Pasadena City College
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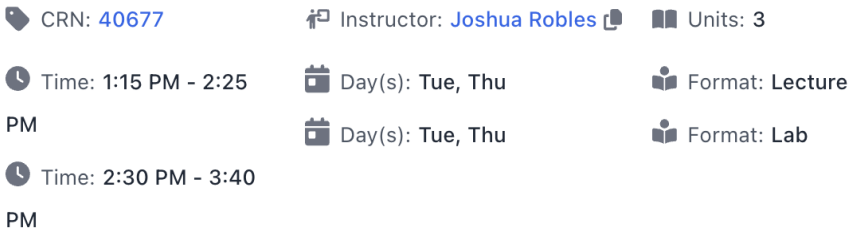
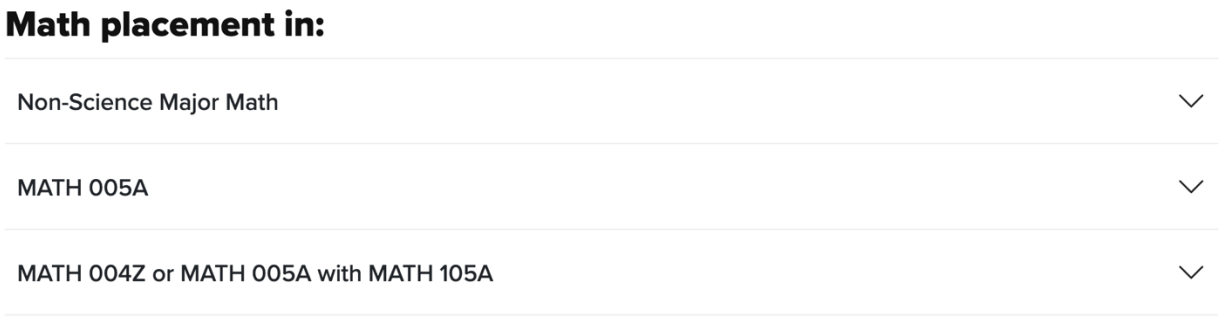
COURSE NAME: MATH 004Z - GET READY FOR CALCULUS

UNITS: 3 Lecture Units (54 hours) + 1 Lab Unit (54 hours), 108 total contact hours. This was increased for Fall 2026. Currently the class is 90 total contact hours. The 1 lab unit is transferrable.

REGISTRATION: Students register for a single course. The schedule shows a lecture and lab but they register with a single CRN.



PLACEMENT: Students respond to a self placement survey during online orientation. Students who have passed Precalculus in High School are excluded from Math 4Z but can take Calculus with support. Starting in Fall 2026 we will have two levels of support for Calculus 1 and 2,



SCHEDULE: We have a few different scheduling options.

- 2 days a week. The lab meets the same day.
- 4 days a week MTuThF.
- 4 days a week MTuWTh.

TEXTBOOK: Most instructors are using OpenStax College Algebra and OpenStax Precalculus. Some are using traditional paper homework from the textbooks and others are using MyOpenMath.

COURSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: The lab course does not have its own Canvas shell.

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GRADING: We have a variety of grading schemes. Below is my personal system.

Students earn two grades, one for Homework and one for "assessements". I take the minimum of these grades as their overall grade. This is a simplified form of a mastery/specifications grading.

Each grade is out of the same number of points: A = 1200 points, B = 1050 points, C = 900 points, D = 700 points.

Homework: There are many points available (2500+). This grading category does not rely on percentages. Students earn homework points by the following methods.

1. Online MyOpenMath. 1 point per problem.
2. A "journal" solution for 1 problem per section. Detailed annotations are required in addition to a short survey. 25 points per journal.
3. A video solution for the same problem from above. Posted to a discussion board. 50 points per video.

Assessments: 1400 assessment points available.

1. 2 small exams X 100 points each = 200 points
2. 3 large exams X 200 points each = 600 points
3. 10 quizzes X 20 points each = 200 points
4. Final exam 200 points = 200 points
5. Group application project = 200 points

Example Grade:
Student: Josh

- Homework Points = 1100 points
  - B grade
- Assessment Points = 1250 points (89.2%)
  - A Grade
- Overall grade = B

Actual syllabus link.

ACTIVE LEARNING: All classes are scheduled in rooms that contain 360 whiteboards and desks that are easily rearranged.

For my classes we spend at least 1 hour a week doing problems at the board. I mainly use randomly assigned groups. Occasionally students work on a worksheet or activity instead. Here is an example for trig. Lastly, I occasionally have students complete a homework assignment in class. Most often, this is done at the end of the day. All of my classes have an embedded tutor. We assist students with their homework until the end of class time.

GROWTH MINDSET: Students are allowed to retake each quiz twice and each exam once encouraging the concept of growth mindset. Students must meet with me to review the exam before taking it.

