

# MAT 420: Putnam Seminar

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Jeff Heath, Olin Hall 116, [jeffrey.heath@centre.edu](mailto:jeffrey.heath@centre.edu), (859) 238-5407

**CLASS:** Th. 12:40 – 2:10 p.m. in Olin 108

**OFFICE HOURS:** Please do not hesitate to stop by my office and ask questions!

My office hours this fall are:

M,W,Th,F: 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Tu: 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Also, I can frequently be found in my office 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except when teaching. Feel free to stop by my office anytime.

**TEXT:** There is no required text for this course; instead, we will rely primarily on handouts.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The Putnam Exam is a notoriously challenging annual mathematical competition. This is a course on problem-solving focusing on Putnam-style problems. Students learn strategies for tackling such problems and become familiar with the style by working out problems from past Putnam exams, discussions, and presentations to the group. The semester culminates in taking the Putnam exam.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. To improve your problem-solving skills.
2. To be acquainted with math problems that take longer than 10 minutes to solve.
3. To be able to effectively communicate mathematical ideas both written and orally.

**CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:** Students are expected to be present at every class meeting. Attendance will be taken at each class. Missing class due to a college-sponsored activity, illness, or family emergency is excused, but please contact me prior to the missed class to make arrangements for submitting work. Students are expected to be actively engaged in every class, regularly demonstrating their problem-solving techniques at the board.

**HOMEWORK:** Students are expected to submit solutions to the Centre Math Problem Solving Competition, which consists of one problem every other week. Solutions are due on Thursdays at noon. Group work is not allowed. Submitting correct solutions is not a requirement to do well in this course; however, it is necessary that students submit solutions that demonstrate evidence that they have put forth full effort on the problems.

**EXAM DATES:** Students are required to participate in the following two math competitions, on the dates specified, at a location TBA on campus.

Virginia Tech Regional Math Contest; Sat., Oct. 24; 9:00 – 11:30am

Putnam Exam; Sat., Dec. 5; 10:00 – 1:00pm, 3:00 – 6:00pm

**GRADING COMPOSITION:**

Putnam Exam Participation                      25%

VT Math Contest Participation	25%
Class Participation	25%
Homework	25%

**LETTER GRADE ASSIGNMENTS:** Your final average will be rounded off to the nearest integer, and then the following letter grades will be assigned.

A	90 – 100	D	60 – 69
B	80 – 89	U	<= 59
C	70 – 79		

**CLASSROOM DECORUM:** Students are asked to exhibit classroom behavior that is respectful of others in the classroom and not disruptive. Please do your best to arrive on time, and be certain that all cell phones are on silent and put away.

**STUDENT DISABILITIES:** Students with physical impairments and/or learning disabilities will sometimes need accommodations to help them have an equal opportunity to learn. It is the student's responsibility to seek these accommodations, if necessary. To do so, please contact the Assistant Dean for Advising, Dr. Mary Gulley, in the Office of Academic Affairs.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** You are responsible for following the academic honesty policy as set forth in the Centre College Student Handbook. As previously mentioned, collaboration on homework assignments is perfectly acceptable; however, all work on quizzes and exams should be your own.