Math 421 Homework Rules and Guidelines

To get full credit on your homework, your solutions should be neatly written, well organized, and contain all relevant details. In particular, please follow all guidelines listed below.

Formatting guidelines:

- The homework you turn in should be a "final draft." Do scratchwork on a separate piece of paper, rather than on the paper you plan to turn in.
- Write only on the front side of each sheet of paper. (This makes grading a large number of assignments considerably easier.)
- Leave plenty of room between problems, and do not try to squeeze too many problems on a single sheet of paper. Generally no more than two problems per page is a good guideline to follow – usually one problem per page is even better unless the problems are very short.
- Your solutions/proofs should be organized into paragraphs containing complete sentences (rather than writing your solution as a big block of text and symbols). Use the proofs in the course text as a guide for how to organize and format your proofs.
- Staple together the pages of your homework in the upper left hand corner.

Content guidelines:

- Assume that you are writing your proofs/solutions for someone who doesn't already know the answer. In particular:
 - Don't skip steps, except for in very straightforward computations.
 - If a step in a proof uses one of the given hypotheses, you should say so explicitly (i.e. "...since we assume that f is continuous..." or "...since g is a nonnegative function...", etc.).
 - If you are referencing a theorem from the textbook, you should explicitly note/verify that the hypotheses of the theorem are satisfied. Also, give a specific reference to the theorem being used (i.e. write "...by Theorem x.xx..." or "by the Mean Value Theorem," rather than "...by a theorem...").
- Proofs that contain long strings of computations/equations/inequalities should contain English phrases/sentences that justify your computations and that explain what your computations/equations/inequalities are proving.
- Make sure that any mathematical/logical symbols you use are being used precisely and correctly.
- Related to the previous point, excessive use of symbols and abbreviations should be avoided. While the use of some symbols and abbreviations is acceptable, they are generally best reserved for situations where time is limited (i.e. lectures, note-taking, and exams). Use the course textbook as a guide for when the use of symbols is appropriate in a proof.
- Discussion of the assignments with your classmates is encouraged, but final write-ups should be done individually.
- List on your homework any person or source (other than the course instructor or course textbook) that you consulted during the completion of the assignment.