

Northern Virginia Community College
MTH 161-008A, Spring 2024
Precalculus I, 3 credits
Dr. Bruce Wahl, Professor

Office and Some Ways to Contact Me:

Bisdorf (AA) 352, Phone: (703) 845-6342

email: bwahl@nvcc.edu (**Please include your name, course and section in the email.**)

web page: blogs.nvcc.edu/bwahl/

Student Hours:

Office Only (AA 352): Mondays and Wednesdays: 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM; Tuesdays and Thursdays: 10:45 AM to 12:30 PM.

Simultaneously in office (AA 352) and on Zoom: Mondays and Wednesdays: 11:15 AM to 12:30 PM; Tuesdays and Thursdays: 2:15 PM to 3:15 PM. You are welcome to see me in person in my office or log on to the Zoom Student Hours. You will find the Zoom invitation in Canvas. I have a waiting room for that Zoom session, so I will watch for you there. Please be patient as there may be other students waiting ahead of you.

Lecture Time and Delivery: Tuesdays and Thursdays: 12:45 to 2:05 PM in AA 456

Non-Instructional Days: March 11-17

Course Purpose and Description:

The purpose of MTH 161 is to prepare students for a course in statistics or applied calculus by providing them with the necessary competencies in algebra and functions. Precalculus I can also be applied in conjunction with Precalculus II (MTH 162) in preparation for a course in calculus with analytic geometry. MTH 161 presents topics in power, polynomial, rational, exponential, and logarithmic functions, and systems of equations and inequalities. The prerequisites are a satisfactory score on an appropriate proficiency examination or completion of developmental mathematics through Unit 9 or its equivalent. Students cannot get credit for both MTH 161 and MTH 167. You may read the complete course content summary at <https://www.nvcc.edu/depts/academic/coursecont/summaries/MTH161.pdf>

Course Objectives:

- Relations and Functions
 - Distinguish between relations and functions.
 - Evaluate functions both numerically and algebraically.
 - Determine the domain and range of functions in general, including root and rational functions.
 - Perform arithmetic operations on functions, including the composition of functions and the difference quotient.
 - Identify and graph linear, absolute value, quadratic, cubic, and square root functions and their transformations.
 - Determine and verify inverses of one-to-one functions.
- Polynomial and Rational Functions
 - Determine the general and standard forms of quadratic functions.
 - Use formula and completing the square methods to determine the standard form of a quadratic function.
 - Identify intercepts, vertex, and orientation of the parabola and use these to graph quadratic functions.
 - Identify zeros (real-valued roots) and complex roots, and determine end behavior of higher order polynomials and graph the polynomial, and graph.
 - Determine if a function demonstrates even or odd symmetry.
 - Use the Fundamental Theorem of Algebra, Rational Root test, and Linear Factorization Theorem to factor polynomials and determine the zeros over the complex numbers.
 - Identify intercepts, end behavior, and asymptotes of rational functions, and graph.
 - Solve polynomial and rational inequalities.
 - Interpret the algebraic and graphical meaning of equality of functions ($f(x) = g(x)$) and inequality of functions ($f(x) > g(x)$)
 - Decompose partial fractions of the form $P(x)/Q(x)$ where $Q(x)$ is a product of linear factors
- Exponential and Logarithmic Functions
 - Identify and graph exponential and logarithmic functions and their transformations.
 - Use properties of logarithms to simplify and expand logarithmic expressions.
 - Convert between exponential and logarithmic forms and demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the two forms.

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- Solve exponential and logarithmic equations using one-to-one and inverse properties.
- Solve application problems involving exponential and logarithmic functions.
- Systems of Equations
 - Solve three variable linear systems of equations using the Gaussian elimination method.

Optional Textbook (please note that this text is embedded in the required online software):

Miller, J., & Gerken, D. (2023). *Precalculus*. McGraw Hill LLC.

Required Online Software: ALEKS

Please read the following steps before purchasing your software.

