

Putnam Exam Seminar

Instructor: Dr. Ryan C. Daileda
Office: Marrs McLean Science Building (MMS), Room 115H
e-mail: rdaileda@trinity.edu
Telephone: (210) 999-8265
URL: <http://www.trinity.edu/rdaileda>

Scheduled Lectures: MW 3:30 PM - 4:20 PM, Marrs McLean Science Building (MMS), Room 110

Office Hours: Consult the course web site.

Course URL: <http://www.trinity.edu/rdaileda/putnam>

Prerequisites: None.

Course Content: This course will focus on mathematical problem solving skills, specifically those skills necessary for the annual William Lowell Putnam Exam Competition (for further information on the exam consult the course web site). We will not only emphasize techniques for solving various types of problems, but also how to carefully communicate solutions to others. The material we cover will be wide-ranging, thought-provoking, and hopefully a little bit fun, too.

Homework: Homework will be assigned at the end of each week and will consist of one or two problems designed to prepare you for the following Monday's discussion. Each Monday students will be asked to present their solutions (partial or complete) to the rest of the class. The point of these presentations is to allow you to explain your insight into the assigned problems and to get feedback on how well you've been able to communicate your solutions.

Quizzes: There will be a quiz in class every Wednesday. The purpose of these quizzes is to give you some idea of what to expect on the Putnam Exam. You will be exposed to a variety of problems and will be graded on the quality (as well as the mathematical content) of your writing.

Attendance: Roll will not be taken in class, but excessive absences should be explained to me. In addition, you are expected to attend both sessions of the Putnam Exam, which will be held on a Saturday in early December. Failure to attend the exam without prior consent of the instructor will result in a grade of F.

Grades: Your overall score in the course will be based upon your scores on the homework, quizzes, and attendance at the Putnam Exam, broken down as follows.

Homework	20%
Quizzes	20%
Putnam Exam Attendance	60%

Your letter grade will be determined by your overall percentage as well as by how well the class performs overall, i.e. *there will be a grading curve*. All homework assignments and quizzes will count equally toward their respective components of your grade, however your lowest quiz score will be dropped.

Expectations: I expect each student to do their best and maintain a positive attitude throughout the semester. In order to prepare you for the level of difficulty of the Putnam Exam many of the

problems we will see will be quite challenging. This should not be seen as some sort of academic punishment, but rather as a chance to hone your problem solving skills.

Academic Integrity: All students are covered by the Trinity University Honor Code that prohibits dishonesty in academic work. Under the Honor Code, a faculty member will (or a student may) report an alleged violation to the Academic Honor Council. It is the task of the Council to investigate, adjudicate, and assign a punishment within certain guidelines if a violation has been verified.

Students who are under the Honor Code are required to pledge all written work that is submitted for a grade: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance on this work” and their signature. The pledge may be abbreviated “pledged” with a signature.

The specifics of the Honor Code, its underlying philosophy, and the norms for sanctioning can all be found on the Academic Honor Council website, accessed through the Trinity Homepage:

http://www.trinity.edu/departments/academic_affairs/honor_code/

Special Needs: If you have a documented disability and will need accommodations in this class, please speak with me privately early in the semester so I may be prepared to meet your needs. If you have not already registered with Disability Services for Students, contact the office at 999-7411. You must be registered with DSS before I can provide accommodations.