was to cheat on the make-up since he had a seriously failing average going into the final. I have been teaching for over twenty years and I am well aware of schemes. I think there has been only two cases in my teaching career where a student legitimately needed to take a make-up final.