1. The NVCC Alexandria Bookstore sells an ALEKS access card for MTH 161. Note: If you have financial aid, you must purchase your code in the bookstore to use that benefit. If you do not have financial aid, then you can purchase access directly from the website in step #2 next.
2. Go to CANVAS and click on our course. The page that comes up should have “Recent Announcements” at the top where you will find a “Welcome” announcement from me. Below the announcements, you will find a Module titled “ALEKS Information.” Within that Module, you will find “Getting Started with ALEKS.” Take a few minutes to read through the latter item where you will discover how to set up your ALEKS account and how to log in to our class on ALEKS. Then, you will click on the “ALEKS” link in the left-hand column in CANVAS and follow the directions to create an account as a new student or select the option that says you have an ALEKS account. This gives you access to ALEKS online resources and an eText. You may purchase access directly from the website or use the code that you purchased in step #1 above. Note: If you need a couple of weeks to figure out how you will acquire your ALEKS access code, you may use the Financial Aid Access Code below.

3. Your **Financial Aid Access Code** is: **BFF21-60DD3-B1EA8-4E79C**

4. **The Financial Aid Access Code does not add an additional two weeks to your account.**

NOTE: This code gives you temporary access to ALEKS for a two-week period. Once the code expires, you will be locked out of your ALEKS account until you purchase a regular Student Access Code. **It is highly recommended that you purchase the Student Access Code BEFORE the two weeks expire** to prevent interruptions with your ALEKS account. **Everyone can use this! Get started right away!**

1. To sign up into ALEKS using the Financial Aid Access Code, go to ALEKS by following the link on your class page.
2. Proceed as a new ALEKS user or as a previous user depending on your history.
3. Continue with the registration process until your account has been set up successfully.
4. On the Apply Access page, enter the 20-character Financial Aid Access Code and click "Continue."
5. Next you will see a page with the date your temporary access expires, click "Continue."
6. You will arrive at the **My Classes** page.
7. You can extend your access to your new class at any time by selecting "**Extend access**" from the class tile menu and enter your new access code. **You do not need to create a new ALEKS account to continue your class.**

Calculator: A graphing calculator is required for this course. I strongly recommend a TI-83 or better. See the note below.

Smartphone Scanner App: You may need to use a free smartphone scanner app (like Genius Scan—you should watch the 22 second video at <https://thegrizzlylabs.com/genius-scan/>) to scan some of your work this semester.

Syllabus:

Chapter 1: §§3, 6-8

Chapter 3: §§1-6

Chapter 9: §§1, 2

Chapter 2: §§1-6

Chapter 8: §§1-3

Grading Policy: There are 4 components that will determine your grade:

1. Attendance—5%
2. Homework (Most of it is on ALEKS)—15%
3. Unit Exams (3 given, 1 hour each, lowest exam grade dropped)—50%
4. Final Exam (100 minutes, comprehensive)—30%

- In general, 90%-100% = A, 80%-89.9% = B, 70%-79.9% = C, 60%-69.9% = D, below 60% = F. I reserve the right to lower the curve but will not raise the curve. No audits are given in this class. The last day to drop with

refund is February 1, 2024. The last day to withdraw to receive a "W" grade is March 23, 2024. If you choose to drop or withdraw from this class, you are responsible for doing all the necessary steps online before these dates. **Note: I will not approve withdrawals after March 23, 2024 without written documentation.**

- **Attendance:** Attending this class is very important. You may miss two classes with no grade penalty. Each class missed after that will result in a 1% drop from the possible 5% attendance grade. My experience is that students who miss class often are putting their education at a low priority and that they are more likely to fail or withdraw from the course. On the other hand, regular attendance with active class participation usually results in a passing grade.
- **Homework:** All mathematics homework will be completed on ALEKS, the online software. Some extra homework related to the class will be detailed in CANVAS. **15% of your grade depends on you making steady progress through the software and exam questions will be based on the types of problems in the homework. See the schedule at the end of the syllabus for tentative dates.**
- **Unit Exams:** One hour each, covering sections as listed below and on the written homework page.
Exam #1 (Unit 1) is tentatively scheduled for February 13, 2024.
Exam #2 (Unit 2) is tentatively scheduled for March 7, 2024.
Exam #3 (Unit 3) is tentatively scheduled for April 11, 2024.

If you know you will not be able to complete the exam during class time on any of these days (for example, for required military duty), please see me well in advance; we may be able to make alternate plans. You may miss *one* exam and that will be your dropped score. You may miss a *second* exam with a valid excuse and take a makeup exam. All makeup exams will be given in the final week of class (April 23-29, 2024). It is your responsibility to schedule the make-up exam with me! The exam will cover the same material as the original but will be an oral exam scheduled in a classroom. More than two missed exams will result in scores of 0 for those exams.

