

18.781: Guidelines for Midterm 2

The exam is designed to test your knowledge of the main results and techniques, and your skill in applying them to problems. In particular, the calculations should be relatively straightforward and the problems will be on the level of the easier homework problems. Some of the problems will deal with calculations, but some will ask you to show some results where you might have to apply your knowledge of the main theorems. The exam will be *open book* (class notes or handouts, previous homework, but not calculators or computers), and 80 minutes long (11:05 to 12:25). It will cover everything up to and including the April 12 lecture, though the focus will be on the material between March 6 and April 12. You should not expect any problems where you have to use a “trick” which hasn’t come up before in class or homework. However, I may set a question which uses a trick that has been covered in class or on the problem set, or an easy adaptation.

To prepare, I would advise the following.

1. You should know the relevant definitions and statements of the main theorems (of course, you can look these up in the notes or book during the exam, but this will waste some time).
2. Go over the homework and read the solutions, which will be put up sometime this long weekend. If you solved a problem and your solution was long or messy, I would recommend reading the solutions anyway, since there may have been a simpler solution.
3. Do the practice midterm problems, as well as Problem Set 7.

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18.781 Theory of Numbers
Spring 2012

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