

Math 880

Proseminar

Our MA program includes either a thesis, or two examinations and an expository paper. Math 880 will help students in either option.

First, it will provide experience in reading research and expository papers beyond the level of standard courses. I'll introduce one example for all of us. Each of you, *even before the course starts*, should ask a faculty member to suggest another paper, and you should *continue consulting* with faculty members to select your own thesis or expository paper topic.

IMPORTANT: I can provide much help about writing, but *you* have to decide what to write *about*. Generally, I won't *supervise* your writing, but will serve as a *resource*.

We'll discuss how the mathematics literature is organized and how to find information in books and journals and online. Jointly and individually you'll be writing, presenting, and criticizing short expositions of some familiar mathematical topics, including some ideas beyond the standard courses.

We'll discuss and practice brainstorming, planning research, pursuing references, finding stories to tell, outlining, drafting, editing, reviewing with others, re-editing, re-re-editing, re-re-re-editing, We'll consider problems of graphics and typesetting. And you can gain experience presenting this material orally in class with computer assistance.

I'll spend considerable effort finding out what help you need and how to provide that efficiently, and working with you individually as well as in class. Throughout the term, you'll help each other by asking questions, discussing problems you encounter and solutions you find, and sharing—orally and in writing—your work in progress.

The goal of the course is for each of you, by the end of the term, to be well on the way to completing a thesis or expository paper. The course is graded CR/NCR: you receive CR by effectively helping us achieve that goal.

MWF 11:10–12:00
Room ??

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