MA 112 – College Algebra

Dr. Stefan Ehrlich

Graduate Computer Science / Mathematics Department

Fall Semester, 2006

Contact Info:  
Phone: 603-888-1311x8531  
Office: Sylvia Trottier - 313  
Email: sehrlich@rivier.edu

Text:  
Algebra for College Students  
Jerome E. Kaufman  
PWS Pub, Co., Seventh Edition

Office Hours:  
Monday 2:00- 3:30  
Tuesday 1:30- 2:30, 4:00- 6:00  
Thursday 1:30-2:30, 4:00-5:30

Brief Course Description:
This course covers concepts ranging from elementary algebra up to, but not including, precalculus. It is designed for use as either a single introductory algebra course or a stepping-stone to more advanced mathematical courses, such as precalculus/calculus. A solid understanding of the topics covered in college algebra is essential for study in computer sciences, physical and life sciences, business and economics, and engineering.

Course Objectives:
To provide a basic working knowledge of the tools and thought processes underlying elementary and college algebra. These include:

Basic concepts- exponents, radicals, factoring, absolute value, inequalities
First and Second Degree Equations with Applications
Polynomials
Rational Expressions
Graphing Techniques

Think of these three challenges:  
Learn to think- Carefully Critically Creatively

Classroom Policies:
Students are expected to attend and participate in all classes. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each class. Please notify the instructor in advance of any anticipated absence whenever possible. It is your responsibility to make up any material missed whenever you are absent from class. Assignments are taken from exercises in the text. The homework problems are always covered in class and you are expected to read the section of text corresponding to the homework assignment. Questions about the problems should be raised at the next class meeting. The study of mathematics/computer science requires regular work and plenty of practice. Postponed homework usually results in poor comprehension and performance.
**Teaching Strategies:**
Lecture format, built around the textbook readings with numerous examples chosen to illustrate theoretical concepts. Lots of drill with emphasis on practice, practice, and more practice. Questions are encouraged and discussion of material stressed.

**Course Requirements and Grading Policies:**
Students will be evaluated based on two midterms and a final exam as follows:

- Midterm 1 - 25%
- Midterm 2 - 25%
- Final - 50%

All tests are closed book and the final is comprehensive. The results will be converted to a letter grade in keeping with grading policies of the college.

Prerequisites: Math 100 or permission of the instructor.

**Material Covered:**
1 - Introduction to Course
   - Review of Basic Material on a Limited and as Needed Basis

2 – Equations and Inequalities
   - First Degree Equations
   - Equalities and Inequalities
   - Absolute Value

3- Linear Equations and Inequalities in Two Variables
   - Rectangular Coordinate System
   - Distance between Points
   - Linear Equations and Inequalities in Two Variables
   - Slope
   - Determining the Equation of a Line

4- Quadratic Equations and Inequalities
   - Quadratic Formula
   - Quadratic Inequalities (optional)

5 – Polynomials
   - Sum, Difference, Product, and Quotient
   - Factoring
   - Simplifying Complex Fractions (optional)

6 – Rational Expressions
   - Simplification
   - Addition, Subtraction and Multiplication
   - Long Division
7 – Exponents and Radicals
   Laws of Exponents
   Roots and Radicals
   Writing Radicals in Exponential Form and Vice-Versa
   Scientific Notation

8- Functions (as time permits)
   Relations and Functions, Composition and Inverse

9- Exponential and Logarithmic Functions (as time permits)
   Exponential Functions
   Logarithms and Logarithmic Functions

10- Systems of Equations (as time Permits)
    Gaussian Elimination in 2x2 and 3x3 Cases

11- Matrices and Determinants (as time permits)
    Matrix Form of Gaussian Elimination
    Determinants and Cramer’s Rule

12– Sequences and Series (as time permits)
    Arithmetic Sequences and Series
    Geometric Sequences and Series