MATH 499
Syllabus
Spring, 2004

Instructor:	Dr. Colin Starr	**Office Hours:**	MTΘF 10:10-11:50
Office:	Collins 308		TW 2-3:30
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Required Text: *none.*

Goals: This course is an introduction to the theory of matroids. We will spend the first half of the semester becoming familiar with the basic properties of matroids. In the second half, you will present papers to the rest of the class.

Assessment: Your grade is based on your effective participation. In the first part of the course, I will call on each of you to present solutions at the board. I will grade based on the correctness of your solution, the quality of your presentation, and your ability to answer questions about the problem. In addition, I will rate the level of difficulty of the problem itself.

If you do not have a solution prepared when I call on you, you will receive a zero for that solution. I fully expect this to happen sometimes, so don't be too worried about it unless it happens a lot.

In the second part of the course, you will be responsible for lectures to the class. I will assess these in much the same way as I do problem solutions. (The second part of the course will also include problem solutions.)

Your **active** participation is absolutely essential to the smooth running of this class. If you think a solution is erroneous, speak up. If you have a question, ask it. If you have a suggestion, make it. The only rule is that all such interjections must be made in a respectful manner. I will assess your participation daily.

In the third (and last) part of the course, you will present a paper (which I must first approve) to the rest of the class. This will take a great deal of preparation, so be sure to take it seriously and start early. You will also write a summary of this paper to hand in.

Active participation:	10%
Problem Solutions:	30%
Lectures:	25%
Presentations:	25%
Presentation write-ups:	10%

There is no predetermined percentage for a given letter grade, but you can expect that 90%, 80%, 70%, and 60% will correspond to a minimum grade of A-, B-, C-, and D-, respectively. However, if you focus on learning what we study, the grades will take care of themselves. They should be among the least of your worries.

I will expect you to be here every day since attendance is a prerequisite for participation. If you must miss, you should let me know in advance.

Please note: Written responses to all questions must be in complete sentences. I expect correct usage of grammar, spelling, and punctuation at all times; your grade will reflect this! I also expect your work to be neatly written.

If you have special needs (e.g., for a documented disability), it is your responsibility to approach me at least a day in advance of the need for accommodation.

My door is usually open. The office hours above are the times I will definitely be in my office (or nearby), but you are welcome to come by at other times as well. I expect to be in frequent consultation with you outside of class.