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Adventures in Geometric Topology: An Introduction to the Mapping Class Group

The mapping class group is one of the key algebraic invariants of a topological space, and a chief tool for studying the automorphism group of a manifold. Frequently omitted from undergraduate curriculum, mapping class groups are an essential component of geometric topology, and geometric group theory. This will be an expository (and pictorial!) talk introducing students to these ideas, including their wider role in hyperbolic geometry and the study of moduli spaces. Familiarity with topology at the level of Munkres' "Topology" will be assumed.