Math 326 Syllabus, Fall 2014

Mark Steinberger

Office       ES 136C
Hours        MW 2:45-4:10 and by arrangement
Email        mark@albany.edu
              Please include Math 326 in the subject line.
Final Exam   Wednesday, December 17, 8:00am–10:00am
My home page http://math.albany.edu/~mark
Course home page http://math.albany.edu/~mark/classes/326/

There will be three in-class exams and a final exam. The dates of the
in-class exams will be announced in class one week prior to each exam. Exam
3 is Monday, December 1.

We will do graded group work every class period.

The grade for the course is calculated according to the following point
system:

In-class quizzes 10%
Each in-class exam 18%
Final exam 36%

There is no textbook. Some of the material can be found in A Concrete
Introduction to Higher Algebra by Lindsay Childs, Springer, 2010, but some
is not. Childs’ book is quite good and would make a good addition to
anyone’s math library. In any case, you will not need to buy a book for this
course. The material will be conveyed in the class notes and in supplements
posted on the course web.

For this reason, class attendance is absolutely essential. If for some reason
you need to miss class, it is imperative that you get notes from someone.
And finding someone who takes good notes isn’t always easy. :-) Also, it is
usually easier to digest the material if you see and hear it presented.

This course is heavy on problem solving. There are good exercises in the
supplements and many old exams posted on the course web, full of problems
to work. Being able to master the problems in, say, the exams from the last
iteration of this course (and to work them all in the allotted time) will be
very helpful in preparing for the exams this time around. In particular,
there is quite a bit of material to practice on, and solutions are posted on
the web.

We will spend significant time talking about theory, because the theory is
essential in developing problem solving skills. Some of the exam questions
test theory in the form of true-false questions where you must prove whether
the statement is true or false. These questions require a solid understanding of the underlying theory.

You are strongly encouraged to discuss this material with each other and with me, both in office hours and in class. Verbalizing mathematical questions is a very useful step toward understanding them. Classroom discussion is strongly encouraged. Please ask questions! If there is something you don’t understand or can’t follow, there will be a number of other people in the class in the same boat. So a number of people will benefit if you ask.

It is very important to stay current with the material. If you fall behind, it will be hard to catch up. And if you are having trouble, please do come to office hours early on. If you leave it until the last minute, you probably won’t be able to learn it in time.

But office hours are not only for those who have fallen behind. Office hours are extremely helpful for learning and I seriously enjoy discussing the material with students and helping them learn. It is especially useful to work with a group of students. The synergy really helps everyone learn. If there is a small group, we will work in my office, ES136C. With larger groups we will work in ES135 (close by).