Math 170 Syllabus

Instructor: Charles Siegel, siegelch@math.upenn.edu

Class Time: 1:00-3:10 PM in DRL 3C8 Monday through Thursday. We will take a 10 minute break at 2:00.

Office Hours: My office hours will be Wednesday from 3:30-5:00 PM and Friday from 12:00-2:00 PM, as well as by appointment. However, for the first week of class, I will only have office hours by appointment.

Website: http://www.math.upenn.edu/∼siegelch

Textbook: None. The course materials will consist of class lectures, readings from the internet and some handouts.

Topics: This course will offer a history of mathematics up to 1900 via important ideas and concepts, emphasizing how these ideas have changed between the ancient world and modern mathematical thinking. We will discuss important historical figures in mathematics as well as the influence of mathematical developments in art, music, literature, science and technology.

Prerequisites: None, although doing a quick review of high school algebra will be helpful.

Homework: In lieu of homework, I'll be assigning problems to think about each night for discussion during the next lecture. If everyone is not contributing to the class discussion, they will be assigned to be written up and graded instead.

Exams: Instead of exams, I will be grading the course via a series of three essays, one every two weeks. The first two are to be 5 pages and the final one 10 pages, both double spaced. Of the first two, one must be a discussion of a specific mathematician and his or her ideas, the other must be a discussion of an idea and the mathematicians who contributed to it. The final essay is your choice of any topic in the course. Essay topics will be approved by me on July 14, July 22 and Aug 5, and the essays will be due on July 22, July 29 and August 13. You are encouraged to submit essay topics before the due dates.

Grading: 45% the final paper, 20% for each of the two short papers, and 15% class participation and discussion.