

WELCOME SURVEY #30

What questions or other comments do you have for Jeff?

Questions about the structure of this class

**Venezia:** Thank you for being understanding when I told you that I am taking this class in Indonesia, and also other students who are taking this class in their home country! I really appreciate that (:

Also, I saw in the calendar that we will be having a quiz every class (in class). Is it possible to take it outside class with timed quiz on canvas, other platforms, or other ways?

**Jeff's Response:**

You are so welcome! Let's find a way to help you thrive. I so respect your strength and dedication to your own learning. You make me want to work harder and be a better person : I mean you are staying up all night so you can learn! Keep it up. Please ask me about your quiz question during class.

**Max:** 1. How much time should be spent on this class every week? What is MATLAB used for outside of this class?

**Jeff's Response:**

Question 1 is a deep question. I have a blog post about this entitled [Schedule to Succeed: Plan to Fudge it up](#). On my [Conquering College website](#), I have some old materials on the subject of how much time you might want to spend learning. Check out the Study Skills Activity 1: Create Your Weekly Schedule documents to learn more about how I used to think about this. Click on the [Study Skills Activity 1 Playlist](#) and take a look at Videos [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), and [7A](#). I should note that I have grown and changed a lot since I created those videos. I no longer think the same way I did when I made those (it's been 5 years...). In any case, I'd love to speak with you about your schedule and think together about your question about how much time you might want to spend.

Can you clarify your second question? I'm not clear about what you mean.

**Sri:** Would it be possible to suggest a couple of engineering or applied math problems for Matlab?

**Jeff's Response:**

Yes! For sure. But I want to learn more about what you mean. Can we chat about this item? Can I ask you to ask this question during class. You might copy and paste the following except into the group chat:

@Jeff: On my intake survey, I asked the following question: Would it be possible to suggest a couple of engineering or applied math problems for Matlab?" In your response to that question, you asked to have a conversation about this. Can we talk about this as a group please?

**Conner:** How often will we rely on group work in this class?

**Jeff's Response:**

Every day we meet during group space. If I do my job well, I hope you also connect with your classmates outside of class. In fact, I would say that my goal is to create an entire learning environment that focuses on group work. This document you are reading right now comes from Group work, doesn't it? I also want us to help each other on the comment section in YouTube. I want you all to see just how much wisdom each of you has and to share that not only with this class but with future generations of my students.

I also hope that you all feel comfortable sharing ideas, helping each other work, and producing the best possible learning (and documentation) you can. You can read more about my attitudes toward group work in our [contract grading document](#). To summarize a key point:

*We can work together? (see page 1)*

Yes. Learning is a social activity. Actually, it's a psychological event, but it occurs in a social context. Consult with others, construct your own understanding, submit your own work, and give credit to the people who helped you. Cite the scholars and sources you found helpful. That's academic integrity.

When you submit work, I hope that your work represents the concept images that you have constructed in your mind.

I just realized I need to update my syllabus.

Connor: Will you please ask me about concept images during class to remind me of this item? Specifically, you can drop the following text into the group chat during our next meeting:

“@Jeff: On my intake survey, I asked a question about how often we will work in groups in this class. In your response, you said that you want our work to represent our concept images. Then you said you need to update our syllabus. Can you clarify what is going on with your comments please?”

Suggestions to improve our learning environment

**Kuma:** I am wondering if students that are not in the US timezone could be in a group? Cuz I am one of them maybe we could collaborate with it (seems like +- 1 hour for the ones spoken in the lecture, 1 to 3 am in the morning).

**Jeff's Response:**

This is a fantastic idea. Can you please mention this during our time in [group space](#) (during our time in class)?

Questions about Jeff (either my professional or personal life):

**Cindy:** How long have you been teaching this course and just teaching in general?

**Jeff's Response:**

I started my full-time job as an instructor at Foothill in September 2013 and have been teaching ever since. You can find a detailed overview of my teaching experience on my [past courses website](#). Read that page (be sure to scroll down as you read) and you'll find more information than you probably care to know about the classes I've taught at Foothill.

