

MATH 109 WINTER 2007: HOMEWORK POLICY

In this class I expect you to abide by the usual university-wide principles of academic honesty. In addition, here are my own policies which I expect you to follow.

1. The homework you hand in should be your own written work, and your own only. It is not acceptable to copy word for word, or paraphrase, the work of another student in the class, or a solution found (say) on the internet. Especially as we get to harder proofs in this class, there are many different ways of approaching a problem and of writing out a solution, and everyone will tend to come up with something rather different. Thus it is usually quite apparent to us when one solution has been copied (even paraphrased) from another.

2. You may work with others in the class (talking over math with others can be a big aid to learning), but under the following conditions. At the beginning of the process you should start on your own. First, you should read the problems yourself and think about how to solve them. Solve as many as you can by yourself. Some others you may be stuck on. Wait a while, you will probably have additional insights the next day (this is one reason it is important to start the homework early). If you are still stuck on some of them, ask the professor, the TA, or your friends in the class (if they have figured it out) for *hints* as to how to proceed. Hopefully after more thought you will see how to solve it. Finally, once you are sure you completely understand the problem, write up the solution in your own words.

3. Here is another form of collaboration which is allowed. If you and a friend are both stuck on a problem, you can discuss the problem, make sure you understand it what it is asking, sketch out some possible approaches and explore them together. But if you come up with a solution together, you then must write up the solutions individually later by yourself. And remember that come exam time you will be on your own to solve problems, so it is still best to begin by solving as many problems on the homework as possible on your own.

4. Note that reading through a friend's entire solution or a solution on the internet and then writing your own is not allowed. You are likely to end up writing a paraphrase of the other solution and not really understand the proof.

5. Finally, use your common sense. If what you are doing seems like cheating, it probably is. If after handing in your homework you cannot reproduce one of the proofs you submitted without looking at what you wrote, you probably didn't understand it well enough.