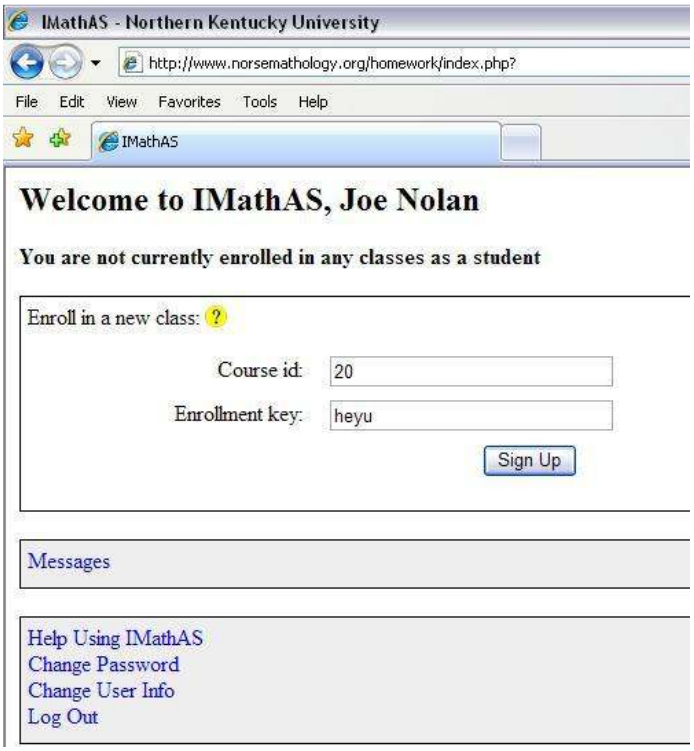
STA 205/212: GUIDELINES FOR USING IMathAS

Having a portion of the homework online allows for convenient, prompt, and continuous assessment of your progress ***toward understanding various calculations and interpretations of statistics.*** Like the Blackboard self-assessments, the components on IMathAS are only a part of the course. In fact we will not start using them until Module 3. In addition to allowing you a large number of attempts, you will find that helpful hints are given after missed questions and hopefully these aid you in learning to do the problems.