In terms of my experience teaching math, I started teaching in college math classes in September 2008 when I began my PhD program at UC Davis. I was a Teaching Assistant and Graduate Student Instructor at UC Davis to help fund my PhD program. It was during those early years that (Sept 2008 – June 2013) I started my career as a college math instructor.

**Noe:** Did you always want to become a professor or something else for a career?

**Jeff's Response:**

Wow. This is such a deep question. You are not the first student who has asked me about this. In fact, one of my students named Mark Asmar (now a Foothill Alumni) interviewed me for a PodCast he was trying to start. I don't think he ever posted our interview on his PodCast. But I have been asked this question so many times over the years. After Mark recorded our interview, I had many more students ask me this question. Eventually, I reached out to Mark to ask him for the audio file....

I tell you that story to tell you this: if you want a detailed answer to that question, please listen to [Mark's PodCast interview](#). Warning: it's 121 minutes long. But, in that interview I share a lot about my history. I might encourage you to wait a little longer. Mark and I had worked together for 3 years by the time he requested this interview. If you want a shorter answer to your question, I'm happy to chat face to face. I will say that that PodCast episode is the most detailed discussion I've ever had with a single person on this subject. Leave it to my students to make me work hard by asking deep questions and thinking critically about the world.



**Jose:** What are the focus intervals you speak of?

**Jeff's Response:**

Can you clarify what you mean here? My guess is you are referring to my statement in my welcome email where I say:

PS. I am NOT available via email. I work in focused intervals and check my email at most once a day. I prefer to deal with almost all questions about our class in person. I love speaking with students face-to-face. I also promise to work hard to help you succeed. You will learn more about my style when we meet in class. If you'd like to get a hold of me, you can text me on my Google voice number at (650) 383-7194. Please include your name and the name of our class (Math 2B)

If so, you can learn a little more about my commitment to deep work in my [professional vision statement](#). There is also a great book on this subject called [Deep Work by Cal Newport](#).

As a side note, I have [a love affair with reading](#). I also love to talk with students about good books to read. Over the years, multiple generations of students have asked me to post my reading lists on my website. Last year, I finally acquiesced. On my website, you can find [a current draft of my reading list](#). Part of my goal of being a life-long learner is to constantly push myself to learn new ideas and grow my brain. Reading is a habit that helps me do this.

In terms of what I mean by focused intervals: I focus hard on challenging work for many hours at a time. During that time, I don't like to be interrupted by tasks that take my bandwidth but don't contribute to my long term vision for empowering my students. Email can do that. If you want to learn more about my feelings about email, please take a look at my [email policy](#) or my [email philosophy](#).

And for the record: over the last 8 years, I've drafted two textbooks, created 600 YouTube videos, started two blogs (a [learning blog](#) with two hard-working Foothill alumni and [a teaching blog](#)), created my [www.appliedlinearalgebra.com](http://www.appliedlinearalgebra.com) website, written [multiple academic articles](#) and spent hundreds (if not thousands) of hours talking with my students. All of this work is dedicated to my students. On a daily basis, I want to maximize the amount of work time I dedicate to my students, both present and future. This habit is my way of protecting my time and focusing on my students.

If you want to know more about my motivation in doing all this work, please read my motivations in [my professional vision statement](#).

I bet you didn't expect this type of answer. Sorry for the long response. But yours is a deep question and I want to give you an honest response. I can already tell that you are a strong man with an independent mind. I look forward to learning more about you. Perhaps you have some books you'd like to tell me about?

Positive feedback and suggestions for continued practice

**Elizabeth:** Thank you for close captioning of the videos, also breaking them into manageable bites. I also appreciate the clear enunciation!!!

**Jeff's Response:**

You are so welcome! I feel very strongly about creating learning environments with [universal design](#) in mind.

I have some very strong feelings about the idea of disabilities. The short of it is: I think it's bullshit that we use the word disabled to describe students. My students are all abled.

Perhaps we can say that my students are differently abled. But not one of my students is disabled. If anything, I am the disabled one. Every one of my students has unique learning needs. Sometimes my skills as a professor are completely insufficient to serve a student the way that student needs.

