

FEEDBACK ON THE FALL 2008 REST OF ALGEBRAIC GEOMETRY
SEMINAR

Summary of format and content of seminar. This was a student learning seminar where we covered the first several chapters of 4 books over the course of a semester. The books were: Beauville's "Algebraic Surfaces," Fulton's "Introduction to Intersection Theory," Clemens-Kollár-Mori's "Higher Dimensional Complex Geometry," and Harris-Morrison's "Moduli of Curves." There were 6-8 lectures on each book, and all but two of these lectures were given by graduate students. The seminar was organized by David Eisenbud and Daniel Erman.

Feedback on the books. How much did you learn from each book? Answers averaged below on a scale of 0-5 (0=nothing, 5=a lot.)

- Beauville: 4
- Fulton: 2.3
- Clemens et al: 3.3
- Harris-Morrison: 3.4

Feedback on the format of the seminar.

- Many people said that they left with a sense of each topic, but without a deep understanding of the topics. This was generally viewed as a positive aspect of the seminar, not a negative aspect.
- Several said that covering many books was good because if they fell behind, then they could catch up again at the next book. A few said that we covered too much material, and would have preferred a more relaxed pace.
- The seminar met on Monday/Tuesday every week, and a couple of people suggested the meetings should have been on nonconsecutive days.
- One person said that when we jumped around a book and only covered the "greatest hits," this was very effective.

Feedback on the content of the seminar.

- Many people felt that they did not learn much from Fulton's book. Possible reasons included: the seminar went through the material too fast, Fulton's book was too difficult.
- Two people wanted more examples and computations in the talks; one person wanted more proofs and depth.
- One person observed that (especially during the lectures on Mori theory) speakers sometimes prepared their lectures from other sources. This person said that this was sometimes useful,

but it could also be frustrating and that it might be better to select books which are self-contained.

- Suggestions for other possible subjects included: the basics of positivity, GIT quotients, and something less “old-fashioned.”

Other Comments/Suggestions.

- “I was happy to have been forced to give one lecture.”
- One person particularly appreciated Professor Eisenbud’s occasional interjections: “It really kept the pace reasonable and helped us see the bigger picture.”
- Ian Morrison’s guest lecture, where he gave an overview of his book, received rave reviews.