

June 9, 2010

Hello!

I hope you have enjoyed your short break and that you are ready for the challenge of taking **Intermediate Algebra Math 263 Online**. I say challenge because students often under-estimate the amount of individual time and dedication it takes to successfully complete an online math class. I am looking forward to helping you conquer this challenge and also meeting you at the **mandatory** orientation scheduled for Sunday, June 13th from 2 - 4 pm in LTC 203/204.

If you have not already done so, please email me, at ebishop@mpc.edu, letting me know that you plan to take the class and that you will be at the orientation. The orientation provides important information about the course curriculum, assignments, exams, deadlines, grading policies, website, textbook, and how to get started with the course, plus this is the opportunity for you to meet your classmates and me face-to-face.

The **mandatory** “book” for this class is the student stand-alone version of MyMathLab that is a companion to *Intermediate Algebra for College Students*, 5th edition, by Robert Blitzer. **Do not open this packet until you are sure you will take the class!** This packet, which is actually an access code for the online text and student manual, can be purchased at the Monterey Peninsula College Bookstore. If you would like a copy of the text, a special MyMathLab edition of the text (spiral bound) can be purchased bundled with the access code for an additional cost. The spiral bound version of the text, and the softcover student solutions manual are **OPTIONAL**.

You can purchase the MyMathLab Packet at the bookstore (this just contains an access code printed on cardboard, and last time I looked, study tips) or you can purchase the access code directly through Course Compass. This is the cheapest option. Just go to www.coursecompass.com, and at the prompt enter our course ID which is **bishop76578**. Then just follow the directions to purchase the code.

Please note that the MyMathLab access code is not for resale—in other words, **it cannot be returned if opened nor can it be purchased used**. You also cannot use someone else’s access code, nor can you “transfer” yours to anyone else. If you decide to drop the class during the first two weeks of the semester, you may return your materials to the Monterey Peninsula College bookstore **unopened** to receive a refund. If your packet is opened you **cannot** get a refund. However, the access code is valid for 12 months from its initial use. This means that if you do not pass the course or you drop the course, you will **not** have to buy the MyMathLab packet again if you retake a course within this 12-month time period that uses MyMathLab.

To succeed in the course, you must:

- Have access to a reliable, **computer** with a good internet connection which is ready to use for the entire semester. Figure out all of your computer issues ASAP. The online product and companion website have been tested in and support the following operating system and browser combinations:

To work with CourseCompass, your computer must meet the following system requirements:

	Operating Systems	Browsers*
PC	Windows XP	Firefox 2.0 Internet Explorer, Version 6.0 Internet Explorer, Version 7.0 Netscape Navigator, Version 7.2
	Windows Vista	Firefox 2.0 Internet Explorer, Version 7.0
Mac	Macintosh OS 10.4	Firefox 2.0 Safari 2.0 Netscape Navigator, Version 7.2
	Macintosh OS 10.5	Safari 3.1

* If you have earlier versions of these browsers, you can download a newer version from the appropriate manufacturer's website:

- For Firefox, go to <http://www.getfirefox.com>.
- For Internet Explorer, go to <http://www.microsoft.com>.
- For Safari, go to <http://www.apple.com>.
- For Netscape Navigator, go to <http://browser.netscape.com>. (Netscape is no longer supported by AOL.)

AOL and AT&T Yahoo users: You cannot view CourseCompass using the AOL or AT&T Yahoo browsers. You can, however, use AOL or AT&T Yahoo as your Internet Service Provider to access the Internet, and then open one of the supported browsers within AOL or AT&T Yahoo to access CourseCompass.

Vista, Firefox, and Safari users: Although the platform on which CourseCompass is built (Blackboard 6.2.3.23) has not been certified by Blackboard for use with the Vista operating system and the Firefox and Safari browsers, a subset of CourseCompass features have been tested with and do support the configurations shown in the preceding table.

- Connection speed

CourseCompass requires an Internet connection with a minimum connection speed of 28.8 kbps (kilobits per second). The faster your connection, the faster you will be able to view this site and some of your course's content. If you are experiencing slow download times, you may need a faster connection

- Have a current **valid email account** that you plan to **check at least twice weekly**. This should be your own email account—not one that is shared with someone else. If you don't have one now, create one as soon as possible. There are many sites that offer free web-based email accounts: yahoo.com, hotmail.com, gmail.com, etc.
- Visit my website http://www.mpcfaculty.net/elizabeth_bishop/default.htm. Follow the link for Intermediate Algebra, Math 263 Online to view some information about this course, such as the syllabus and schedule.
- Have a **MyMathLab** packet. *Only open this packet if you are absolutely certain that you are taking this online course. You'll have a chance to view the product at the orientation before you open your packet. Hopefully, this will allow you to judge whether this online course is right for you, before you commit to not being able to return the product.*
- Register at the course website: www.coursecompass.com. You'll set up an account there – be sure to keep track of your login and password! You'll also need our course code: **bishop76578** and the access code you'll either find in your packet from the bookstore, or purchase directly through the website.

Successful online students have to be “ready to go” at the orientation. There is really no time to get prepared during that first week, since you have to cover a lot of math material, while also learning how to navigate through the course website and work with the online software. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me by phone at 831.646-4173 or by email at ebishop@mpc.edu.

See you soon!

Elizabeth