Please ask me about this. I have a ton to say on this subject! Know this: I believe every one of my students is fully able. You are enough. You are complete. You are unique. We will work as a team to help identify your unique strengths and also to help meet your learning needs where you are. Cheers to working as a team to empower your learning.

**Clarissa:** Thank you for being so welcoming and understanding. I am also signed up for your Linear Algebra class. I am really looking forward to working with you this quarter :)

**Jeff's Response:**

You are so welcome. I believe that all teachers have the capacity to be this understanding and I'll lead by example. Thank you so much for signing up for my classes.

Let's stay in frequent contact about your learning. My classes are intense and the fact that you are taking two of my classes in one quarter catches my attention. I value your health and well-being: these are most important. Let's work as a team to manage your learning and keep up with the material.

Maybe we can make an appointment in office hours to talk through this as a team?

**Shenye:** I'm looking forward to this kind of new and untraditional learning experience in this quarter!

**Jeff's Response:**

Me too. I'm very curious to hear what you think about this class.

**Param:** I'm excited for the quarter!

**Jeff's Response:**

Cheers. Me too! I think this is going to be really fun.

**Zaw Lin:** I definitely thought you would be much scarier(and stern) from reading your website and introduction files but, now that we had a meeting I realized that you are so much friendlier than what it seemed like.

**Jeff's Response:**

Oh no... You might have been reading some of my legacy documents. One of my favorite sayings is "[I suck today, but a little less than yesterday.](#)" When I was a younger teacher, I created syllabi that had harsh language. I was trying to care for my students but I didn't know what I was doing.

I have some questions for you:

- Have you read our [course syllabus this quarter](#)? I'm very curious to know what you think of the tone in our syllabus? Is it stern? Is it scary? What can I do to change that?
- What documents were you reading that made me seem scary and stern? I want to edit those immediately and update those to reflect the current state of my mind 😊.
- Will you please follow up with me about these questions? I really do want to hear your responses.

**Bryan:** I look forward to learning from you this quarter and experiencing the flipped classroom model!

**Jeff's Response:**

Me too. I am so excited. I've been working for 10 years to make this happen. I hope to earn your trust enough that you give me feedback about this class. I have a genuine curiosity about and interest in learning what works and what doesn't work for you. I listen carefully to your feedback and then I make changes based on what I learn.

**Arash (Sam):** love your style and friendly-ness so far. 10/10

**Jeff's Response:**

Thank you. I love your style too. Let's keep laughing together. Let's learn and grow as a team. I can already tell that you bring high energy to our class and you have so many gifts to share with us.

**Andy:** I like how you keep lecture interesting and not be a boring professor (keep cussing) it brings life to lecture

**Jeff's Response:**

Thanks for this. I will definitely [keep cussing](#). It's not for everyone but this is part of who I am. I grew up in a blue collar family. I learned that sometimes "fuck" is more appropriate than "fudge." The former has raw emotion. The latter has a filter, at least for me. One thing I want to do as a teacher is to celebrate my students as you are. I want you to feel comfortable being yourself. I owe it to you to lead by example. So... hell yeah I'll keep trying to make it fun and interesting.

**Sohee:** I always try my best to succeed and learn in every classes I take, and try to be engaged as much as I can. I also love to talk with professors after class, in their office hours, and ask questions regarding class materials that I failed to understand. Even though it's difficult for me to take this class in a different time zone, I'll still try my best to adjust my time and have a wonderful learning experience with you!! I can feel that you are a nice person, so I'm really looking forward learning MATLAB from you.

**Jeff's Response:**

Yay! You can do this. I think you're going to thrive in this class.

I love to talk with learnings as often as possible. I live for these dialogs. It's the greatest joy of my professional life. Let's find a time to meet. Please ask me to make an appointment and we'll find a time to connect.

No questions or comments yet

**Hyunji:** Nice to meet you!! no question for now :))

**Erick:** None!

**Chad:** None so far.

**Jiale:** Nothing now, it is the first time meeting. It may have some questions in the future.

**Brenna:** N/A at this time

**Yakir:** Not right now

**Eugenia:** N/A

**Mathew:** None

**Isabel:** None