Two Ways of Understanding

There are two ways to look at this class. See What Students Say Of Schremmer http://www.freemathtexts.org/CCP/CCPSupport/WhatStudentsSayOfSchremmer.pdf

• The students who just want to get the credit tries to memorize how to get the answers to the questions on the exam. But then,
  – How do you know you are using the right procedure for the question?
  – How do you know you remember the procedure correctly?
  – What do you do when the question does not look the same as the one for which you have memorized the procedure?

  Moreover
  – As you go on, it’s not just that there is more to memorize, it gets harder to memorize.
  – Memorization does not last so you wind up being ill-prepared in the next course.

  Sooner or later, these students realize that memorization does not really work.
• The students who want to learn mathematics tries to figure out Why . . ., Why . . ., Why . . . a given question demands a certain procedure
and **why** this procedure does the job. It looks like more work but:
- It is really a good *investment* as later you will always be able to reconstruct what you need on the basis of just sheer common sense.
- So, it gets rid of “math anxiety”.
- The more you go, the more connections you find that tie things together, the easier it is to see **why** what’s going is going.
- It will help you deal with other courses, even outside of mathematics. Eventually these students realize that this really works.

**Example 1.** A standard problem in Basic Algebra is to solve an affine equation. Now while there is a formula, \( \frac{-b}{a} \), on a exam you may suddenly not be quite sure you remember this formula correctly and then there is the issue that the formula might not be the right one. But equations do not come out of the clear blue sky. And, in fact, once you really see what is going on, you will always be able to recreate the formula from scratch and **for sure**.

**What This Means In Practice**

In order to take this class successfully, you must:
- **Never take anything for granted or as going without saying.** You should never accept a statement as **true** on just somebody’s say-so. Only after a convincing case has been made, by you, by me, or by anybody else, should you accept it as **true**. This is exactly like in court where an attorney cannot just say “My client is innocent” and leave it at that. Lawyers and mathematicians alike, as well as you and I and everybody else, we all must make our case.
- **Always be ready to explain the meaning of the words you are using** because, before we can agree on whether what it is that is being said is **true** or **false**, we will first need to agree on **what** it is that is being said. Again just like in court, we won’t be able to say “You know what I mean” because the only safe answer to that is “No”.
- **Be aware that understanding takes time.** In fact, I believe that the Scheduling Office has the following rule-of-thumb: Each "credit hour" of class generates 2050 minutes of work (I do not know where this number comes from but I think it is an industry standard assumption). So for 3 credits that’s 6,150 minutes which means that for each of the 16 chapters of the book, you should count on spending an average of **about 6 1/2 hours to study a chapter**.

The general idea is not to leave any “grey area” in your mind because it is from grey areas that “math anxiety” arises. You will **know** you are right when you have **convinced** yourself, that is when you have made a case that
STUDY THE TEXTBOOK AND ASK, ASK, ASK

you are willing to defend against others.

Study the Textbook and ASK, ASK, ASK

1. In order not to waste your time by me lecturing (writing the course on the board) and you taking notes, I have taken the notes for you and written my lectures into a TEXTBOOK, Reasonable Decimal Arithmetic. You can download it one chapter at a time for free from http://www.freemathtexts.org/CCP/016/materials.php. There is also a commercial text, FNMT 016 Arithmetic, by Bittinger and Penna, available from the Bookstore for $$$.

2. You will have to study each chapter before class. (See the Calendar at http://www.freemathtexts.org/CCP/016/016Support/016HW-ReviewExamCalendar.pdf). That way, you will be able to use the time saved by your not having to take notes by asking and discussing questions about the chapter. So, it is absolutely and totally necessary that you should get a printed copy of the TEXTBOOK to bring in class because you will have to make annotations, access the INDEX and, in general, go back and forth among chapters. More precisely,

• You must read each sentence—starting with the very first one, ask yourself what sense the sentence makes to you and then write down, however briefly, what makes you think that it is TRUE ... or FALSE.

• If the sentence does not make sense to you, you should make sure you know the meaning of every word in that sentence and if you don’t know the meaning of a word, you should look up the word in the INDEX at the end of the book to find out where in the book the word is explained.

• If you are still having trouble with the sentence, you should write down the question that you will ask during the next class. This is what mathematicians call reading pencil in hand. By the way, you should not use any “electronics” to help you because they do not really help you.

