A Brief Guide for Writing Homework/Quiz Assignments and Exams

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TO BE ENFORCED IN COURSE ECH3301

NOTE: It will be a general policy that work which does not follow these guidelines will be returned without a grade.

Presenting mathematical ideas should be no different than any other subject. This may come as a surprise, because most calculation-oriented lower-level classes (algebra and calculus) rarely expect good presentation. This unfortunately reinforces bad habits that transfer to higher-level courses that require written explanations in addition to calculations.

The usual rules of good writing should apply, especially **neatness, clarity and organization**. A good example of mathematical writing can be found in many (but by no means all) textbooks. This is the style you should emulate for written assignments in this course.

Some specific considerations, in rough order of importance are:

(1) The most important rule: **brevity**. Answers should be as long as necessary to convey all significant details, and NO LONGER!

(2) Complete, grammatically correct sentences (yes, just like in other classes) are essential. Note that equations are parts of sentences and should be accompanied by text and proper punctuation.

(3) The writing should be large enough to be **legible – this means readable by the TA**, not by the writer. Problem numbers should be clear and numerical order should be preserved. **In cases where handwriting is too poor to be readable, assignments will have to be typeset by computer.**

(4) Organizing ideas is the most important part of writing. Large problems may require organization into paragraphs and even entire labeled sections.

(5) Graphs and drawings should be annotated (by hand if necessary), and a textual explanation should accompany. In the case where computer code is used, a copy of the code and graphical/numerical results should be included at the end. If many variations of the same code are used, only a basic template in necessary.