

## Mathematics 402A     Autumn 2004

Instructor: John Palmieri, Padelford C-538, 543-1785, palmieri@math.washington.edu

Class time and place: MWF 9:30, Savery 241

Office hours: M 10:30-12:00, F 10:30-11:30, drop in, and by appointment

Web page: <http://www.math.washington.edu/~palmieri/Math402/>

Text book: *Algebra* by Michael Artin.

Examinations and grading. I will give weekly homework assignments; there will also be a midterm and a final exam. I will post the homework assignments on the course web page, and they will be due **each Monday at noon** (changed to **3:00 pm**, as of October 20), in my office. The midterm will take place, tentatively, on **Monday, November 8**. After I've graded the midterm, you will have a few days to correct some of your mistakes for some extra credit. I'll give you more details as the time approaches. The final exam will take place on **Wednesday, December 15, 8:30–10:20**. The midterm is worth 25% of the grade, the final is worth 35%, and the homework is worth 40% (35% for regular homework, plus 5% for your "mini-portfolio").

Reading and homework. The best way to learn mathematics is to do it, so you should read the book and do the homework problems. I will provide weekly reading assignments; by **each Tuesday evening at 8:00 pm**, you need to send me an email message about the reading: provide a brief summary of the most important ideas in the reading, and also at least one question about the reading that you would like me to address in class. All together, these reading reports will count the same as one homework assignment; you may skip one reading report without any penalty.

Feel free to work with other people on your homework, but you must write your solutions yourself. If you find a solution in a book or some other source, please provide a reference. A good approach for homework is to first try to do a problem on your own, and then if you run into difficulties, you can discuss the confusing issues with your classmates. Of course, you are certainly welcome to ask me for suggestions.

Mini-portfolio. During the quarter, I will highlight certain problems from your homework assignments, and we will discuss these in class. Your goal is to produce beautifully written, crystal-clear solutions to those problems. A draft of this "mini-portfolio" is due on **Monday, November 1**. On **Monday, December 6**, you will turn in the final draft. This will be graded separately from your other homework, and will be worth 5% of your grade.

Office hours. Feel free to drop by my office; if I'm there and not talking to someone else, I'm probably available to talk. If I'm not there, email is a good way to contact me, since I check it pretty regularly. I will not be in my office on most Thursdays.

Plan for the course. This quarter, we will be studying group theory: we will start with Chapter 2 of the book, and then do parts of Chapters 5 and 6.

Other books. There are lots of fine algebra books out there, and it's often a good idea to look at different approaches to mathematical concepts. I have put two books, *A First Course in Abstract Algebra* by Rotman and *Abstract Algebra* by Herstein, on reserve in the math library (Padelford C-306). See the course web page for a list of other books you might look at.