Math 124 Syllabus Summer, 2015

Instructor: Prof. Wilson.
Office: Room 304, 16 Colchester Avenue.
Office hours: Monday 2:00-3:00, Wednesday 2:00-3:00, and by appointment.
Office phone: 656-4326 (has phonemail).
Email: jmwilson@uvm.edu (office); hinesburg@juno.com (home). (Note: the home email is not private.)
Website: http://www.cems.uvm.edu/~jmwilson/.

Text: *Linear Algebra and its Applications* (fifth edition) by David C. Lay. The bookstore tells me they will have copies in time for the class. At my request, the bookstore will stock the loose-leaf edition, which should cost less than the hardback. If you want the hardback, you can order it online (from, e.g., Amazon). Its ISBNs are 032198238X (ISBN-10) and 978-0321982384 (ISBN-13). Amazon also has a Kindle edition, but I can’t vouch for its quality (some Kindle books have glitches).

Approximate course contents: We will try to cover most of chapters 1–5 and some of 6. We will cover the chapters in this order: 1, 2, 4, 3, 5, 6. The respective topics covered are (roughly): basics of solving systems of linear equations; matrix algebra; vector spaces; determinants; eigenvalues and eigenvectors; orthogonality and least-squares methods.

Grading, tests, and homework: I will assign homework at every class meeting. You should do the problems but you do not need to hand them in. I will work a subset of the assigned problems at the next meeting, along with any others you wish to see done. I will regularly post homework and reading assignments on the website. Your grade will be based on a weighted average of quiz and exam scores. I will give 4 quizzes, a midterm, and a final. Each quiz will contribute 10% to your grade; the midterm and final will each count for 30%. I do not give letter grades to quiz or exam scores, but only to your final class average.

We will have a quiz or exam every Wednesday. The quiz dates are 7/1, 7/8, 7/22, and 7/29. I will give the midterm in class on 7/15. The final exam will take place on 8/5 (the last class day).

Note on computer usage: Computer accounts have been or soon will be set up in your names. The basic principles and techniques of linear algebra can and will be illustrated via hand computations on small matrices; but the matrices one typically encounters in the real world are too large to be tractable without computers, and you should become familiar with their use. Since I use *Mathematica* to make up handouts and exams, I will talk about it whenever I do mention computers. (I’ve used MATLAB, but I’m very rusty on it, and any knowledge I have is years out of date; unfortunately, I don’t know a thing about MAPLE.) Note: you won’t need a computer to do any exam, but I encourage you to bring a calculator.

Policy on missed quizzes, etc.: If you miss one for a good reason (illness, job conflict, family emergency, etc.), I will be happy to arrange a time and place for you to make it up.
Normally I will not ask for written verification of your excuse (I don’t think I’ve ever had to), but I might if it seems that people are taking advantage of my good nature. If I do ask you for such verification, you should not feel that you’re the bad guy: somebody else was, but the policy has to be uniform. I must warn you that if you come to a quiz or test feeling ill, take the exam, and bomb it, you will be stuck with the score.

Policy on learning disabilities: If you have a learning disability requiring special accommodations (such as untimed or large-print exams), the University and I will be happy to provide them. However, it is your responsibility to inform me and ACCESS (formerly the Office of Specialized Student Services) at 656-7753 well ahead of time if you do require such accommodations. Your request for special accommodations will be kept completely confidential.