

Great Issues In Humanities: Perspectives On Gambling

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Palenske 226

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Web schedule: <http://mathcs.albion.edu/~mbollman/Fall25.html>

Office hours: MW 11-12, R 2-3, F 12-1

–Also by appointment. I'm around fairly often–feel free just to drop by.

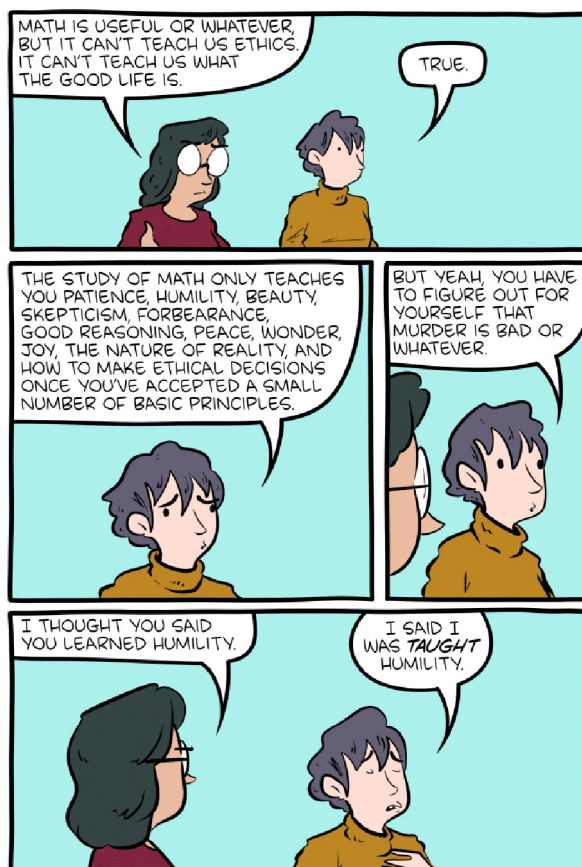
Course URL: <http://mathcs.albion.edu/~mbollman/Honors/index.html>

–Reading assignments will be posted here, as will discussion questions, project material, and other news of interest. Note that this is *not* the Albion course web site.

Grading:

Daily reading quizzes	100 pts.
Projects:	
1. The big picture	100 pts.
2. Indian gaming in context	100 pts.
3. The story so far.....	100 pts.
4. Casino mathematics exercises.....	100 pts.
5. Mathematics in the casino.....	100 pts.
6. Theory vs. practice.....	100 pts.
Laboratory work with R.....	100 pts.
Final project/presentation: Gambling in perspective...	200 pts.
TOTAL.....	1000 pts.

Percentage	Numerical grade
[92,100]	4.0
[90,92)	3.7
[88,90)	3.3
[82,88)	3.0
[80,82)	2.7
[78,80)	2.3
[72,78)	2.0
[70,72)	1.7
[68,70)	1.3
[60,68)	1.0
[0,60)	NC



Texts: *Roll The Bones: The History of Gambling, Casino Edition* (RTB), by David Schwartz
The Literary Companion to Gambling (TLCG), by Annabel Davis-Goff
 –Note: This title is unavailable through Brit Books. Multiple copies will be made available through alternate channels.

The Logic of Chance (TLC), by John Venn

The Unfinished Game (TUG), by Keith Devlin

Bringing Down the House (BDH), by Ben Mezrich

Basic Gambling Mathematics: The Numbers Behind the Neon, 2nd edition (BGMNBN), by Mark Bollman→

Lab sessions will meet in the Palenske 231 computer lab on the days indicated below.

Tentative schedule of events

Week of (Monday)	Reading assignments and other news (Text codes appear above)			
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Friday
8/25	Introduction	RTB Prologue & Ch. 1	RTB Ch. 2-3	TUG Ch. 1-2
9/1	Labor Day	TUG Ch. 3-4 <i>Project 1 due</i>	RTB Ch. 4	TUG Ch. 5-7
9/8	TUG Ch. 8-10	TLCG p. 1-23	RTB Ch. 5-6	TLCG p. 24-34
9/15	Lab 1	RTB Ch. 7	BGMNBN Ch. 1	RTB Ch. 8
9/22	BGMNBN Ch. 2	BGMNBN Ch. 3	TLCG p. 37-82	TLC Ch. 1-2 <i>Project 2 due</i>
9/29	Lab 2	TLC Ch. 3-4	TLC Ch. 5-6	TLCG p. 83-136
10/6	TLCG p. 137-177	TLC Ch. 7-8	BGMNBN Ch. 4	BGMNBN Ch. 5 <i>Project 3 due</i>
10/13	Fall Break		Lab 3	Silver article
10/20	BGMNBN Ch. 6	BDH Ch. 1-7	TBA	BDH Ch. 8-14
10/27	Lab 4	BDH Ch. 15-21	BDH Ch. 22-32	<i>Breaking Vegas</i> , part 1 <i>Project 4 due</i>
11/3	<i>Breaking Vegas</i> , part 2	Field trip	Aftermath	Reading TBA
11/10	TLC Ch. 9-10	TLC Ch. 11-12	RTB Ch. 9	Lab 5
11/17	RTB Ch. 10-11	RTB Ch. 12-13 <i>Project 5 due</i>	TLCG p. 181-204	TLCG p. 205-241
11/24	RTB Ch. 14-15	TLC Ch. 13-14	Thanksgiving Break	
12/1	TLC Ch. 15-16	TLC Ch. 17-19	RTB Ch. 16 <i>Project 6 due</i>	RTB Ch. 17
12/8	Final Exam Week —Meeting Thursday, 11 December, 300–500 PM. Final projects and presentations due at this meeting.			

