

MATH 205 WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS Winter 2007

There are two written assignments, the first due February 26 and the second April 9. The first is a short essay about the mathematician Donald Coxeter (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 or other special symbols 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. Essays that are not stapled or bound will *not* be accepted. 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 2 paragraphs in the first person. One should deal with why you found this topic interesting, e.g. "I find Sophie Germain to be very important both in the development of mathematics and in women's struggle for equality because _____." The other should explain why you think this particular topic or person is important (in the past, present, or future). 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 Coxeter. Several faculty members here at the University of Calgary knew him. 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 called “King of Infinite Space,” about Coxeter, is on reserve in the library, and a Google search with his name will have over 600,000 entries. Although the short essay is much more work than a quiz (but only counts as Quiz 2), it is highly recommended to do it since students who do the short essay tend to average about 10% more on the long essay.

P. Zvengrowski