Computational Methods

Alberto Striedinger

If you want to take the computational method class with Dr. Kaw, take it when your semester is not that heavy so you can make the best of it. Do not panic right away because of the class name. The first chapters will require you to remember you programming skills, not so much for the variety of functions in MATLAB you remember but how you use them. The reason I tell you this is because I did not take any MATLAB course in the USF before, just a programming course back in my university in Colombia in Visual C ++. The code remains the same, but the syntaxes changes and it is easy to adjust. If for any reason you have doubt about a topic in class or outside class do not hesitate to go to his office or asking him during the class. He is very polite and friendly.

The mood in the class is great. He tells jokes and lets the student tell jokes as well and even if the jokes are bad, you will laugh. However, do not take his class lightly. You might become a very good friend of him but if you get low scores in the tests you will lose the class, I guarantee. I suggest you to look at the YouTube video-clips. He's got on the class web-page, these are very helpful because there are sometime in which you don't fully understand things or you just don't remember the class content. The video-clips explain each topic in a clear and concise manner and very easy to understand. Something that has worked for me is the following:

1. Go to class. Don't worry about taking note of everything; just catch those he remarks as very important, focus on how he solves the problems. When he explains solution methods pay much attention to the advantages and disadvantages of each solution method.
2. Watch the YouTube video-clips once or twice a week.
3. Before the test do the following:
    a. Read the chapter assigned for the test
    b. After reading each chapter, make a summary of it in your own stile
    c. Look at the end of chapter problems and DON'T SOLVE THEM RIGHT AWAY. First figure out what you need to do for the solution in each problem (step you need to follow to get to the solution), picture them in your mind, don't worry about numbers.
    d. Now after doing it with all the problems for each chapter, solve them.
    e. Finally watch the video about the chapter again.

Another hint I have to tell you is to practice MATLAB, he put a MATLAB review chapter in the web so you can take a look at it, and it is good. Dr. Kaw will make you write codes for some projects, when you are writing the codes be aware of explaining what you are doing, what the input and output data are and the assumption you are taking.