APM120 advice/FAQ

- HW-00 reviews material you need to master as a prerequisite, to give you a clear idea of whether you can take the course. It is necessarily long, but is not meant to deter you from taking the course, and the next HW will be shorter. Student advice: "*so please, for the love of Larry Bacow, start it early*" and come for help!
- The course notes are provided as a non-downloadable DropBox link to a continuously updated version for clarity/correctness/consistence with the lectures. Please report any mistakes/unclear explanations!
- Hand calculations on HW: we believe the best way to understand big-data methods is to do explicit calculations with small data sets. HW calculations may use Matlab/Python unless hand calculations are **explicitly** required. If you are unsure what is allowed & that this may affect your HW grade—come seek help.
- Hand calculations on quizzes and the final: are similar to HW problems that explicitly require hand calculations.
- The APM120 section format—weekly HW help sessions—assist you to understand the material and solve HW problems. Come to these and to the multiple office hours for a direct interaction with TFs & other students.
- Course grading: Grades are not curved, and we are interested in the success of all students. Class averages or standing relative to others, are irrelevant. The distribution of past course grades indicates that the vast majority of students do very well, but that still requires consistent hard work.
- Quiz and final questions follow closely those given in HW to minimize any uncertainty/stress. If you drop any HW assignments, be sure you can still solve these questions which may appear in the midterms or final.

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- Coding: students taking APM120 have a wide range of coding experiences. If you are experienced, you may learn more by writing your own codes. Otherwise, use the starter codes in *Sources folder,* attempting to understand the code rather than use it blindly. Coding may initially be frustrating—come seek help!
- Lecture speed: similarly, students come to this course with a wide range of math preparations. We ask for your feedback a couple of weeks into the semester and adjust as needed. If you find the lectures going too slow, use the extra credit HW problems to challenge yourself; if the lectures are challenging, please come to office hours for help. We strive for a good course experience for all students regardless of their preparation level.
- Feedback on your HW and quiz work: course assignments are graded/returned *promptly*. See Gradescope rubrics for an explanation of what you may have missed, and come to office hours for further help.
- Review problems with detailed solutions (link on Canvas, distinct from previous quizzes and final) provide a useful way to learn and practice the material.
- Practice exams are on Canvas. The provided solutions allow you to verify your answers; they do not contain all steps & are not meant to teach you how to solve the problems. For that, see course notes & review problems.
- Final exam vs. a final project: while a final project would have allowed students to get deeper into one or two of the methods covered in the course, it does not provide the overall review that the quizzes and final exam do. The two monthly quizzes allow you to review the material and reduce the study load at the end of the term.