NSM 12F  Peer-Assisted Learning (for Math 31)

Faculty contact and Instructor of Record:  Dr. Corey Shanbrom,  corey.shanbrom@csus.edu
Section Leader: your PAL facilitator

TEXTS:  Assigned study sheets        COURSE FORMAT:  Discussion, two hours per week

COURSE DESCRIPTION:  NSM 12F is designed to give students the opportunity to participate in reflective, conceptual problem solving within the field of calculus. Conducted under the direct supervision of a trained student (PAL facilitator), PALs use problem sets designed by the Coordinating Professor in your regular class. Concurrent enrollment in that class is required, as problem sets will correspond to information presented there. Students will be evaluated on the basis of attendance & participation in problem-solving exercises. Credit/No Credit; 1 unit

PAL FACILITATORS will provide support to students as they work through problems and may facilitate their success by modeling effective approaches to problems. NOTE: PAL facilitators are students, not teachers, so they should not be expected to lead a class as an instructor might.

WHY TAKE A PAL?  Peer-Assisted Learning is a highly effective strategy that is used by dozens of universities around the country. Students who engage in PAL sessions build confidence and experience solving tough problems that will enable them to succeed in the discipline. The highly supportive structure of the small group makes all students feel welcome.

EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated based on attendance and participation.

1. Attendance:  Regular attendance is essential for students to reap the benefits of the problem-solving sessions. Very late arrival may be interpreted as an absence. This will be determined by the session leader and will be defined as the student missing a significant amount of the day’s material. Students who have 4 or more unexcused absences during the course of the semester will earn a grade of “NC” in the course. If you have a verifiable emergency (illness, etc.), inform your PAL facilitator as soon as possible. Students who leave class for an extended period of time, or for the rest of the class after roll, will be counted as absent unless they have a legitimate excuse.

2. Participation:  Students are expected to be reasonably prepared for the problem-solving sessions, which includes (at minimum) completion of appropriate assignments for the regular lecture course. Students are further expected to put forth a sincere effort in working through the problems, and to work cooperatively with other students during the sessions. Students may be counted as absent if they consistently do not participate in the sessions.

3. Preparation:  Students are expected to come to the PAL session with the necessary concepts and knowledge of the material for that week, whether in their heads or in their notes. This is required because team-based learning works best with a higher amount of input from teammates. PAL is intended to facilitate a deeper understanding, but not to lead in instruction. Students are expected to keep a notebook/binder/folder containing relevant notes and information for their Math 31 class. Every two weeks, the PAL facilitator will inspect the students’ notes and check for depth and consistency. If students fail to bring an appropriate set of notes during inspection, then this will be counted as an absence. However, students
may absolve the absence for that day if PAL facilitators notice great effort in working with their group.

4. **Groups:** Students are expected to work in teams to solve problems and arrive at deeper understanding. PAL facilitators may change the teams at any time.

**STUDENT CONDUCT**

Students enrolled are expected to arrive at all sessions on time and to remain for the full period. Students are expected to behave in an appropriate manner during all class activities, and to respect the opinions of other students within group situations.

**Cell phone use is not permitted during PAL sessions for any reason.** If you have a legitimate emergency, please inform your PAL facilitator BEFORE the session begins, and then step out into the hall to use your phone.