

Sample/past exam paper solutions

Dr. I. Tomašić

December 1, 2010

Let me explain my attitude toward posting sample solutions to exam papers. I *will not post them* online for several good reasons:

1. Posting sample solutions encourages a belief that going through the sample solution constitutes a sufficient preparation for the exam, which is far from the truth. The only way to do well in the exams is through hard individual work in order to gain full command of the material in the notes (definitions, theorems, examples etc.) and coursework material (related to exercises and some exam questions). This may require several passes through the whole material. Going once over the sample solutions is worthless.
2. Sample/past papers are not given to students in exam conditions, which means that they have full access to their notes, computing facilities, the internet, their colleagues, tutors and the lecturer, in *unlimited time*. Non-existence of sample solutions encourages students to make an effort, use these resources and work at least in order to find all the solutions in the sample/past papers. Posting sample solutions would just be another instance of spoon-feeding and students themselves should renounce it as unnecessary.
3. Some students learn past exam solutions by heart and replicate them in exam conditions even in situations when the question is quite different. I have seen numerous occurrences of this behaviour in previous years.

On the other hand, it must be understood that I do not wish to be secretive regarding any aspect of the examination process, and I am happy to discuss any serious attempts of solving any previous exam paper problems during my office hours.