Thoughts At Large:

1. Attendance at all class meetings (MTWF 1:00-1:50 PM, Observatory; indicated lab days in Palenske 231, same time) is required. Your decision to take this course constitutes a decision to attend class every time it meets. (This works both ways, incidentally: My decision to teach this course is a commitment to offer class sessions worth attending. I am sure you will let me know if I'm not doing that.) This course moves *extremely* rapidly, and those who miss class frequently will find themselves soon behind. Students missing *four or more days of class* (one week of class) for other than College-sponsored events or health problems as certified by a health care professional, will be ineligible for any deviation from the grading scale given above.

2. All assignments will have the due date and time clearly specified. Late assignments will receive a 25% deduction per day or fraction of a day late, and will not be accepted after graded work has been returned. Written assignments must be turned in on paper—electronic submissions will not be accepted.

3. Most non-lab classes will begin with a brief (3-5 minutes) 3-point quiz on the day's reading assignment. If you are careful about doing the reading in advance, these should pose no problem. Reading quizzes will be closed-book and closed-notes. No makeup quizzes will be given. Be on time: if you arrive in class after the quiz is over, you will not be allowed to make it up.

4. The academic dishonesty policy for this course will be that specified in the Student Handbook, with the following modification: The local penalty for confirmed cases of academic dishonesty will be a *double negative* grade on the assignment—that is, if the assignment in question is worth (for example) 100 points, your grade for that assignment will be -200 points. Note that a confirmed case of dishonesty on any of the first six written projects means that the highest grade you can earn is a 2.7, and a confirmed case of dishonesty on the final project will make it impossible for you to pass the course.

5. Regarding ChatGPT and similar AI assistance: I would urge you in the strongest possible terms to resist the temptation to use online sources such as ChatGPT when completing assignments. Using AI to do your work is not unlike taking a forklift to the gym when you're going to lift weights—it will get the job done, but it won't benefit you in the way that you need. Confirmed use of AI on any assignment will be regarded as academic dishonesty and will be addressed in accordance with point #4 above.

6. Unless you are an EMT, cardiac surgeon, arms-control negotiator, or person serving in some other life-saving capacity in your spare time, your cell phone is to be turned off and put away while you are in this class. If I see or *hear* your cell phone during class, you will receive a 2% deduction in your final grade, cumulative with each incident.

There is one exception: Each day's discussion leaders may keep an Internet-ready device handy during class in the event that we need, as a group, to look something up.

7. Laptop computers are allowed in class only with my preapproval, and then only for circumstances of documented need.

8. There will be no extra credit assignments in this course. Please don't ask.

9. Everything submitted to a professor in writing, be it email, homework, essay, or lab report, should follow the rules of (American) English grammar and spelling to the best of the writer's ability. The easiest way to contact me is via email. For insight into how to properly email a professor, check out the advice at

<https://mledgy.blogspot.com/2005/01/how-to-e-mail-professor.html>.

I will not respond to any email that starts with the word "Hey".

10. Most class sessions will be discussion-based, with most discussions to be led by students. Everyone will have several opportunities to lead the day's discussion. Failure to lead an equitable share of class discussions will result in a lowered grade.

Guidelines for discussion leaders

- ★ There will usually be two persons responsible for a reading. Work together.
- ★ When preparing to lead a discussion, you may assume that everyone has read the assignment carefully. Therefore, it is not necessary to give a general summary of the material.
- ★ Focus the discussion on issues, arguments, interpretations, cultural contexts, contemporary applications, or difficult points in the reading. The only restrictions are that the discussion questions pertain to the reading and be worth our time and energy. If you think that a question is interesting or are confused about something presented in the day's reading, that's probably good enough to submit it.
- ★ In class: Take your role as discussion leader seriously, and do not hesitate to call upon your fellow students.
- ★ Email your questions or discussion points to me no later than **12:00 midnight** the night before. Discussion questions will be posted to the class Web site each day. Note well: This requires advance preparation—it's not a good idea to wait until the day before your turn as discussion leader to read the material.