- **Final Exam:** On Tuesday, April 30, 2024, the final exam will be given from 12:00 noon to 1:40 PM. The exam will be comprehensive—covering all material we covered in the fifteen weeks. **All students are expected to attend the final exam on Tuesday, April 30, 2024, from 12:00 noon to 1:40 PM.**
- **Exams are individual efforts. Any proof of cheating on an exam results in a score of 0 on that exam, and that score will not be dropped. Cheating includes both receiving and giving help. Cheating also includes invalid absences for exams.**

Notes:

1. You are responsible for your own attendance. If you miss a class, you are responsible for reviewing the material in the textbook or online (there are lots of good lecture videos on YouTube) and getting notes from a classmate.
2. It is **required** that you have a TI-83 or better graphing calculator for this class. You may not use cell phones or any other connected devices as calculators on exams. I will allow you to use any calculator on most exams, so it is to your advantage to purchase one. I have a TI-83, TI-86 and a TI-89 and have access to other models such as the TI-84, and TI-92. I **strongly** encourage you to invest in a TI. **Note:** I have had other students in the past buy the cheaper models and they were disappointed when they saw how easy the TI's were to use. Please consider this in your choice. It is up to you to purchase a calculator and to practice using it.
3. Doing homework is vitally important in any course you take! Especially in math, it is important to do homework every day. Homework includes reading the textbook and doing the problems in the chapter text, doing assigned problems, attending help sessions and student hours, and participating in a study group. I expect a **minimum of six (6) hours per week in homework**—the “2 for 1” rule—you put in at least two hours of study for every one hour of class per week. Note that this is a minimum time—you may need to put in significantly more time into this class to be as successful as you want to be! Please remember that I have 10 Student Hours a week in which I can help you in person or on Zoom. The Academic Success Center (ASC) in Bisdorf (AA) 229 also has tutoring. You can find their information at <https://blogs.nvcc.edu/asc/>.

4. Special Needs and Accommodations. Please address with me any special problems or needs at the beginning of the semester. If you are seeking accommodations based on a disability, you must provide a disability data sheet, which can be obtained from the counselor for special needs, (703) 845-6301.
5. Please see the “NOVA Policies” link on CANVAS for more information from the college on topics like Academic Integrity, Withdrawal Policies, and Wellness and Mental Health.

CLASS SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPICS	TEXT	ALEKS Due Date
1/16	Introduction and Functions and Relations	1.3	Complete Initial Knowledge Check
1/18	Functions and Relations	1.3	1/23
1/23	Transformations of Graphs	1.6	1/30
1/25	Transformations of Graphs	1.6	1/30
1/30	Analyzing Graphs of Functions & Piecewise-Defined Functions	1.7	2/1
2/1	Algebra of Functions & Function Compositions	1.8	2/6
2/6	Quadratic Functions & Applications	2.1	2/8
2/8	Review for Exam #1		Unit 1 Last Chance Due 2/13
2/13	Exam #1 (1.3, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 2.1)		
2/15	Introduction to Polynomial Functions	2.2	2/20
2/20	Division of Polynomials & The Remainder & Factor Theorems	2.3	2/22
2/22	Zeros of Polynomials	2.4	2/27
2/27	Rational Functions	2.5	3/2
2/29	Polynomial & Rational Inequalities	2.6	3/5
3/5	Review for Exam #2		Unit 2 Last Chance Due 3/7
3/7	Exam #2 (2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6)		
3/19	Inverse Functions	3.1	3/21
3/21	Exponential Functions	3.2	3/26
3/26	Logarithmic Functions	3.3	3/28
3/28	Properties of Logarithms	3.4	4/2
4/2	Exponential & Logarithmic Equations & Applications	3.5	4/4
4/4	Modeling with Exponential & Logarithmic Functions	3.6	4/9
4/9	Review for Exam #3		Unit 3 Last Chance Due 4/11
4/11	Exam #3 (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6)		
4/16	Systems of Linear Equations in Two Variables & Partial Fraction Decomposition	8.1 & 8.3	ALEKS 8.1 due 4/18 ALEKS 8.3 due 4/20
4/18	Systems of Linear Equations in Three Variables	8.2	4/23
4/23	Solving a Systems of Linear Equations Using Matrices & Inconsistent Systems & Dependent Equations	9.1 & 9.2	4/25
4/25	Review for Final Exam		
4/30	FINAL EXAM 12:00 noon to 1:40 PM		

NOTE: ALL INFORMATION IN THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE!