College Algebra Choices

1. What are the offerings?

The math department is offering two flavors of college algebra for the fall.

- Traditional College Algebra is the same course we have been running for years. It is taught with two lectures and one recitation a week. It requires a graphing calculator.

- Studio College Algebra is a newer version. It covers slightly less material and is targeted at students preparing for STAT 325 or MATH 205. It is taught with one lecture, one studio, and one recitation each week. The studios take place in a computer lab where students will work in pairs and use spreadsheets to apply algebra techniques to situations often involving real data. While there is significant work on spreadsheets, this version doesn't require a graphing calculator.

Contact Andrew Bennett (bennett@math.ksu.edu, 2-0562) or Rekha Natarajan (rekha@math.ksu.edu, 2-3023) if you have questions about the content or pedagogy of the different versions.

2. Which students should be in which versions?

Both versions meet exactly the same prerequisites. While the studio version doesn't cover all the techniques of the traditional version, the studio version can be used as a prerequisite for the engineering calculus sequence. However, different students will probably have better experiences in different versions.

Students may have a better experience with the traditional version if

- They are planning to take courses such as MATH 150 or MATH 220 where greater facility with detailed algebraic techniques is required.
- They dislike working in pairs and would rather work on their own.
- They just want to turn in their homework and take tests.
- They don't want to have a significant amount of time spent working in a computer lab.
- They want to focus more on technique and less on applications.

Students may have a better experience with the studio version if

- They are first semester freshmen.
- They are planning on taking MATH 205 or STAT 325 as their last quantitative course.
- They prefer more work on concepts to techniques and want to see how algebraic ideas are applied.

- They prefer to talk through material with others and are willing to work through new material, rather than expecting everything explained in formal lectures.

To reiterate, these are recommendations for where a student may have a better experience, but there is no requirement that any student take a specific version. Taking a year off from mathematics significantly reduces the chances of a student being successful in any version of college algebra. In most cases, it is more important that freshmen be signed up for some version of college algebra than which version they take.

3. How do I tell which sections are which?

Fortunately, the iSIS system does include a comment for each recitation which determines if the recitation is a studio section or a traditional section. This comment is viewable when you click on details under the course search screen and look at the section titled class notes. Some other clues for which sections of Math 100 are which version:

To enroll in the **traditional version**, a student needs to enroll in a recitation with a one letter code from A – Z. These recitations meet one day a week, either on Monday or Friday. They also need to sign up for a traditional lecture, which meets Tuesdays and Thursdays. The traditional lectures have codes 01L, 02L, and 03L. A student may sign up for any of these lectures. Finally, the student will also need to enroll in the traditional quiz section, 01Q, which meets on Tuesdays at 7:05pm. All components of the traditional version are directly linked to the traditional recitation such that a student only needs to pick the recitation they want. The other components will be auto enrolled or the student will be prompted if there are any choices in components such as lectures.

To enroll in the **studio version**, a student needs to enroll in a recitation with a two letter code beginning with the letter "A," so AA – AN. Each recitation is paired with a studio, that unfortunately is called a "Lab" in iSIS, whose code is a two-digit number followed by a B, so 01B – 14B. The paired studios and recitations take place at the same time, with the recitation on Monday or Tuesday, and the studio on Thursday or Friday. The studio lectures take place on Wednesday afternoons and are sections 04L and 05L. A student may enroll in either lecture. The student also needs to enroll in the studio quiz section, 02Q, which meets on Tuesdays at 7:05pm. All components of the studio version are directly linked to the studio recitation such that a student only needs to pick the recitation they want. The other components will be auto enrolled or the student will be prompted if there are any choices in components such as lectures.

A complete listing of all sections of math courses with comments on the nature of each section is available in iSIS.