University of Montana

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MAT 002T.01: Prealgebra

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Recommended Citation

Excellence is achieved by the mastery of fundamentals.

-- Vince Lombardi

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Text: *Prealgebra* by Margaret L. Lial and Diana L. Hestwood

Math 002 is a one-semester prealgebra course. In this course, we investigate the building blocks of the number system, including whole numbers, integers, solving equations and problem solving, fractions, decimals, ratio and proportion, percent, and geometry and measurement.

I want to emphasize to all of my students how important *your* role is in succeeding in this course. Attendance is not part of your final grade, BUT I cannot teach you if you are not in class ready to learn. I will take attendance and if you are sitting on the line, e.g. between an A and B grade, your attendance record can tip you to the higher grade. Turn off your cell phone. Come prepared. Pay attention and *keep thinking*! No matter how you feel about studying math, or how math fits into your career plans, I can assure you that it is important to learn personal responsibility and show that you have a solid work ethic. My suggestion is that you plan to work on math 5-6 days per week for relatively short time periods. This will allow the processes to become more deeply imbedded than studying many hours at one sitting.

You have a lot to do with how the "feel" of the class develops. You ARE the class and you can make it lively and interesting or you can make it silent and boring. Personally, I prefer lively with lots of questions and student interaction ... but it's up to you. If you do the work and follow my suggestions, you will find the classes make sense and the challenges are reasonable, not overwhelming. As an educator, I believe in the keywords respect and appreciation, and these traits work both ways. I will respect your efforts and appreciate your contributions, and conversely, you must also do the same for me and each other. It makes for a much nicer class.

Calculators You may use a calculator to check your work.

Grades – Homework and/or problem sets are due on the assigned dates. I cannot emphasize strongly enough how important it is for you to be diligent in your study habits. You will not learn math by osmosis or wishful thinking; you need to put in the effort in order to be able to learn the material. Remember that regular math work is better than cramming….cramming **really** doesn't work for math. Your work needs to be clear and legible (showing all of the steps taken in the problem) so that it can be evaluated. **I will not grade illegible papers.**
Final grades will be based on the chapter tests, the problem sets (if assigned), and the cumulative final. Chapter tests (5) are worth 100 points each, Homework for each testing unit is worth 50 points, and the cumulative final is worth 200 points for a total of 950 points. The following grading scale will be used:

90-100%	A
80-89%	B

70-79%	C
60-69%	D
Below 60%	F

I also understand that a significant portion of the typical MAT 002 class struggles with math anxiety -- that is why you need to take MAT 002 in the first place. Take a deep breath! I am on your side and want to see you succeed. We do cover a lot of material in the class, but if you are able to discipline yourself to keep up with the assignments, the tests won't be so overwhelming. I HAVE TO give tests; that's the only way I can assess your progress. The purpose of the tests is not to trip you up, but to show what you have learned. Try to relax and do your best. If you have a diagnosed learning disability, other arrangements can be made through the Academic Support Center.

Makeup Tests and Late Problem Sets -- If you have special circumstances which prevent you from taking a test on time, please notify me in advance. Only under documented, emergency circumstances will a makeup test be given without prior approval. Problem sets will not be accepted later than the day the test is taken.

Test Return Policy -- I will attempt to have corrected tests returned no later than one week after the test date. There is no way I will be able to return corrected tests any sooner. If you have questions regarding corrected tests, please wait till after class to discuss them with me.

A Note on Cheating -- Academic honesty is expected at all times. No form of cheating will be tolerated. The penalty for cheating on a test is loss of **all** points for that test; a second occurrence guarantees being reported to the administration. The University of Montana has strong sanctions against plagiarism and other forms of cheating. Cheating is not worth the effort and is unfair to those who are honest. You are always welcome to seek help on take-home tests (if any) and on homework assignments, but make an effort to learn from the experience. The work you hand in to me should be your own (even with assistance). I don't care whether your parents or friends or spouses or tutors understand the material -- I care about you and what you have learned. You won't have any help on the final exam and it is cumulative. If you haven't learned the subject, it will be apparent when you take your final.

Course Outcomes

At the completion of the course students will:
- Accurately calculate basic mathematical problems involving fractions, decimals, percents, ratio and proportion.
- Utilizing order of operations to calculate equations.
- Utilize signed numbers and exponents in problem solving.
- Confidently manipulate components of equations.
- Apply knowledge of the metric system conversions to solve problems.
- Verbalize increased self confidence related to mathematics

The final exam for this course will be held on Tuesday, December 12 at 8 am - 10 am in this classroom. It will be closed book.

Final Note

I want math to be a subject you enjoy and appreciate. Learning math empowers you! You raise your self-esteem with your accomplishments and become a more valuable member to the community with your problem-solving skills. Math is a subject that is rich and rewarding, but only if you understand the basics of vocabulary and grammar so that you can speak the language. The best way to come to

appreciate how math works is to DO THE MATH. Discipline yourself so that you practice regularly. If you do, tests won't seem like such a threat -- because they shouldn't be! They are a necessary assessment tool that shows both you and me how well you are progressing. Education is not a contest. It is a goal. Show both of us that you want to learn.

I am looking forward to a lively and exciting semester with all of you. Please give this course your best effort so that it can be just as interesting for you!

Academic calendar available at http://www2.umt.edu/registrar/currentcalendar.htm
Finals schedule available at http://www2.umt.edu/registrar/finals_schedules.htm

See attached daily calendar for class topics and test days. Test days may change depending on class needs. You are responsible for knowing changes in class schedules and assignments by being in class. Your absence (unless I am notified) does not excuse you from class assignments.