

Homework 1

due on Tuesday, September 15

Study chapter 7 of Dummit and Foote. Solve problems 33 and 34 to 7.4.

Problem 1. An element a of a ring R is called **nilpotent** if $a^m = 0$ for some $m > 0$.

a) Prove that in a commutative ring R the set N of all nilpotent elements of R is an ideal. This ideal is called the **nilradical** of R . Prove that 0 is the only nilpotent element of R/N .

b) Let R be a commutative ring and let $a_1, \dots, a_n \in R$ be nilpotent. Set I for the ideal $\langle a_1, \dots, a_n \rangle$ generated by a_1, \dots, a_n . Prove that there is a positive integer N such that $x_1 x_2 \dots x_N = 0$ for any x_1, \dots, x_N in I (i.e. that $I^N = 0$).

c) Prove that the set of all nilpotent elements in the ring $M_2(\mathbb{R})$ is not an ideal.

d) Prove that if p is a prime and $m > 0$ then every element of $\mathbb{Z}/p^m\mathbb{Z}$ is either nilpotent or invertible.

e) Find the nilradical of $\mathbb{Z}/36\mathbb{Z}$ (by correspondence theorem, it is equal to $n\mathbb{Z}/36\mathbb{Z}$ for some n).

Problem 2. Let R be a commutative ring. For an ideal I of R define

$$\sqrt{I} = \{x \in R : x^n \in I \text{ for some } n > 0\}.$$

a) Prove that \sqrt{I} is an ideal. It is called the **radical** of I .

b) Prove that $\sqrt{\{0\}}$ is the nilradical of R .

c) Consider a surjective homomorphism $f : R \rightarrow S$. Prove that in the correspondence theorem the nilradical of S corresponds to $\sqrt{\ker f}$.

d) Prove that R/\sqrt{I} has trivial nilradical.

Problem 3. A subset S of a commutative ring is called **multiplicative** if $0 \notin S$ and for any $a, b \in S$ also $ab \in S$.

a) Let I be an ideal of a commutative unital ring R . Prove that I is a prime ideal iff $R - I$ is multiplicative.

b) Let S be a multiplicative subset of a commutative unital ring R . Consider the set T of all ideals of R which are disjoint with S . Prove that this set contains maximal elements (with respect to inclusion; this requires Zorn's Lemma and is very similar to the proof that every ring has a maximal ideal). Prove that every maximal element of T is a prime ideal.

c) Use b) to prove that if $a \in R$ is not nilpotent then there is a prime ideal in R which does not contain a .

d) Prove that the nilradical of a commutative unital ring R coincides with the intersection of all prime ideals.

Problem 4. Let $f : R \rightarrow S$ be a homomorphism of commutative unital rings.

a) Prove that if P is a prime ideal of S then $f^{-1}(P)$ is a prime ideal of R . Is this true for non-commutative rings?

b) Find an example when P is a maximal ideal of S but $f^{-1}(P)$ is not maximal in R .

c) Prove that if f is onto and Q is a prime ideal of R such that $\ker f \subseteq Q$ then $f(Q)$ is a prime ideal of S . Is this true for non-commutative rings?

d) Suppose that f is surjective. Prove that if P is a maximal ideal of S then $f^{-1}(P)$ is maximal in R . Prove that if Q is a maximal ideal of R then $f(Q)$ is either S or it is a maximal ideal of S . Show by example that a similar statement for prime ideals is false.

e) Find all prime ideals of $\mathbb{Z}/36\mathbb{Z}$.

Problem 5. Let R be a ring and n a positive integer. Prove that if I is an ideal of the ring $M_n(R)$ then $I = M_n(J)$ for some ideal J of R . Prove that I is maximal iff J is maximal. Prove that I is prime iff J is prime. Conclude that if R is simple (prime) then so is $M_n(R)$.

Problem 6. Let I be a prime ideal of R . Prove that if J, K are left ideals of R such that $JK \subseteq I$ then either $J \subseteq I$ or $K \subseteq I$. Hint: Consider the set of all a such that $aK \subseteq I$ and prove that it is an ideal containing J .