Math 326 Syllabus, Fall 2015

Mark Steinberger

MAT 326 Classical Algebra
Class number 2155
Class location ES143
Class time MWF 12:35–1:30
Prerequisite MAT 220
(May be taken concurrently)
Instructor Mark Steinberger
Title Herr Doktor Professor :-) (Associate Professor of Math. and Stat.)
My office ES 136C
Office hours MWF 1:40–2:35 and by arrangement
Email mark@albany.edu
Please include Math 326 in the subject line.

Final Exam Friday, December 11, 10:30am–12:30pm
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 Wednesday, December 2.

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. In any case, you are expected to attend class. The university’s medical excuse policy
is available at http://www.albany.edu/health_center/medicalexcuse.shtml.

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).

Other than during exams, you are strongly encouraged to work with other students and with me. The in-class work will be mainly in groups. During exams, you may ask me questions but should not communicate with anyone else. Use of phones during exams is prohibited. The university’s academic integrity policy is available via http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html.