

How to give a seminar talk

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In this short text we would like to explain a good strategy for you to approach giving a talk in our seminar “Arithmetic of Quadratic Forms”.

1. **Read the main reference for your talk.** Cassels’ book is sometimes short on the details and thus it is a great (and necessary) exercise for you to fill in the gaps. It can also be useful to look at other references so that one obtains a broad view of the topic. Make sure that you understand why the topic you are talking about is interesting and how it fits into the context of the previous talks. If you don’t know how or where to obtain good additional references, do not hesitate to contact us.

2. **Solve exercises on the topic of your talk.** For this, it is of course advisable to start with the exercises of the main reference (if it contains any – Cassels does). Again, we can provide additional exercises if necessary.

3. **Choose 1-3 goals for your talk.** Note that what you consider particularly important is entirely up to you. However, make sure that the other students see the goals of your talk as soon as possible.

4. **Ask questions if something is not clear to you.** You are certainly encouraged to talk to us on your topic. In fact, there will be a weekly fixed time and place where you can meet us to ask your questions. Observe that this meeting is not mandatory, but we assume that you will be attending if we don’t hear from you. Also, note that we don’t expect you to have covered all of the above points before our meeting.

5. **Do a write-up of your talk that addresses your goals.** It should be written like “lecture notes” for yourself. We also encourage you to share it with the other participants of the seminar.

6. **Consider preparing an "exercise sheet" for the listners of your talk.** You can share them on overleaf.

7. **Test your talk on somebody and record the time.** It may even be useful to take the time at several points of your talk. We are definitely willing to listen to an excerpt of your talk in our meeting.

8. **Be open to constructive feedback.** Teaching is usually learned in practice, which is one of the main goals of this seminar.