

To Math 599 students:

I am the Fall instructor for Math 599. We will meet on Friday, September 3 in the usual colloquium room at 4 pm to discuss the course and my expectations from you. The following will apply to all students who have not made prior arrangements with Paul Kirk.

Attendance Policy: You must attend a talk given by each but 2 distinct speakers. There are 7 distinct Fall colloquium speakers scheduled as of August 26, 2005 and you must attend a talk given by at least 5 of them. If more speakers are added, the policy still holds – you can only miss talks for 2 speakers. (Note: What this means regarding Puckelsheim is that you ought to go to one of his 3 talks. If you can, you ought to go to all 3 talks, but I realize you may have other duties scheduled at odd colloquium times.)

I strongly recommend that you do not choose to miss talks early in the semester as there will be no exceptions to the above attendance policy. Incompletes will be awarded only if some dire emergency comes up and only if you are passing the course with at least a B (see the grading policy section below.)

You are responsible for initialing the sign-in sheet (next to your name). I will place the sign-in sheet at the front of the colloquium room and will try to have it there at least 5 minutes before the colloquium is due to start. You may also initialize it at the end of the colloquium.

Essay Policy: You must submit essays on 3 of the talks. These will be graded as acceptable and unacceptable. You may rewrite any given essay once with the following caveat: you may only re-write your third essay if you turn it in by December 2. Essays are due by the following dates and are also due by Friday at 4 pm of the week following the speaker's talk about which you are writing. Late essays are not acceptable and may not be re-written. You will have one week from the time I return an essay to re-write it. The due date for your re-write will be provided to you at the top of your essay when I return it to you.

Essay 1 due by October 7
Essay 2 due by November 4
Essay 3 due by December 9

Remember – those dates are firm and it is your duty to remember them and to get your essays to me on time.

Acceptable versus Unacceptable: Acceptable essays contain descriptions of the speaker's subject area, a general summary of what the talk was about and what you got out of the talk, and a critique of the speaker's style. For instance, some say an ideal colloquium has 20-30 minutes of material graduate students can understand followed by 15-20 minutes that general faculty can understand followed by 5-10 minutes that specialists can understand. Do you think the speaker matched that ideal? What could he or she have done to improve the talk?

The emphasis here is on whether you are trying to get something out of the talk. That "something" may be some feel for the flavor of the type of arguments made in the speaker's field; e.g. the key ingredient in these proofs are inequalities obtained by a clever application of the Cauchy-Schwartz lemma (and discuss this application at greater length). Or it may be a connection between two topics that you never thought would be connected; e.g. while I didn't follow the talk much after the first 20 minutes, I was fascinated to learn that you could classify every semisimple Lie algebra by a graph called a Dynkin diagram (and give the definitions of each, the connection between the two, and an example). Or, in the

case of a really bad talk, it might be nothing at all in which case you might spend a little extra time reading abstracts and Math Reviews of the speaker's work and then criticizing the speaker's lecturing ability heartily in your essay; e.g. this talk was just dreadful, but, afterwards, I looked up the MathSci Reviews of the speaker's recent work that indicated the lecture was really about the brilliant development of new techniques in statistics that allow you to make sense of what looks to the naked eye like complete noise (and, perhaps, discuss what the speaker should really have said and an example he should have given). But you should be trying to get something out of these lectures. Try to write in a way to explain the essence of the talk, simply, to someone who was not there.

Acceptable essays contain no plagiarized passages (from the speaker's papers, from reviews of the speaker's paper, or from any other source) and are **not** typed lecture notes of the speaker's talk. In fact, symbols and jargon should be kept to a minimum and English words should be used to describe the material whenever possible. Major theorems, common definitions, useful lemmas, etc... can be quoted when *you* can place them into context.

Acceptable essays are ideally one and no more than two pages long, typed, single-spaced, with 1 inch margins or of the equivalent length but handwritten legibly.

Grading Policy:

A+ : awarded to individuals who have 3 acceptable essays on their first try and who meet the attendance policy.

A : awarded to individuals who have at least 2 acceptable essays after re-writes and who meet the attendance policy.

B : awarded to individuals who have only 1 acceptable essay after re-writes and who meet the attendance policy.

C : awarded to individuals who fail to meet the attendance policy and/or have no acceptable essays even after re-writes.

Colloquia Scheduled as of August 26:

Joachim Cuntz - Friday, 9 September 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Friedrich Puckelsheim - Monday, 12 September 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Friedrich Puckelsheim - Wednesday, 14 September 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Friedrich Puckelsheim - Thursday, 15 September 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Chandrashekhar Khare - Friday, 30 September 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Avner Friedman - Friday, 14 October 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Vic Reiner - Friday, 21 October 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Howard Masur - Friday, 28 October 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Alon Orlicsky - Friday, 11 November 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM