

MATH 250: NUMBER THEORY

Spring 2024

Syllabus IN PROGRESS

Instructor:	David Zureick-Brown (“DZB”)	Office:	502 Seeley Mudd
Email:	dzureickbrown@amherst.edu	Hours:	Thursdays 2:30-3:30 (in person)
Time:	TuTh 11:30 – 1:00		Wednesdays 2:30-3:30 (via zoom)
Place:	014 Seeley Mudd		Wednesdays 3:30-5:30 (in person)

Textbook: “A Friendly Introduction to Number Theory,” 4th ed., by Joseph H. Silverman

Course website: <https://dmzb.github.io/teaching/2024Spring250/>

Zoom link: <https://emory.zoom.us/j/97540680666>

Math Fellows:	David Metacarpa	dmetacarpa24@amherst.edu	Tue	??	Wed	??
			SM	TBA	SM	TBA
Q Center:	TBA	atanguay@amherst.edu	Tue	1-4	Wed	9-11 (Zoom)
		Seeley Mudd 208	Thu	1-4	Fri	12-2

Q Center Zoom link:

<https://amherstcollege.zoom.us/j/94446399260?pwd=U2FoM1NscWlUM0h5UkROM0tidUVKZz09>

Tanguay appointment link: <https://calendly.com/atanguay-qcenter>

QCenter website: https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/support/moss_quantitative_center

Prerequisites: Instructor permission.

Course content: We will cover some subset of the following topics: unique factorization, irrational numbers, residue systems, congruences, primitive roots, reciprocity laws, quadratic forms, arithmetic functions, partitions, Diophantine equations, distribution of primes.

Getting help

Office Hours: Please stop by to see me (in Seeley Mudd 502) during my scheduled office hours; you can stop by unannounced during these times! If you have scheduling conflicts with my office hours then you are also welcome to make appointments to see me (outside of my regularly scheduled office hours) at a time which is mutually convenient. To schedule an appointment simply send me an email! (In which case, please include your availability in your message.)

Math Fellows: Visit our TAs’ office hours, too (see above).

The QCenter: Allison Tanguay of the the Moss Quantitative Center offers Math 250 help, including both appointments and unscheduled drop-ins.

Peer tutoring: If you need regular one-on-one help from a tutor, we can (probably) help to set up a (free) peer tutor. To do so, please send me an email.

Homework is due Thursdays at 11:25am, via Gradescope. The assignment should be submitted as a single file. Please be kind to our dear graders and take care to make the assignment legible.

See the document here

<https://dmzb.github.io/teaching/2024Spring250/assignments-S24-250.pdf>

for a list of all assigned work and a weekly breakdown of the course content.

Grading: Your grade will consist of the following. Your lowest weekly assignment will be dropped.

Weekly Homework Assignments	40%
2 midterms and a comprehensive final exam	60% =
Best exam	30%+
Second best exam	20%+
Third best exam	10%+

Grade scale: A lower bound on your final grade is given by the following table.

A = 93-100	B+ = 87-90	C+ = 77-80	D+ = 67-70	F = 0-63
A- = 90-93	B = 83-87	C = 73-77	D = 63-67	
	B- = 80-83	C- = 70-73		

Typical rubric: Proofs will typically be graded on the following rubric (out of 10 points).

10	Flawless
9	Basically correct, but not literally 100% correct
7	Mostly correct, but with at least one error
5	Numerous errors
2	Proof contains a fundamental misunderstanding
0	No part of the proof was correct

Assignment and exam dates:

Weekly Assignments	Generally due Thursdays at 11:25pm via Gradescope.
Midterm 1	Thursday, ???
Midterm 2	Thursday, ???
Final Exam	Monday, May ???, ???-5pm in the usual room (SMUD 014)

Exam problems will be extremely similar to the (easier and medium difficulty) homework problems.

If you have any conflict with these test dates, PLEASE let me know at least two weeks in advance.

Rewrites will be allowed (and encouraged) on weekly graded assignments; and students can recover up to half of the missed points. Rewrites are to be submitted through Gradescope. You may rewrite a problem multiple times, and you may resubmit a rewrite as late as you like (including right before the final exam).

When you submit a rewrite, please make it clear which problems you are rewriting.

Late submissions. Any assignment submitted after the due date will be treated as a “rewrite” (you can receive up to half credit for the assignment).

Honor Code: Remember that copying another student’s work is a violation of the Honor Code and will be treated as such. Please review Amherst College’s Honor Code, available [here](#).

You are free to consult any sources (animate or inanimate) while doing your homework; working in groups is encouraged! On the other hand, you are expected to make an honest attempt to do every problem on your own before consulting other sources. Learning and retaining knowledge is a back and forth process of trying problems on your own and asking for help or for a small hint.

Plagiarism: a good rule of thumb to avoid plagiarism is the following – when doing the final write up of a problem, do not have any textbooks, web pages, or classmate’s write up open in front of you. If you get stuck when writing up an assignment, go back and look again; just make sure that you organize the mathematics in your head before writing a proof rather than copying a solution from some source. **This is a generous homework policy. Please do not abuse it.**

Calculators, notes, and textbooks are not allowed during exams. If you must leave class during an exam for **any reason**, please leave all of your belongings (**including your handheld supercomputer phone!**).

Inclusivity: I put great value in welcoming each and every student into the classroom, regardless of their sex, race, nationality, gender identity, socioeconomic status, ability (intellectual or physical), religious beliefs, or sexual orientation. Each student brings with them to the classroom a unique set of experiences and I expect everyone to contribute to providing an inclusive environment. If, at any time, you experience a situation within this course that you feel challenges your sense of inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement, then please notify me as soon as possible.

Accessibility and accommodations. Amherst College complies with the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and offers accommodations to students with disabilities. Please do not hesitate to ask for accommodations or to contact me about accommodations. (Please also do so as soon as possible.) For more information, please go [here](#).

Attendance policy. Attendance is always optional (except for exams). If you are sick, I would prefer that you stay home from class and get notes from a classmate.