11. This course fulfills the **Historical and Cultural Analysis Mode of Inquiry** in the College core: Courses in this mode focus on how human knowledge is determined by its cultural and historical context, and how this knowledge in turn shapes cultures and creates historical change. In order to fulfill this mode of inquiry, courses must:

- Include material significantly removed from the students' experience either by virtue of cultural or historical distance;
- Direct students to investigate their own cultural and historical moment from a perspective informed by their study of culture or history;
- Require students to explore the specific cultural context of artifacts, to the extent that the course covers artifacts of a different culture or from a different historical period.

12. Additionally, the Prentiss M. Brown Honors Program has adopted the following student learning outcomes for honors courses, which will be assessed in the fall of 2025.

- Written and Oral Communication Skills: Students will be able to demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills.
- Analytic Skills: Students will be able to analyze and respond to scholarly arguments.



This syllabus is Y10K compliant.

The following information is required by the College:

1. Reporting Discriminatory Harassment

Albion College seeks to create a welcoming environment in which all students can learn, but we recognize that harassment may still occur. If a student experiences harassment or discriminatory treatment, there are several ways they can report it. For details, please see <https://www.albion.edu/offices/student-development/current-students/report-discriminatory-harassment/>.

2. Bias Reporting

In line with our commitment to fostering a culture of belonging on campus, we have created a bias reporting system for use by all members of our community. This tool allows students, faculty, and staff to report individual incidents of bias on or off campus and serves as a mechanism to help us address systemic issues of bias more broadly.

3. Title IX Office and Resources for Survivors of Sex-Based Discrimination and Harassment

Albion College is committed to providing an educational environment where we are all able to learn, teach, and work freely and where the dignity, safety, and self-respect of all members of our community are protected. Sex-based discrimination, sex-based harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking are incompatible with this mission and will not be tolerated at Albion College. On-campus confidential resources for victims/survivors of sexual assault include Lisa Winchell-Caldwell, Director of the Center for Gender Equity/Victim Advocate (517-629-0613) and Counseling Services (517-629-0236). Beyond campus, Sexual Assault Services of Calhoun County, Bronson Health (888-383-2192) provides 24/7 resources for survivors. For additional information about resources on and off campus, visit

<https://www.albion.edu/offices/anna-howard-shaw-center-for-gender-equity/victim-survivor-services/resources-for-survivors/>.

If you have been the victim of sex-based discrimination, sex-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, or sexual assault, please contact the College's Title IX Officer, Dr. Taran McZee (titleix@albion.edu).

4. Cutler Center for Student Success

The Cutler Center for Student Success is located in the Stockwell Library. The Cutler Center provides a number of services to support student success and serves as a one-stop hub connecting students to resources across campus. Through the Cutler Center, students access peer tutoring and writing consulting, accessibility services and accommodations, the TRIO SSS program and other services. To connect with the Cutler Center, please email us at cutler@albion.edu or stop by to be connected to the resources you need to be successful this term. The Cutler Center is open 8:00am - 5:00pm.

Student Success Surveys and Referrals: Albion College faculty and staff use a platform called Briton Connect to connect students to the resources they need to be successful. Using Briton Connect, all instructors complete a student success survey in the 4th week of classes to provide feedback regarding your academic performance, and staff may submit a referral at any time during the semester to be sure that students are connected to helpful resources. You may be contacted by a student success coach who will assist you in identifying and connecting with resources to help you be as successful as possible.

5. Accessibility Services

It is the policy of Albion College to accommodate students with disabilities and qualifying diagnosed conditions in accordance with federal and state laws. Any student who feels that they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a learning, psychiatric, physical, or chronic health diagnosis, should contact Accessibility Services Director, Elizabeth Rudolph (erudolph@albion.edu), to meet and develop a plan for reasonable accommodation(s) based on supporting documentation.

If you have completed this process and requested accommodations for this semester, plan to meet with Elizabeth as early as possible to discuss a plan for implementing these modifications in this class. It is best to schedule these meetings at least one week prior to their implementation. Accessibility Services is housed in the Cutler Center on the first floor of the Stockwell Library and is open Monday-Friday, 8:00am-5:00pm. Elizabeth Rudolph, the Director for Accessibility Services, can be reached at 517-629-0628 or email erudolph@albion.edu for more information.