

Preface

When visiting M.I.T. for two weeks in October 1994, Victor Guillemin made me enthusiastic about a problem in symplectic geometry which involved the use of the so-called spin-c Dirac operator. Back in Berkeley, where I had spent a sabbatical semester¹, I tried to understand the basic facts about this operator: its definition, the main theorems about it, and their proofs. This book is an outgrowth of the notes in which I worked this out. For me this was a great learning experience because of the many beautiful mathematical structures which are involved.

I thank the Editorial Board of Birkhäuser, especially Haim Brézis, for suggesting the publication of these notes as a book. I am also very grateful for the suggestions by the referees, which have led to substantial improvements in the presentation. Finally I would like to express special thanks to Ann Kostant for her help and her prodding me, in her charming way, into the right direction.

J.J. Duistermaat

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Duistermaat, J.J.

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