

ECON 1078-002 MATHEMATICAL TOOLS FOR ECONOMISTS 1

University of Colorado Boulder
Department of Economics
Spring 2026

Instructor:	Danielle Parks	Time:	MWF 11:15 AM – 12:05 PM
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The course syllabus, handouts, supplementary materials, and homework assignments will be posted on Canvas. Please check the course webpage frequently as I will be updating it with materials and assignments.

Course Description: This is a one-semester course on mathematical tools that are frequently used by economists. In this course, things will build up gradually. Topics covered in this course include basic college-level algebra, simple linear and nonlinear equations, functions and their graphs, systems of equations, set theory, summation, logic and proofs. With the introduction of the necessary content above, the course aims to cement a solid foundation for your future economics and business courses.

Main References:

- Knut Sydsaeter, Peter Hammond, and Arne Strom, *Essential Mathematics for Economic Analysis*, 6th Edition. (required)
(you may use an alternative edition - just make sure to match up the relevant chapters).

Objectives: This course is primarily designed for students to study the relationship between economic theory and basic mathematics, and to provide an overview of the following content:

- Linear functions: Including slopes, the general equation for a straight line, slope-intercept form, graphing, linear inequalities, and linear models.
- Quadratic functions and how they can apply to economic models (e.g. a simple monopoly model).
- Polynomials: Includes factoring polynomials, division, and rational functions (these skills are often employed in Econ 3070).
- Exponential and logarithmic functions used extensively in intermediate economics courses (e.g. when presenting positive, monotonic transformations).
- Important function properties and techniques: Including products and quotients, shifting functions, and composite functions.

Grading Policies:

Attendance	10%
Assignments	20%
Midterm 1	15% or 20%*
Midterm 2	15% or 20%*
Canvas Quizzes	10%
Final Exam	25%

*Weights for midterm 1 and midterm 2 will depend on your midterm scores. The midterm with your lowest score will be weighted 15% and the midterm with your highest score will be weighted 20%.

Letter Grade Distribution:

A	94.00-100
A-	90.00-93.99
B+	87.00-89.99
B	83.00-86.99
B-	80.00-82.99
C+	77.00-79.99
C	73.00-76.99
C-	70.00-72.99
D+	67.00-69.99
D	63.00-66.99
D-	60.00-62.99
F	0.00-59.99

A curve may be applied to the overall course grade to conform to departmental standards. Other than that, I will not grant any request to increase your grade to meet a certain cutoff. You will receive the grade that you earned throughout the course. If you are concerned about your grade(s) you should immediately come talk to me. I will do everything I can to help you be successful in this course.

Course Policies:**• General:**

- Please be respectful and courteous to your classmates as well as myself. In an effort to promote the best environment for learning, I ask that you come to class prepared, engage with the material and coursework, and ask questions as needed to facilitate you and your classmates learning.
- You are welcome to contact me before/after class, in office hours, or via email. Please allow up to 24 hours for an email response during the week and up to 48 hours over the weekend.
- Note that if you have questions about your grade, I will likely ask you to look in Canvas or come to office hours due to FERPA guidelines.

• Lectures:

- I ask that you attend class as that will be the main vehicle for instruction. Class will consist primarily of lectures on course material, followed by problem solving practice.
- Please be courteous and refrain from creating distractions during class. This includes silencing and putting away your phone, using any other non-calculator electronic devices only for the purpose of note-taking, and waiting to discuss things outside of the scope of the class until after the lecture.
- You will receive an attendance grade for being present in class. You will be giving up to two absences that do not hurt your attendance grade. After that, further misses will come out of your attendance grade. If there is some protracted or significant unexpected cause for absences, please let me know so that I can consider it in your attendance grade.
- I will post the slides on Canvas for reference. We will also do practice problems to guide you through how to apply the topics. It is your responsibility to go over and learn any material that you miss in class - and I cannot promise that everything I say or do in class will appear in the posted slides online. I am always happy to answer your questions about any material.

- **Homework:**

- There will be four graded homework assignments. I will announce the due dates for these in class. You may work in a group, however please be sure to clearly note all group members on your submission.
- I will randomly choose two assignments to be graded on accuracy. The other two assignments will be a completion grade.
- Assignment can be turned in up to one day late. The grade penalty is 10 percent. I will not accept any homework assignments past one day late.

- **Canvas Quizzes:**

- Quizzes will be on Canvas. I will not give any make-up quizzes. However, your lowest quiz will be dropped.

- **Exams:**

- All exams (midterms and final) will be in-person. Please do not be late for any of those - no additional time will be given. The dates for the examinations are as follows:

Midterm 1 - Friday, Feb 20

Midterm 2 - Monday, April 13

Final - Tuesday, April 28 (1:30 pm - 4:00 pm)

- I will not give any make-up exams. If you need to take an exam early, please let me know at least two weeks in advance. In the case that you have to miss any of the midterms because of a family or medical emergency, and only if you provide documentation to justify that absence, the weight for the corresponding midterm will be added to the final exam. In all other cases, a missed exam will result in a grade of zero for that exam.
- The final exam cannot be missed under any circumstances. During all the exams (midterms and final), the use of calculators will not be allowed. All calculations will be simple enough to do without one. You will need something to write with (pen or pencil) for your exams. If you have 3 or more finals on the same day, you can arrange to take the last final at an alternate time. Should an emergency arise, please notify me as soon as possible so that we can make accommodations.

University Policies:

- **Classroom Behavior:** Students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote, or online. Failure to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation, or political philosophy.

For more information, see the [classroom behavior policy](#), the [Student Code of Conduct](#), and the [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#).

- **Requirements for Infectious Diseases** Members of the CU Boulder community and visitors to campus must follow university, department, and building health and safety requirements and all public health orders to reduce the risk of spreading infectious diseases.

The CU Boulder campus is currently mask optional. However, if masks are again required in classrooms, students who fail to adhere to masking requirements will be asked to leave class. Students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred

to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution. Students who require accommodation because a disability prevents them from fulfilling safety measures related to infectious disease will be asked to follow the steps in the “Accommodation for Disabilities” statement on this syllabus.

For those who feel ill and think you might have COVID-19 or if you have tested positive for COVID-19, please stay home and follow the [further guidance of the Public Health Office](#). For those who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms and have not tested positive for COVID-19, you do not need to stay home.

- **Accommodation for Disabilities, Temporary Medical Conditions, and Medical Isolation:** [Disability Services](#) determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so your needs can be addressed. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or required medical isolation for which you require accommodation, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the Disability Services website.
- **Preferred Student Names and Pronouns:** CU Boulder recognizes that students’ legal information doesn’t always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors’ class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student’s legal name.
- **Honor Code:** All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [Honor Code](#). Violations of the Honor Code may include but are not limited to: plagiarism (including use of paper writing services or technology [such as essay bots]), cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution: honor@colorado.edu, 303-492-5550. Students found responsible for violating the [Honor Code](#) will be assigned resolution outcomes from the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution as well as be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Visit [Honor Code](#) for more information on the academic integrity policy.
- **Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation:** CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, protected-class discrimination and harassment, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. These behaviors harm individuals and our community. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these policies, and individuals who believe they have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](#), and support resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).
Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when they are made aware of any issues related to these policies regardless of when or where they occurred to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about their rights, support resources, and resolution options. To learn more about reporting and support options for a variety of concerns, visit [Don’t Ignore It](#).
- **Religious Holidays:** Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. If you have a conflict, please make arrangements with me no later than the first week of the semester.
See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.