

MSCS



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Department of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science
St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN 55057

April 17, 2009
Volume 37, No 16

This Week's Colloquium

Title: **Merchandising
Decomposition Analysis
(MDA)**

Presenter: Columbus Morfaw

Date: Tuesday, April 21st

Time: 1:30 pm

Location: SC 188

About the talk: This talk addresses one solution to the challenges of measuring the return on investment (ROI) of retail price optimization. That solution is merchandising decomposition analysis (MDA). Topics in the talk include a science review, how MDA uses models and MDA price detection logic.

About the speaker: Columbus Morfaw was born and raised in Rome, Italy before heading to the United States to earn his Bachelor's of Science in Mathematics at High Point University, North Carolina. He now works for Target Corporation as a business analyst, specifically in the area of strategic pricing.

Pilot Version of CS Course

Flash! This just in from the CS program:

In the fall, we will be offering an experimental section A of CS 121, focusing on science and math, and using Python.

Note that all sections of CS 121 develop programming skills, all satisfy MAR/AQR and all sections have no prerequisites. However, the pilot section A is designed for an audience of students in Science and Mathematics, whereas other sections are designed for a heterogeneous audience—anyone from a humanities major to a math or science major.

What you need to know about these two sections:

- CS 121 sections B and C will feature multimedia applications, using the Scheme programming language, as before.
- CS 121 section A will be a pilot section featuring applications to Science and Mathematics, using the Python programming language.

For more information, go to the CS website at www.stolaf.edu/depts/cs/academics/courses/cs1.html or contact Dick Brown (rab@stolaf.edu, x3860).

April is Math Awareness Month

Instituted in 1986 as a week, and lengthened to a month in 1999, Mathematics Awareness Month aims to make math more visible and also demonstrate interesting and important ideas from the world of mathematics to the general public.

Each year, a theme is chosen for Mathematics Awareness Month. This year's theme is "Mathematics and Climate;" previous years' themes have included topics such as voting, internet security, the human genome, art and much more.



If you've ever tried to explain the appeal of math to math-phobic friends or family, try pointing them in the direction of (www.mathaware.org); check it out yourself as well! The site includes a list of Math Awareness Month events taking place across the country as well as a selection of essays, papers and sound clips with topics relating to this year's theme, including travel/research experiences in the Arctic and Antarctic, as well as papers on sea ice, hurricanes and more.

MAA Elections

This is just a friendly reminder that it's not too late to run for office in St Olaf's Math Association of America (MAA) executive council. There are seven positions in the council: president, vice-president, treasurer, and senior, junior, sophomore, and first-year class representatives. All returning students are eligible for any position except first-year representative. Please contact Jonathan Woolums (woolums@stolaf.edu) by Friday, April 24th if you wish to run for a position.

Problem of the Week

Find the sum $S = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{k^2}{3^k}$.

Solutions to last week's problem are posted at SC 222. Send your solution to this week's problem to Prof. Gower (SC 222, gower@stolaf.edu) by Friday, April 24, 2009.



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If you would like to submit an article or math event to be published in the Math Mess, e-mail kochc@stolaf.edu.