

C. Radians/Degrees

I gave an exam in 141 on which I asked students to use Newton's method to approximate the root of $\cos x - x = 0$. Nearly 1/4 of the class got an incorrect answer because they had their calculators in degree mode. I had warned them several times about this, but I neglected to mention it before the exam.

Students who are taking either a physics class or a freshman engineering class usually have their calculators in degree mode when they come to class. This can result in some strange answers and graphs in their calculus classes. You should remind them, especially before an exam, to put their calculators in radian mode.