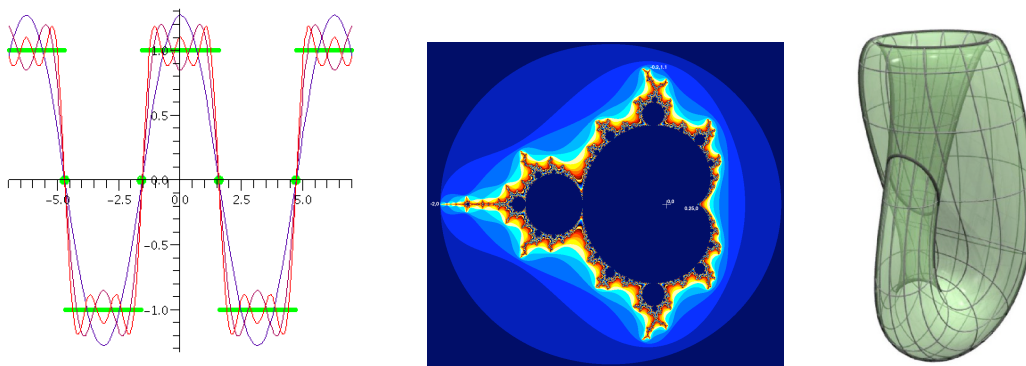


SPRING 2010

The “What is...?” Seminar



Organizer: SLOBODAN SIMIĆ, MH 318A, simic@math.sjsu.edu

What is this “What is...?” seminar: Nobody can know everything, but it’s a good idea to strive to “know everything about something and something about everything”. A student (here or anywhere) can end up graduating with a math degree without ever learning some of the basic concepts and ideas of modern mathematics. Hence the “What is...?” seminar, a series of short student talks, each answering a concise question of the form “What is...?” (referring to a mathematical concept or idea).

The Goal: To learn important mathematical concepts and ideas not covered by your classes in a relaxed and open environment.

Prerequisite: None!

Possible topics: What is... cardinality? Euler characteristic? Chaos? Curvature? Prime number theorem? Lebesgue measure? Fourier series? Gödel’s Incompleteness Theorem? Fundamental group? And many more. Topics will be chosen by students, with my help.

Logistics: We will meet a few times at the beginning of the semester to decide on the topics and literature. Students (or teams of two students) will choose their favorite topics and study them during the semester, under my supervision. The presentations will be in late April or early May.

Why should you participate? Because you love mathematics and will benefit from learning new things! Besides, the seminar may help you if and when you take your GREs and go to graduate school. You can also sign up for MATH 180 and get independent studies credit.

Web page: For more information go to my web page <http://www.math.sjsu.edu/~simic> and click on the link **What is...?.** Please contact me by email or come by my office if you are interested.