

MATH 205 WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS Winter 2006

There are two written assignments, the first due February 27 and the second April 12. The first is a short essay about the mathematician Pal (Paul) Erdős (3-6 pages, double spaced), counts as Quiz 2, and is weighted the same as each other quiz. The second is a medium length essay (8-15 pages) on a topic of your choosing. It is weighted 15% of the course grade. Many suggestions for suitable topics have already been given in the lectures, you may choose from these or select your own topic. Make sure to clear it with the instructor via email or discussion. Essays in English or French are fine, they can be typed or neatly handwritten. They can also be typed with the mathematical formulae done by hand, if that is more convenient.

The essays will be evaluated in several ways. Obvious ones are the presentation - there must be a cover page with title, author, course name and number. The essay must be stapled or bound in a folder. Spelling and grammar will be taken into account, as well as clarity of expression. Proper bibliographies and referencing must be present, you may use any system with which you are comfortable for this. Proper names must be spelled correctly, including accents and other diacritical marks (this applies also to quotes in other languages). Both essays should include 1-2 paragraphs in the first person, e.g. "I find Sophie Germain to be very important both in the development of mathematics and in women's struggle for equality because _____." In addition to obvious reference sources there is also considerable expertise right in the University of Calgary on many topics.

The essay may be mainly non-technical but can also include some mathematics. The evaluation will be based on the essay's interest, ideas, and argumentation. Your own ideas and opinions will also be welcome, e.g. "I believe the film 'A Beautiful Mind' based on the life of John Nash was a great (terrible) portrayal of this mathematician's life." Direct quotes from references are fine, but these should always be clearly indicated and should not comprise more than about 25% of the essay. It is very important to make it clear when you are quoting from other sources, otherwise one can be open to charges of plagiarism, academic misconduct, and receive a grade of 0 for the essay.

The short essay should include include some biographical material about Erdős. Several faculty members here at the University of Calgary knew him very well, and in particular Professor Sauer has graciously consented to interviews. He should first be contacted via email nsauer@math.ucalgary.ca to set up a convenient time. In the long essay you have considerable freedom to write about any portions of your topic that are of interest to you. It will be graded somewhat more strictly than the short essay. A book about Erdős

is on reserve in the library, and a Google search with his name will have over 150,000 entries.

P. Zvengrowski