3. Hopefully, another student will answer your question but in any case that’s where I come in: I will be discussing the question and help you figure out what the problem is. However, everybody is different and so, first, you will have to help me pin down what it is you are having trouble with. Your questions will have to be reasonably precise because I cannot give a precise answer to a vague question.

Example 2. If you tell me “I can’t do this math”, what can I possibly tell you? On the other hand, if you ask “Why is the sign right here a −?” we have a precise question
that we can work on.
By the way, I am quite aware that, at first, this is probably going to be the hardest thing for you to do because your are not used to it. So what I will do is to help you pin down whatever the issue is . . . by asking you questions.

4. Of course, if you would rather not wait until the next class, email me at aschremmerCCP@gmx.com. (Please absolutely do not use my CCP email address NOR CANVAS.)
Don’t copy the whole text with which you are having trouble, instead just tell me where it is and get to the point.

**EXAMPLE 3.** Say you have a question about **EXAMPLE 42 in Chapter 5** or **Homework 3, Question 5** or **Review II, Question 12**. Once you have written “In Chapter 5, Example 42” or “In Hw3-5” or “in RvII-12”, just say what your question is, for instance “Why do we have to change the ⊖ to an ⊕?”

5. Should all else fail, we will make an appointment to deal with the difficulty you are having. My office hours are by appointment only on:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
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<td>11:20-1:00</td>
<td>11:20-1:00</td>
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</table>

and we will meet in the **Central Learning Lab, Room B1-28**.

Whether answering your question by email or by appointment, I will spend whatever time is necessary to resolve the issue. Moreover, if needed, I will make every effort to make an appointment at a time other than the above ones.

6. You should make every effort not to fall behind in your study of the chapters. This is because the stuff in every chapter is based on what came before, not just in the chapter before but also in any preceding chapters. So, the in-class discussions of stuff in the current chapter will surely involve stuff that was already discussed previously.
If you are **absent**, you will have missed your main opportunity for asking the questions you surely need to ask in order to help your understanding of the chapter. What will then happen is that you will have a lot of trouble with what will come later because the later stuff will depend on stuff that was discussed while you were absent.
Similarly, if you are **late**, and the question you then ask is about something that was already discussed before you came in, I cannot stop the entire class to discuss your question because we need to discuss the questions which have not yet been raised.
In order to help you be on time, each class will begin with a very short **Quiz** during which I will take attendance. Please note the following:
PREPARING FOR THE EXAMS

I will hand out the Quiz at 8:00 and you will have only a very few minutes to take it.

The Quiz will consist of two questions and, if you get them both right, you will get 1 Bonus Point for the Quiz. The Bonus Points will be added to your Final Total Score. See below the section How About The Grade?

If you come in class after I have handed out the Quiz, whether during the time the rest of the class is taking the Quiz or any time after, you will have to come to the desk for me to record the number of minutes you are being late. If you don’t come to the desk, I will count you late until I realize you are in the room—if I do. Please don’t take that chance, just come to the desk.

So, in taking attendance I will keep track of lateness as well as absences.

7. According to College Procedure #5, “students missing the equivalent of two weeks classes may be dropped”. In other words, you can miss up to the equivalent of two weeks of class without any excuse but you cannot afford to miss more than two weeks of class—even with an excuse. See [http://www.ccpx.edu/college-catalog/college-policies-and-procedures/registration-and-enrollment#Attendance](http://www.ccpx.edu/college-catalog/college-policies-and-procedures/registration-and-enrollment#Attendance). Accidents do happen and I will try to help you make up for that but the point is that you cannot “compress time” and that the brain wants the time.

Preparing for the EXAMS

1. Doing the homework that comes with each of the 16 chapters in the textbook is your first “reality check” on your understanding of the chapter:
   i. After you have read the chapter “pencil in hand”, download the corresponding HOMEWORK from [http://www.freemathtexts.org/CCP/016/materials.php](http://www.freemathtexts.org/CCP/016/materials.php)
   ii. For each question in the homework, find the place in the chapter where the question is dealt with and re-read as you deal with the question.
   iii. For the homework really to be a “reality check”, you must explain in the provided space the case for your answer. Your answer, right or wrong, will not affect your final grade either way because we all need to make mistakes in order to learn from our mistakes.
   iv. After you have come to an answer for which you can make a case, check which of the multiple-choices corresponds to your answer. If none of the choices a, b, c, d does, there is always choice e (None of the preceding). Do not work back from the choices as you cannot learn anything from that. The
response grid is just for me to get a picture of how you did with the chapter.

