Math 425 Syllabus, Spring 2012

Mark Steinberger

Office  ES 136C
Hours  MW 12:35–1:05 and 3:40–4:10
       F 12:35–1:30
       and by arrangement
Email   mark@albany.edu
        Please include Math 425 in the subject line.
My page  http://math.albany.edu/~mark
Course page  http://math.albany.edu/~mark/classes/425-525/

Due to the escalation in textbook prices, there will not be an assigned
text for this course. I will be using materials from several sources, including:

[1] Childs, Lindsay N. A concrete introduction to higher algebra.
    Third edition. Undergraduate Texts in Mathematics. Springer,
[2] Niven, Ivan; Zuckerman, Herbert; Montgomery, Hugh. The
    theory of numbers (Fifth edition). John Wiley & Sons, New York,

I will also place shorter documents on the course web.

There will be three take-home exams. We will also have in-class quizzes
most class periods, mostly done as group work. Each take-home exam counts
for 30% of your grade, and the in-class quizzes count for 10%.

Class attendance is essential, especially since there is no book. 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.

The quizzes should encourage your class attendance, as you will receive
an automatic zero for any quiz you miss. There will be no make-up quizzes.
However, since absences are sometimes unavoidable, I will drop your three
lowest quiz scores in computing the quiz component of your grade.

The quizzes will be primarily based on the material introduced in the
preceding class, so be sure to study your notes prior to the next class.
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.

My goal here is to teach you, not to penalize you. The test for all of us is how you do on the exams. So please make use of the class and office hours to get my help. I am happy to give it.

It is very important to stay current with the material. If you fall behind, it will be hard to catch up. 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.

The ultimate test is being able to solve problems. Keep your curiosity alive and follow it where it leads.