18.A34 Mathematical Problem Solving, Fall 2016

Website: [https://learning-modules.mit.edu/class/index.html?uuid=/course/18/fa16/18.A34#info](https://learning-modules.mit.edu/class/index.html?uuid=/course/18/fa16/18.A34#info)


Office hours: See my website.

Email: poonen@math (add .mit.edu if off-campus). Math is much easier to explain in person than in email, so if you have a math question, come to office hours! If you do email me, include your name.

Meetings: T-Th 11am-12 in 4-153. MIT students who are not officially enrolled are welcome to participate, but should not hand in homework.

Prerequisite: None.


Structure of the class: In general, we’ll discuss new topics on Thursdays, and students will present solutions to problems on Tuesdays.

Homework: A list of problems will be assigned each week, and each officially-enrolled student is to select six of them and carefully write up solutions to them, to be handed in during class each Tuesday.

Late homework will not be accepted. At the top of each assignment should appear either the text **Sources consulted: none** or a list of all sources consulted other than the required book and your own notes from lecture. This is *required*. (Examples of things that should be listed if used: names of people that you discussed solutions with (whether or not they are taking the class), Wikipedia and other websites. For many of the problems, there may exist solutions of varying quality online; if you look at one of these, or look at solutions written by students or professors in previous semesters, you must mention the precise source on your assignment.)

You should not expect to be able to solve every single problem on your own; instead you are encouraged to discuss questions with each other or to come to office hours. Write-ups must be done independently. (In practice, this means that it is OK for other people to explain their solutions to you, but you must not be looking at other people’s solutions as you write your own.)

Use solutions in the book as a model for the level of detail expected. Write in complete sentences. If you have questions about the homework, it is best to ask these in office hours.

Grading: Based on homework and in-class presentations. Beyond grading for correctness, the grader may deduct points or grant bonus points based on the elegance of the solution and clarity of the writing. No exams.
If a personal or medical issue is interfering with your studies:

- Contact your medical provider if you need medical attention.
- Please do not come to class if you are potentially contagious.
- Email me.
- If it is an extended illness or serious personal problem, one that will cause you to miss handing in a homework, then (and only then) please discuss this with Student Support Services (S⁵). You may consult with S⁵ in 5-104 or call 617-253-4861. The deans in S⁵ will verify your situation, and then discuss with you how to address the missed work.

If you have some other kind of conflict, email only me (not a dean) as far in advance as possible, and I will make a decision on how to proceed.

If you need disability accommodations: Please speak with Kathleen Monagle, Associate Dean in Student Disability Services (SDS) in 5-104 or call 617-253-1674, ideally before the semester begins. If you have a disability but do not plan to use accommodations, it is still recommended that you meet with SDS staff to familiarize yourself with the services and resources of the office. If you have already been approved for accommodations, please bring the accommodation letter to Theresa Cummings, 617-253-4977 in Mathematics Academic Services 2-110 early in the semester.

Other important things:

- It is your responsibility to email me as far in advance as possible in case of an extended absence, or in case you find yourself struggling with the course for any reason.
- If you have emergency medical information you wish to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform me immediately: feel free to talk to me privately after class or in my office.