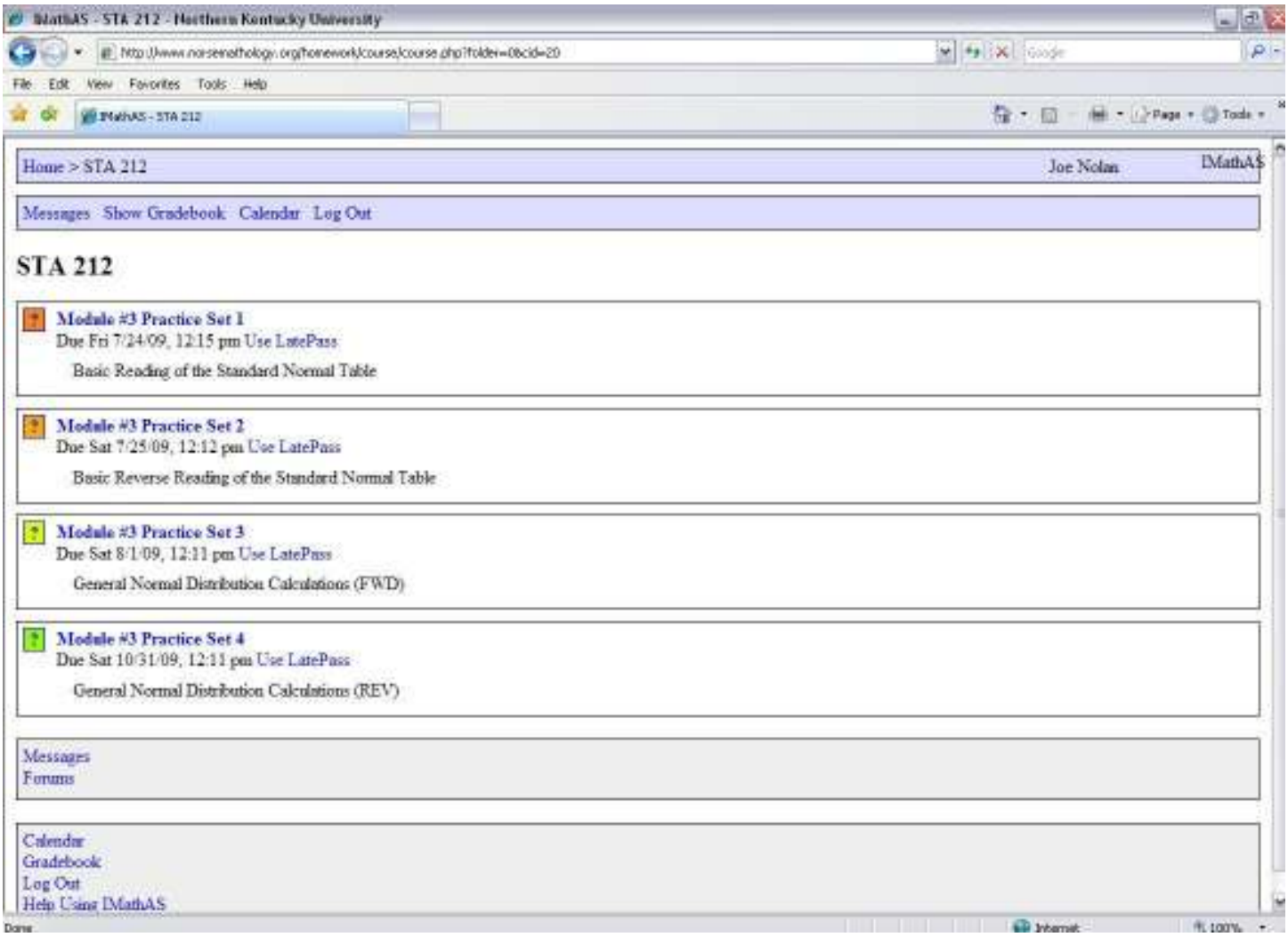
TO GET STARTED

You need to register in order to use IMathAS. As far as I am aware the program works with either Internet Explorer or Firefox. To get started, proceed to http://www.norsemathology.org/homework/. Normally you can log in from this page, however the first time you need to register via the following steps:

1. Click "Register as a New Student".
2. Choose a username/PW and fill in the rest of the form below (left). It is required to enter your name or I will be unable to match you to my grade-book. Then click "sign up".



