Acknowledgement

The present set of notes was developed as a result of Higher Algebra courses that I taught during the academic years 1987-88, 1989-90 and 1991-92. The distinctive feature of these notes is that proofs are not supplied. There are two reasons for this. First, I would hope that the serious student who really intends to master the material will actually try to supply many of the missing proofs. Indeed, I have tried to break down the exposition in such a way that by the time a proof is called for, there is little doubt as to the basic idea of the proof. The real reason, however, for not supplying proofs is that if I have the proofs already in hard copy, then my basic laziness often encourages me not to spend any time in preparing to present the proofs in class. In other words, if I can simply read the proofs to the students, why not? Of course, the main reason for this is obvious; I end up looking like a fool.

Anyway, I am thankful to the many graduate students who checked and critiqued these notes. I am particularly indebted to Francis Fung for his scores of incisive remarks, observations and corrections. Nontheless, these notes are probably far from their final form; they will surely undergo many future changes, if only motivited by the suggestions of colleagues and future graduate students.

Finally, I wish to single out Shan Zhu, who helped with some of the more labor-intensive aspects of the preparation of some of the early drafts of these notes. Without his help, the inertial drag inherent in my nature would surely have prevented the production of this set of notes.

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