

EXAM II RESULTS
Fall Term 2010

Instructor: Professor Karen E. Smith

Total possible points: 100

High Score: 100

Low Score: 8

Median score: 75 (means half got 75 or above; half 75 or below).

Half the class (16 students) had scores in the range 74–90. (With the 295 curve, these can all be considered sure A's).

Here are some honest grades to help you assess typical math department upper level math course grading policies. College grading policies are **very different** than high school, and vary by department and even within departments by program.

A+ range: 96 and up (two students in this range)

A range: 81–95 (eleven students in this range)

A- range: 71–80 (five students in this range)

B+ range: 58–70 (six students in this range)

B range: 51–57 (one student in this range)

B- range: 45–50 (three students in this range)

C range: 35–44 (two student in this range)

NOT PASSING: (three students)

HOWEVER, as announced, the departmental 295 policy curves these grades to an A- to A+ scale. Anyone who got 88 or above can translate that to a likely A+ grade. Anyone who got at least 70 points on this exam can translate that to a likely A final grade (assuming continued success), with the people in the high sixties also likely A's, depending on the other test scores, homework, comments in class, etc. Students with scores in the fifties and sixties somewhat on A-/A the border—many of these will be eventual A's and are students who may want to continue in Math 296 depending on level of interest, commitment, etc.

Anyone with scores of 50 or below can translate that to a likely A-, and seriously consider signing up for Math 186, 217, 215 or some other course. Let's talk. Of course, scores can be low for all sorts of reasons, and everyone's case is different. Also, if you ace the final, all previous test scores are moot. However, I can not recommend continuing in 296 for the group of students I consider "not passing" this exam. The grades above are perhaps typical of what to expect in 296.

Note: Non-honors lower level math courses (105, 115, 116, 215, 216, etc) typically have a B- median.

My own personal opinion was that the test was quite fair: there were plenty of problems for decent students to be able to show themselves, and one problem which really let the very best students show themselves. On the whole, I was *very impressed* with the large group of students scoring 74 or higher. These students have shown tremendous improvement and are now writing sophisticated proofs, showing serious potential for becoming excellent mathematicians and users of mathematics. There were several students with lower scores who also impressed me by how far they've come, and whose scores (in my opinion) do not fully represent their potential.

As for the grading scale on this test: I was stingy with the A's and A+s. If this were actually a final exam (say for 296), it is likely that the A+ range would have been set at 88 and up, and the A range starting at 74. Similarly, the A- and B+ ranges may have been more lenient as well. However, the grades assigned to 50 and below would stay firm. Students in this range really need to demonstrate better mastery to qualify for any higher grade.

List of all scores: 100, 96, 90, 89, 89, 87, 86, 86, 85, 84, 83, 82, 81, 79, 76, 75, 75, 74, 68, 62, 61, 60, 59, 59, 56, 50, 50, 46, 36, 36, 16, 15, 8