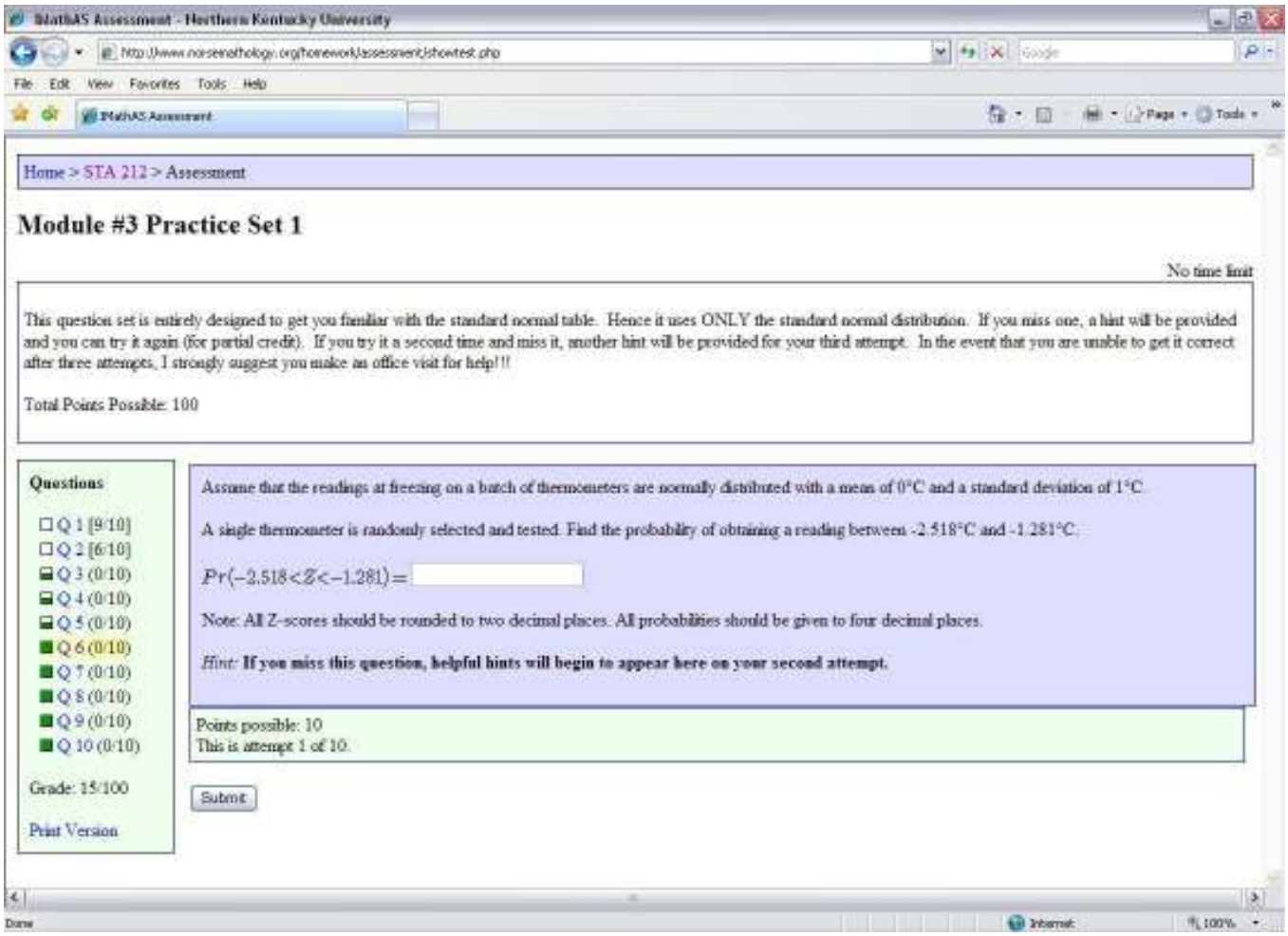
3. Click "Return to the login page" and login using your newly created credentials. You will be given a screen that allows you to enroll in a new class.
4. You should fill in "20" as the course ID and "heyu" as the Enrollment Key (see above, right). Then click "Sign Up". You will now see a page that lists the courses you are taking including STA 212. This page also has links to let you edit your user information and password if needed. It is the main page from which you will always start after logging in.
5. If you log in and click the link to the course (STA 212), you will see something similar to the graphic on page 2. Each available function is explained after the graphic.



Here is brief a description of each of the functions above (if you have further questions, please ask):

1. **Messages**: You can send me messages from this system, however **regular email is preferred** and is likely to be answered more quickly.
2. **Show Gradebook**: This will show you your scores ONLY for activities completed on IMathAS. It will not show you all of your official scores for the class. The scores from IMathAS will be scaled to 125 activity points at the end of the semester.
3. **Calendar**: Shows you the due-dates of upcoming online assignments.
4. **Log Out**: Logs you out of the system.
5. **Assignments / Color Coding**: Assignments that are red are due very soon. Assignments that are green have due-dates further in the future. Colors in between red and green indicate something about the closeness of the due-date. An "!" indicates information while a "?" indicates an assignment you need to complete.
6. **Use Late Pass**: Each student is allocated 3 late-passes. These must be used ***prior to the due-date of an assignment*** and their function is to extend that due date (for you only) by one day. Three such extensions should provide more than enough flexibility.
7. **Forums**: This function does not (and will not) work. Unfortunately I cannot remove it.
8. **Help Using IMathAS**: Provides things similar to what I've given you in this document.

When you get into an assignment, you will see something like the following graphic. Some useful hints for proceeding through the question sets follow.



