Mathematics: A Concise History and Philosophy (Undergraduate Texts in Mathematics / Readings in Mathematics)

W.S. Anglin

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This is a concise introductory textbook for a one-semester (40-class) course in the history and philosophy of mathematics. It is written for mathemat ics majors, philosophy students, history of science students, and (future) secondary school mathematics teachers. The only prerequisite is a solid command of precalculus mathematics. On the one hand, this book is designed to help mathematics majors ac quire a philosophical and cultural understanding of their subject by means of doing actual mathematical problems from different eras. On the other hand, it is designed to help philosophy, history, and education students come to a deeper understanding of the mathematical side of culture by means of writing short essays. The way I myself teach the material, stu dents are given a choice between mathematical assignments, and more his torical or philosophical assignments. (Some sample assignments and tests are found in an appendix to this book.) This book differs from standard textbooks in several ways. First, it is shorter, and thus more accessible to students who have trouble coping with vast amounts of reading. Second, there are many detailed explanations of the important mathematical procedures actually used by famous mathe maticians, giving more mathematically talented students a greater oppor tunity to learn the history and philosophy by way of problem solving.

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