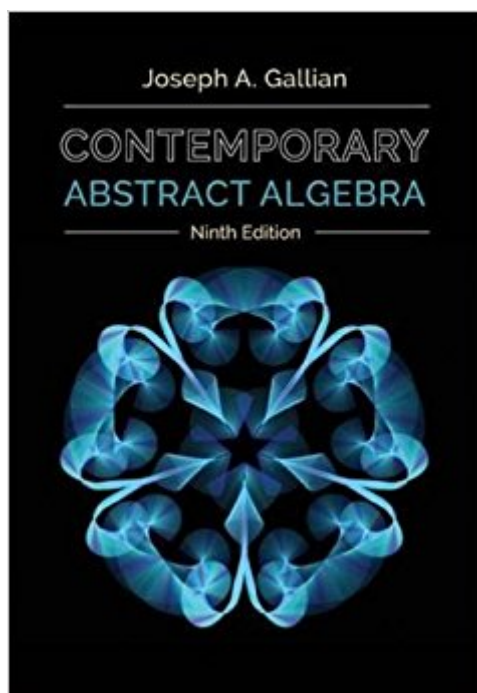


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Contemporary Abstract Algebra



Synopsis

CONTEMPORARY ABSTRACT ALGEBRA, NINTH EDITION is primarily intended for an abstract algebra course whose main purpose is to enable students to do computations and write proofs. Gallian's text stresses the importance of obtaining a solid introduction to the traditional topics of abstract algebra, while at the same time presenting it as a contemporary and very much an active subject which is currently being used by working physicists, chemists, and computer scientists.

Book Information

Hardcover: 557 pages

Publisher: Brooks Cole; 9 edition (January 1, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1305657969

ISBN-13: 978-1305657960

Product Dimensions: 6.5 x 1.1 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.0 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #18,909 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #76 in Books > Science & Math > Mathematics > Pure Mathematics > Algebra > Elementary #107 in Books > Textbooks > Science & Mathematics > Mathematics > Algebra & Trigonometry

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Joseph Gallian earned his PhD from Notre Dame. In addition to receiving numerous awards for his teaching and exposition, he served, first, as the Second Vice President, and, then, as the President of the MAA. He has served on 40 national committees, chairing ten of them. He has published over

100 articles and authored six books. Numerous articles about his work have appeared in the national news outlets, including the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Boston Globe, and Newsweek, among many others.

Excellent text. I rarely come across books for upper-level math courses that are this well written. Good pacing, consistent level of difficulty between in-chapter examples and homework problems, and nice inclusion of practical applications. Most importantly, EVERY concept is explained very clearly.

I taught a course on Group Theory from this book September - December 2016. (My user name is slightly out of date, perhaps.) The text does a reasonable job of discussing abelian groups, and there are some interesting applications of elementary group theory. Gallian's prose is readable, and there are dozens of exercises at the end of each chapter, many of which require some creativity to solve. That's about all I can say that's positive. The order in which the material is presented is unforgivable. Lagrange's theorem, which is the first major result in group theory is not introduced until Chapter 7. Homomorphisms are delayed until Chapter 10, after a chapter on normal subgroups. Conjugacy classes are not mentioned in the main text at all - they are defined in Chapter 24 as an 'Special Topic'. Examples of non-abelian groups beyond dihedral groups are rare. Many of Gallian's proofs are vague, poorly written and omit key details. For example: I set my students the task of rewriting Gallian's Lemma on page 103 as a homework assignment. (For some reason lemmas are not numbered in the book.) Few students could untangle what 'this process' was, or clearly explain the induction step. Theorems 6.2 and 6.3 are an example of sketchy and unconvincing proofs. Many of these would be unacceptable in a student's homework assignment! In the end, I wrote my own notes on multiple topics and distributed these to the students to supplement their reading. The cost is prohibitive, and the differences between the 8th to the 9th editions are minimal. I will never teach Group Theory from this book again.

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