Here are some hints for efficiently proceeding through the problem set:

1. You can select questions from the menu on the left. You can go back and forth between questions (after submitting answers or not). Correctly completed questions will show as white-boxes (and have scores). Previously attempted questions that are still incorrect will show as half-green / half-white. Unattempted questions will have a fully green box. **Note: You can also print a paper copy if you like and input answers later. Many students find this to be useful. To do this most effectively, click the "Print Version" link.**
2. Submitting the question will let you know immediately if you got the correct answer. For calculation problems, probabilities should generally be entered to 4 decimal places, percentages and Z-scores should be to 2 decimal places. Please follow instructions for rounding and/or presentation of answers.
3. This is a learning process – there will be times that you get a question incorrect. Clicking "Reattempt this question" will allow you to try **the same question** again (for less credit) and often with a hint to help you. **If these do not help enough, it may be time to visit your instructor!**
4. For questions that you miss, once you get them right you will have received less than full credit. You may still get full credit by clicking "**Try another similar question**". This will give you a new question (same scenario but different numbers) which you may attempt for full credit. **You may do this as many times as necessary – however if you are doing it more than once I strongly recommend an office visit!**
5. While there is an option to "click here to end and score the test now", you **never** need to use that. Questions will score automatically each time you submit them (and using this option before everything is complete removes an attempt and forces you to regenerate a question to receive full credit).
6. If you have questions, please stop by the office for a demonstration, or otherwise let me know!!!

SOME FEEDBACK-BASED SUGGESTIONS FOR GETTING THE MOST OUT OF IMATH

1. **Due Dates / Expectations:** There will always be an ample timeframe to complete an assignment once we have finished covering it in class. You should start them early – since you get unlimited attempts to get each problem correct, you have only yourself to blame if you do not get 50 out of 50 points on an assignment (and of course making sure you know how to do each problem will help you when it comes time for quizzes/exams). Please note: I have little sympathy for students who begin the assignment within 12 hours of the deadline (and yes, the computer does let me know when you start!). Generally speaking you are expected to spend 2-3 hours per class hour (which includes homework) in your studies outside of the class sessions.

2. **Print Versions:** Many students find that printing a copy of the homework (use the "Print Version" link) and doing it on paper is helpful. **Note that any time you ask a question in office hours or class, you should bring your work along so that I can identify any mistakes!**

3. **Computations**: In many cases IMath will act as a calculator for you. If you type, for example, "(4/30) / (3/20)", IMath will divide the fraction 4/30 by the fraction 3/20 and come up with the decimal answer 0.888889. You can enter it as the mathematical phrase "(4/30) / (3/20)", as the reduced fraction "8/9", or as a decimal using at least three non-zero digits "0.889". All of these answers would be accepted as correct. **Notes:** If you type a mathematical phrase, you should use the "preview" button to make sure it is being read correctly. IMath uses standard order of operations.

4. **Rounding**: The easiest way is just to include a few decimal places beyond what is asked. There are no penalties for this. But if you round, make sure to follow the general rules: 5+ rounds up, 4- rounds down.

5. **Time:** There will be no problem-parts that should take you more than 10 minutes to complete. So – if you have struggled with any part within a problem for more than that time – it is time to ask a question at the beginning of class, or visit my office.

6. **Missed Problems:** The same advice (see #5) applies if you miss a question multiple times. If you are not getting a calculation correct, please take time to come by the office or ask about it in class. **I am *always* happy to assist you if you take the initiative to stop by**. (But on the flip side, I do not feel sorry for students who do not take responsibility for seeking help when they need it.) **One other note: If you need to ask a question about a problem, please don't regenerate it in IMath or I will be unable to see your original problem!**

7. **Office hours vs. Tutors**: There are tutors available in the math center (UC). Sometimes they can be effective, particularly for students who need lots (hours each week) of assistance. Generally speaking, however, tutoring is not a substitute for stopping by office hours. If you find that you need tutoring, you should probably also be spending 15-30 minutes in my office to ask questions as well! For a majority of students, 15 minutes spent getting some help during office hours would equate to a full hour of tutoring.

8. **Email Help**: You are most welcome to email me for help on problems as well (nolanj1@nku.edu). The more you can describe about what you've tried, the easier it will be for me to help you in this way. Please don't be offended if I ask you to stop by the office – that just means that I am not able to identify your mistake from the email. Emails received by 8pm generally get an answer on the same day.

9. **Extensions**: You have three free 24-hour extensions. Note that to use a late-pass, you must use it BEFORE the deadline for the assignment. Additionally, since this is homework – designed to help you learn the material – I am known to be very liberal in terms of giving extra extensions in cases where students visit my office to ask questions (or otherwise show reasonable interest) before the assignment is due.