2. If you have not explained your answers, I will mark your homework NoX (“No eXplanation”) because your lack of explanations prevents me from helping you figure out what went wrong in case you made a mistake. On the other hand, you can ask questions on the HOMEWORK itself, right there along with your explanation. Just put on the first page a ? next to the question in the response grid to alert me that you have a question there. I will respond right there 1.

3. I will accept late homework but, again, keep in mind that, since the homework is for you to check your understanding of what you studied in the chapter, and since each chapter is necessary for the understanding of the next chapters, you should try to do both the reading and the homework in time. Also, if you are not happy with what you did on a homework, you can always download and print another copy of the homework, re-do it to learn from your previous mistakes and re-submit it and I will look at it.

4. I will keep a record of which Homework you did not submit as well as of any NoX because neither is serious studying.

5. To get an idea of what the EXAMS will look like and to prepare for them, you should first download and study the REVIEW QUESTIONS from http://freemathtexts.org/CCP/016/materials.php and then download and study the REVIEW DISCUSSIONS. Finally, do the same with the EXAMS on the website and my solutions for these exams. These are EXAMS that were given in previous semesters.

6. After we have dealt with the chapters in each Part, I, II or III, and before you take the EXAM, you will take a REVIEW TEST which has the exact same questions as the REVIEW QUESTIONS and the REVIEW DISCUSSION but with multiple-choices for me to give you an immediate feedback. Of course, the results on the REVIEW TESTS will be purely for your information and will not count towards your final score.

How About The Grade?

I want your final grade to reflect as well as possible what you have learned in this course. As a result, I will not include any points for attendance, submitting homework, asking questions, being nice, etc. (But I will add the bonus points for perfect quizzes.)

EXAMPLE 4. Dr. Nice passed all his courses in medical school with the help of points he had been given for attendance, submitting homework, asking questions, being nice, 1 My handwriting is terrible but I will try my best.
etc. Would you like Dr. Nice to operate on your heart?

1. For each of the three Parts of the course, the class after the REVIEW TEST there will be the EXAM that counts towards your final grade. *No electronics, no written documentation*, nothing but blank paper on which to record your *explanations*. Not taking the EXAM gets you 0 for that Part.

2. On the last two days of class, you will be able to *make-up* your score(s) on *any and/or all* of the three EXAMS with the understanding that your MAKEUP score(s) will automatically *replace* your EXAM score(s) and this *for the better or for the worse*.

3. Your *Final Total Score* will then be the sum of:

i. Your *Total Score On The Three Parts*, either from the EXAMS or from the MAKEUPS if you took it/them. Each score is out of 100 points for a total of 300 possible points.

ii. Your score on the *Departmental Common Exam* given by the Foundational Mathematics Department which is out of 100 points. (No MakeUp.)

iii. The sum of your *Bonus Points* (Necessarily, at most 16 points!)

4. Your *Final Grade* will then be determined by your *Final Total Score* out of 400 possible points from the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Total Score within:</th>
<th>Final Average within</th>
<th>Final Grade</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[0, 200)</td>
<td>[0, 50)</td>
<td>F (Fail)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[200, 240)</td>
<td>[50, 60)</td>
<td>MP (Making Progress)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[240, 400)</td>
<td>[60, 100)</td>
<td>P (Pass)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**NOTE.** Since you need a total of 240 to Pass, if for instance your *Total Score On The Three Parts* is 210 and you have 9 *Bonus Points*, you need only 21 points on the *Departmental Common Exam* to Pass.

5. You *must* take the *Departmental Common Exam*. Otherwise, no matter what your *Total Score On The Three Parts* is and how many *Bonus Points* you may have, the *department* will automatically give you an *F*. I will post the date of the Departmental Common Exam on [http://freemathtexts.org/CCP/016/announcements.php](http://freemathtexts.org/CCP/016/announcements.php) as soon as it is set by the School.