

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Surfaces	3
2.1	Surfaces as 2-dimensional manifolds	3
2.1.1	Basic definitions	3
2.1.2	Surfaces with boundary	4
2.1.3	Gluing surfaces	6
2.2	Surfaces as combinatorial objects	8
2.2.1	Ribbon graphs	8
2.2.2	Classification of surfaces I: Existence	13
2.3	The fundamental group of a surface	17
2.3.1	The fundamental group of a topological space	17
2.3.2	Cayley graph and presentation complex	20
2.3.3	Classification of surfaces II: Uniqueness	22
2.4	Combinatorial versions of the fundamental group	22
2.4.1	A combinatorial description using a ribbon graph	23
2.4.2	A combinatorial description of the fundamental group using covers	24
2.5	Cohomology of surfaces	25
2.5.1	de Rham cohomology	25
2.5.2	Ribbon graphs and cohomology	30
2.5.3	The intersection form	33
2.6	Comments, references and further reading	35
3	Vector bundles and connections	37
3.1	Vector bundles	37
3.1.1	Definitions	37
3.1.2	Constructions	40
3.2	Vector bundles with structures	41
3.2.1	Vector bundles over manifolds	43
3.3	Connections	44
3.3.1	Koszul connection	44
3.3.2	Constructions	46
3.3.3	Gauge equivalence and action of the gauge group	47
3.3.4	Holonomy along a path	47
3.3.5	Holonomy and linear differential equations	48
3.3.6	Curvature	49
3.3.7	Flat connections	49
3.3.8	Connections preserving structures	50
3.3.9	The holonomy map of a flat connection	51

3.4	Combinatorial versions of connections	52
3.4.1	Discrete connections on ribbon graphs	52
3.4.2	Local systems	53
3.5	Four models of the representation variety	54
3.5.1	Flat connections and local systems	54
3.5.2	Local systems and representations	55
3.5.3	Smooth and discrete connections	56
3.6	Comments, references and further reading	57
4	Twisted cohomology	58
4.1	de Rham version of twisted cohomology	58
4.1.1	Motivation: variation of connection	58
4.1.2	de Rham version of twisted cohomology	61
4.2	A combinatorial version	64
4.2.1	The combinatorial complex	65
4.2.2	The Isomorphism Theorem	66
4.2.3	Duality	68
4.2.4	Proof of Theorem 4.1.7	71
4.3	Torsion	72
4.3.1	Determinants	72
4.3.2	An isomorphism between determinants	73
4.3.3	The torsion of a metric complex	74
4.3.4	The torsion of a flat metric connection	74
4.3.5	Torsion and symplectic complexes	76
4.3.6	Parallel metrics on bundles	78
4.4	Comments, references and further reading	79
5	Moduli spaces	80
5.1	Moduli space and character variety	80
5.2	Topology and smooth structure	81
5.3	Proof of Theorem 5.2.6	83
5.3.1	The Zariski closure of a group	84
5.3.2	More on the holonomy map	87
5.3.3	The Zariski dense part is Zariski open and non-empty	89
5.3.4	The action is proper	90
5.3.5	The moduli space and its tangent space	92
5.3.6	The complement of the Zariski dense part	93
5.4	Connected components	93
5.4.1	Connected components I: the compact case	93
5.4.2	Connected components II : an invariant	95
5.4.3	Connected components III: Milnor–Wood Inequality	96
5.4.4	Connected components IV: Goldman’s work	99
5.5	Comments, references and further reading	99

6 Symplectic structure	101
6.1 Universal connections and smooth structures	101
6.1.1 Lifting lemmas	101
6.1.2 Universal connections	102
6.2 The symplectic form	103
6.3 Classical mechanics and observables	104
6.4 Special observables I: Wilson loops and the Goldman algebra	105
6.5 Special observables II: Spin networks	109
6.5.1 An observable on the space of all flat connections	110
6.5.2 Poisson bracket of spin network observables	111
6.6 Volumes of moduli spaces	113
6.6.1 Witten's formula	113
6.6.2 Volume and the disintegrated measure	114
6.6.3 Characters and the disintegrated measure	116
6.7 Comments, references and further reading	118
7 3-manifolds and integrality questions	120
7.1 Integrality	120
7.1.1 The Cartan form	121
7.1.2 Integrating the Cartan form	121
7.2 Boundary of 3-manifolds and Lagrangian submanifolds	125
7.2.1 Submanifolds of the moduli space	125
7.2.2 Isotropic submanifold	126
7.2.3 Chern–Simons invariants	126
7.2.4 Chern–Simons action difference and the symplectic form	129
7.3 Comments, references and further reading	131
Bibliography	132
Index	137