

Math 2890, Games of Strategy: Contract Bridge I

Course Information

Fall 2018

Professor: Dr. Lisa Mantini, 410 Math Sciences

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- ◇ Instructor's office hours: TW 1:30-2:20, R 11:30-12:20, and by appointment.
- ♣ Course Times: M 4:00-5:15 PM in 422 MSCS.

Course Assistants: Two of our former students, Phillip Pergande and Robert Wolff, will assist in class this semester.

Course Objectives: In this course we will learn the basics of playing the game Contract Bridge, one of the world's best and most difficult games of strategy. We will study several aspects of the game:

- ♠ the nature of a trick-taking game and evaluating our hand;
- ♡ the *auction* phase, in which we use the bids we make as a language to describe the strength and shape of our hand and to decide on the final contract;
- ◇ the *declarer play* phase, in which we analyze the best way to take as many tricks as we committed to in the auction; and
- ♣ the *defense*, in which we try to prevent declarer from making his contract.

Bridge is a game that can amuse us for a lifetime. Interested students might consider continuing to play next semester in the OSU Bridge Club or playing duplicate bridge at the Stillwater Duplicate Bridge Club or in other ACBL-sanctioned events.

Prerequisites: This class is open to Honors students who are enrolled in any Math course at the level of Math 2144, Calculus I, or above.

Texts and supplies: There are two texts for this course, both provided free of charge by the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL). They are:

- ♠ *ACBL Bidding in the 21st Century*, by Audrey Grant and Betty Starzec, American Contract Bridge League, 1990. Spiral-bound copies are available in the cupboard in the back of the classroom, and a pdf scan of each chapter has been uploaded to D2L.
- ♡ *Learn to Play Bridge 1*, by Fred Gitelman, BridgeBase, Inc., 2005, an e-book that can be downloaded from the ACBL, for Windows computers only (Mac users will have to use a virtual Windows app in order to run this program). A zip file containing the executable file ltpb1setup.exe has been uploaded to D2L.

In order to practice at home, you will also need:

- ◇ **Bridge cards**, at least one deck, available for you to keep as provided by the club *Fun and Games Duplicate Bridge* in North Park Mall in OKC.
- ♣ three **friends** to play with you!

Course Format: In this course we meet once a week to learn the mechanics of bridge and to play. We will have lessons on bidding or play, some practice hands, and then free play. On some weeks there will be a short assignment (“quiz”) in D2L to be done before the next class. During the semester we will have two open book quizzes. We will also have three major Game Days, played by partnership student pairs in the competitive style as duplicate bridge. Winning student pairs may win master points.

Course requirements: In this course you are required to attend class, to make a sincere effort to learn to play the game, and to treat all other students in the class with friendliness and respect. Your course grade is based primarily on your attendance and active participation, with a few open book quizzes and homework assignments. A total of 200 points are available, distributed as follows. Earning 90% of the available points guarantees the grade of A, and 80% guarantees a B.

Item	Points	Total
Attendance on 13 non-game days	5 points	65 points
Homework and quizzes	5–20 points	65 points
Halloween Game Day, October 29	20 points	20 points
Thanksgiving Game Day, November 19	20 points	20 points
Final Game Day, December 10, 6:00–7:50 PM	30 points	30 points
Total		200 points

Major Dates: Dates for the major course events are as follows:

- ♠ Quizzes are scheduled for **October 15** and **November 26**. These are group discussion quizzes which are open book, open notes.
- ♡ Halloween Game Day 1: **October 29**. This is a partnership duplicate game. You may wear costumes. There will be Halloween candy as prizes.
- ◇ Thanksgiving Game Day: **November 19**. This is also a partnership duplicate game. No turkey will be served, but we can talk about pumpkin pie.
- ♣ Final Game Day: **December 10, 6:00–7:50 PM** (note time change), during our final exam period. I’ll buy pizza if folks can come a bit early and be done eating before 6:00 PM.

ACBL and Master Points: The American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) is the governing body for competitive bridge on this continent. They award and maintain records of the master points earned by competitive bridge players. As I am a certified bridge instructor, I am permitted to award master points for student games which follow ACBL guidelines. Students who wish to continue playing duplicate bridge and keep their master points will need to join the ACBL. The membership dues for students are \$5 per year, for as long as you are 25 years old or younger.

Online resources: There are many online resources to learn more about bridge or to play against others, or against robots, including the ACBL web site (www.acbl.org), the Bridge World Magazine (www.bridgeworld.com), and an online playing platform called Bridge Base Online (www.bridgebase.com).