

Math 2890, Games of Strategy: Contract Bridge I

Course Information

Fall 2017

Professor: Dr. Lisa Mantini, 410 Math Sciences

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- ▷ Course Times: T 3:30-4:45 PM in 422 MSCS.
- ▷ Instructor's office hours: M 3:30-4:30 PM, W 1:00-2:00 PM, R 2:30-3:30 PM, and by appointment.

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 learn to communicate with our partner through the abstract language of bidding. We will then learn to analyze our holding to determine the best line of play. Our discussions of strategy will use critical thinking and analytic skills and may touch on probability, decision theory, and even psychology in attempts to mislead our opponents! Bridge is a game that can amuse us for a lifetime. Interested students might consider the possibility of forming an OSU Bridge Club in the future and/or competing in some collegiate events sponsored by the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL), the game's governing body on this continent.

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.

Text: The text has been provided for students without charge from the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL). It is the first in a series, entitled

- *ACBL Bidding in the 21st Century*, by Audrey Grant and Betty Starzec.

The ACBL club *Fun and Games Duplicate Bridge* in Oklahoma City provided us with used decks of cards. Membership in the ACBL is optional (see below).

Computer and Online Resources: There are several optional computer and online resources useful for learning contract bridge.

- ▷ The ACBL can provide a program to download and install on your computer called *Learn to Play Bridge I and II*. You may download the program by providing contact information to the ACBL at <https://web3.acbl.org/newmembers/free-learn-software>
- ▷ You may also use an online tutorial found at www.learn2playbridge.com, also maintained by the ACBL.
- ▷ You may play bridge online at www.bridgebase.com, either with robots or with other human beings. They even have an app you can install on your smart phone!

Course Format: In this course we meet once a week to learn the mechanics of bridge and to play. We will first play the game Minibridge, to experience the play of the cards

without the confusion of bidding. Then we will start learning the language of bidding. Most class sessions will consist of our completing a worksheet to accompany a lesson, followed by practice hands. The lessons will touch on bidding, play of the cards as declarer, and play of the cards by the defense. Many weeks we will have a short homework assignment. During the semester we will have three 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.

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.

Field trips: The ACBL and local duplicate clubs sponsor games and tournaments, and we may take a field trip to such an event later in the semester if students are interested.

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 your active participation, as well as a few open book quizzes and a few homework assignments. A total of 200 points are available, distributed as follows.

Item	Points Available	Total
Attendance on non-quiz, non-game days	5 points each	50 points
Game Day Attendance (3)	20 points each	60 points
Quizzes, open book and open notes (3)	20 points each	60 points
Homework (6)	5 points each	30 points
Total		200 points

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

- ▷ Quiz 1: 26 September
- ▷ Quiz 2: 24 October
- ▷ Game Day 1: 31 October. You may wear costumes. There will be Halloween candy as prizes.
- ▷ Quiz 3: 21 November. There is some chance this quiz will be online as I may be out of town during the week before Thanksgiving at a professional development event.
- ▷ Game Day 2: 28 November
- ▷ Game Day 3: 14 December, 2:00–3:50 PM, during our final exam period.