

Math 2270 Response to Feedback #1

September 15, 2015

Thank you to everyone who gave me some insight into how the course is going for you! I will try to act on as many of your suggestions as I can. Please feel free to give me feedback at any time about what is and isn't working for you. I've responded to some common concerns below.

1 Lecture

- “The lectures are too technical.” I am already trying to minimize the number of technical details discussed in lecture. Unfortunately, the book is rather technical, and I am trying to make the lectures at least somewhat compatible to the material and terminology in the book.
- “Don't waste time on unimportant topics.” While I don't want to waste time rambling about tangential topics (such as whether infinity could be used as an entry in a matrix), they can be fun and a nice diversion from the regular material. I also want to encourage questions of all sorts. But I will try not to get too carried away.
- “Please do more examples.” I wish I had more time for examples, but lecture already feels short to me. I am trying to emphasize the concepts! Please look at the book's examples and practice problems and come to the problem sessions if you want to see carefully worked book problems.

2 Homework

- “Please provide homework solutions.” I would like to, but I just don't have the time. Try to come to the problem sessions if you want to see carefully worked solutions. You could also try investing in the study guide that accompanies the textbook, but I have no idea how good the study guide is.

3 Textbook

- “I don't have the 5th edition yet; is it okay to use the 4th edition?” Yes, the content of the sections is almost identical, but be warned that the exercises I recommend are

for the 5th edition and the quiz questions will be based on 5th edition exercises. So if you want to use the 4th edition, you should check the recommended problems with someone who has the 5th edition.

- “The textbook is hard to read.” I agree, the textbook is formal, technical, and a bit dry, which is not to everyone’s taste. I hope my lectures are easier to understand.

4 Tests and Quizzes

- “Please give us more time on tests!” I will try to make the next test shorter.
- “The first test was too conceptual and contained questions that we didn’t see in lecture or in the homework.” My apologies, I think I went a bit overboard with the conceptual questions. I had a hard time writing computational questions other than solving linear systems. The next test should be better because we’ll have covered more material. But I did warn you at the start of the course that the concepts are extremely important, and I do try to include a few hard questions to give you the chance to show you have obtained a deeper understanding of the concepts.
- “The quizzes are much easier than the tests!” I don’t want the quizzes to be too stressful, and I think it makes sense to ask questions that are similar to homework problems to give you an incentive to work on the recommended problems.
- “Please provide a study guide for the tests.” Great idea! I will provide an outline of the most important things to know for each upcoming test.

5 Other

- “I’m having trouble with the language and terminology of the course.” Unfortunately, precise language is incredibly important in more advanced and conceptual mathematics courses. Try to get used to the terminology and feel free to ask me for clarifications!