

**Math 2600-02: Linear Algebra**  
MWF 2:10–3:00pm in SC 1117  
Fall 2015

Instructor: Spencer Dowdall

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**Office Hours:**  
Mon 3:00–4:30  
Wed 10:30–12:00  
and by appointment

## Course Information

**Description:** Linear algebra is an important bridge to more advanced topics in mathematics; it also has widespread applications to the physical and social sciences, engineering, economics, data science and many other fields. Topics to be covered include: vectors spaces, bases, linear transformations, matrices, row operations, determinants, systems of linear equations, eigenvalues and eigenvectors, inner product spaces, and orthonormal bases.

Math 2600 also serves an important role in Vanderbilt's curriculum in that it provides many students their first introduction to abstract and theoretical mathematics. The course will involve rigorous proofs of theorems, and students will be required to understand and reproduce proofs; assignments and tests will emphasize both proof writing and computational problem solving. For these reasons, Math 2600 is considered to be a very challenging course. Students should be prepared to invest considerable amounts of time and energy (e.g., 4–6 hours/week) in understanding the material and doing the homework.

**Text:** *Linear Algebra, 4th edition* by Stephen Friedberg, Arnold Insel, and Lawrence Spence. We will cover most of chapters 1 through 6. **Reading the textbook** is essential for understanding the material.

**Course webpage:** [www.math.vanderbilt.edu/~dowdalsd/Fa2015math2600/](http://www.math.vanderbilt.edu/~dowdalsd/Fa2015math2600/)

View the webpage for course information (including this document), current announcements, instructor information, homework assignments, and the current schedule of topics. Grades for completed assignments will be available in Blackboard.

**Grading:** Final grades will be computed according to the following breakdown:  
Homework & Quizzes–25%, Midterms–17% each, Final Exam–24%.

**Homework:** Homework assignments will be given in class and posted to the course webpage. Assignments will generally be due at the beginning of class on Wednesdays — **late homework will NOT be accepted** without prior approval. Your **lowest homework score will be dropped**. Solutions should be *neat, legible, and stapled*. You are encouraged to work together in groups and discuss homework problems with other students, but your *solutions must be written up independently and in your own words*. Copying answers from another student or source, or allowing your answers to be copied, will be considered a violation of the Honor Code.

**Quizzes:** There will be occasional in-class quizzes designed to check basic understanding of the material. These will occur during the first 5–10 minutes of class, so it is important that you arrive on time. Your **lowest quiz score will be dropped**.

**Midterm Exams:** There will be three in-class exams on: Friday **September 18**, Wednesday **October 14**, and Friday **November 13**.

**Final Exam:** There will be a comprehensive final exam at 9:00am on **Thursday December 17**, as designated by the university registrar (see <http://registrar.vanderbilt.edu/calendar/exams/>).

**Make-up policy:** There will be no make-up exams or quizzes. It is your responsibility to arrange your schedule to be able to take the exams at the scheduled times. Absences from exams or quizzes due to illness or other extraordinary circumstances must be adequately documented. Furthermore, except in genuine emergencies, a student must notify me of their absence in advance.

**Attendance:** Attendance is very important for this class, as it will help you better understand the material. I strongly encourage you to actively participate by asking questions and engaging in class discussion. I also encourage you to read the text in advance as this will allow lectures to be more interactive and focused on the topics you find most challenging.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and are responsible for all announcements, assignments, and material covered in class. Consult the daily schedule on the course webpage for the list of sections to be covered. See Vanderbilt's 'Class Attendance' policy in the Undergraduate Catalog.

**Technology Policy:** Do not use cell phones or computers in class. It is distracting. You may not use calculators or any other electronic devices for tests or quizzes.

While I do not recommend you rely on computers, you may use calculators or advanced computer programs to guide your way or check answers in homework problems. However, your solution needs to be self-contained and must demonstrate an understanding of what's going on. And remember that on exams you will have to work without computational aids.

**Accommodations:** If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services Department ([www.vanderbilt.edu/ead/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/ead/)). They will determine with you what accommodations are appropriate and communicate them to the instructor. This service is confidential.

**Honor Code:** Vanderbilt's Honor Code governs all work in this class. All work submitted for credit must be the student's own and should reflect the student's own understanding of the material.