I do not otherwise have students discuss growth mindset but, students do complete a "homework journal" frequently. The journal is an assignment that requires students to write a quality solution to a homework problem. In addition to the solution, students complete a short survey about their preparedness on this topic, pictured below.

2) The problem is asking me to find a _____
(number, expression, equation, function, graph, interval, other)

3) **Big Idea**. In one clear sentence, describe the main method or concept needed to solve this problem.

_____
_____
_____

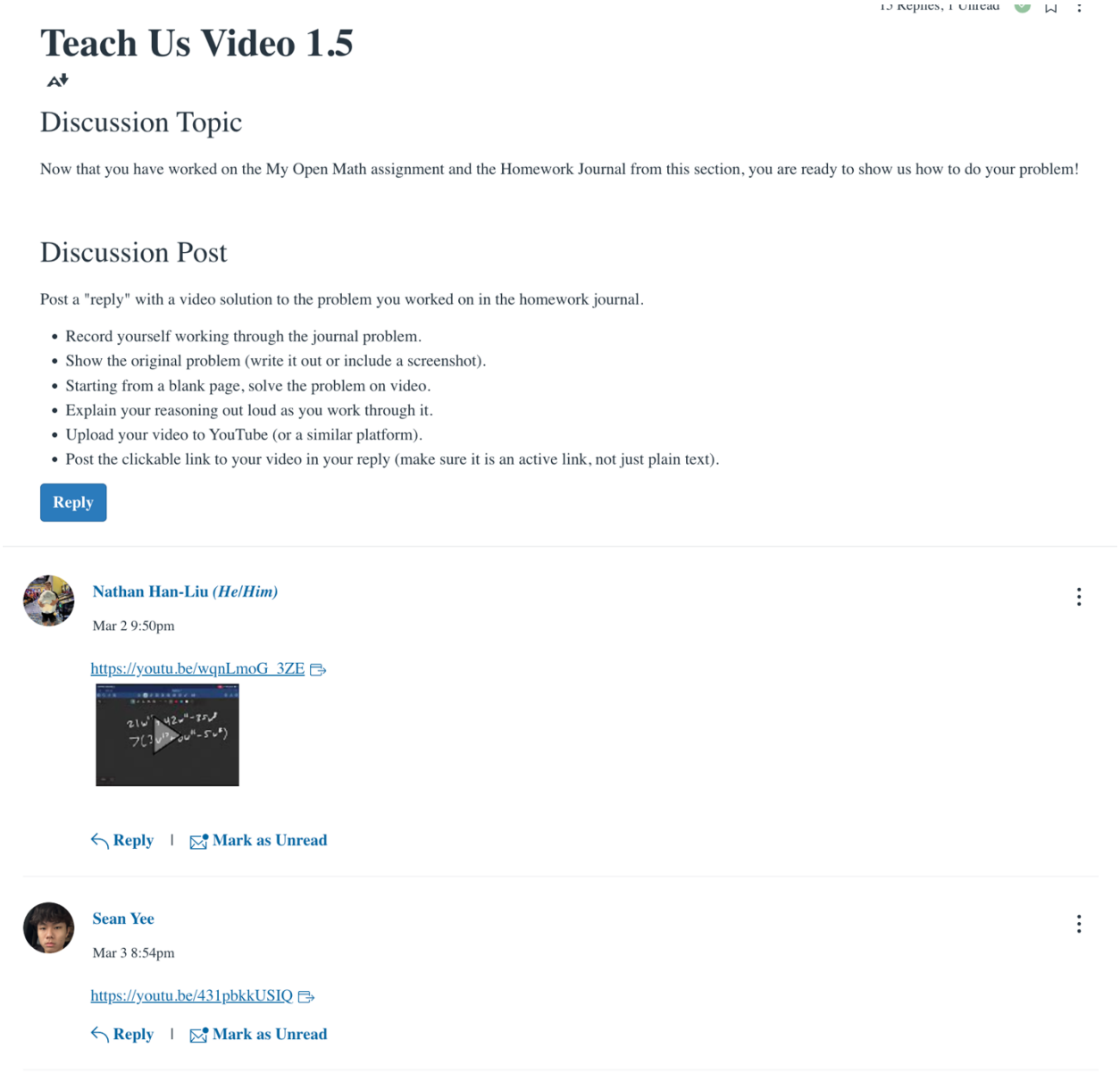
4) **Reflection**:
   a) Did you use any resources to help with the problem? If so, which?

_____
_____
_____

   b) How ready are you to be assessed? ____ (1-5). What would increase that?

_____
_____
_____

EXAMPLE ASSIGNMENT: This is the video assignment mentioned above in homework area. Students make a short video explaining the same problem they did in the journal. This is posted to a group discussion board.



OTHER COURSE ELEMENTS: Since our course is not a requirement to enter Calculus 1, we remind students of the Pass/No Pass option. We have seen anecdotal success of this being useful to retain students longer and have them move on Calculus sooner.