Instructor: Prof. Bruce Reznick, 327 Altgeld Hall, 333–4284, reznick@math.uiuc.edu. My phone has voice mail and I frequently check and reply to my email, including weekends. Office hours are by appointment. I take them seriously, and they can usually be arranged within 24 hours. You are also encouraged to ask me questions immediately before, during and after class. If you email me a course question, I will post your anonymized question and my reply on ClassComm for the benefit of the entire class. I’m terrible with names; don’t take it personally.

The course assistant is Paul Koehring. He will be the expert on the interface between you and the C&M software. I will lecture on the math content part of the time, and be available for answering mathematical questions the rest of the time.

Text and Syllabus: The syllabus can be found at http://cm.math.uiuc.edu/461syl.php The text for the course is the CR-Rom Prob/Stat &Mathematica. The plan is to cover the whole thing. There are ten chapters. Each has Basics, Tutorials, Give it a Try and Literacy. The essential material is in the Basics and the Tutorials; the homework will be taken from the Give it a Try, and the exams will be very much like the Literacy. You will get hardcopies of the Literacy sheets from the various chapters.

Homework Policy: Written homework will be assigned to be due weekly, at times yet to be determined. Collaboration in studying and working the homework is strongly encouraged! Collaboration without comprehension is a waste of time. If you do not have a work partner, let me or one of the class assistants know. If you work on a homework as a group, you may turn in one assignment with several names on it. However, you should keep a copy of what you turn in, and you will all be equally responsible for it. We will try to return comments on the assignment to everyone in the group. Our intention is to have assignments back within one week.

Late work will be corrected but not graded. Don’t fall behind!

Exam Policy: There will be three Hour Exams, at the usual intervals. The Final must be held at the scheduled time, which is Friday, December 12, from 7:00 – 10:00 pm. I don’t like it either, but I don’t have a choice.

Grading Policy: Keep in mind that I am grading your work, not you as a person. The homework counts 40%. Each Hour Exam counts 15%, and the Final Exam counts 30% The lowest 15% test will be dropped. That is, either your lowest hour exam will not count, or the final will only count as much as a regular hour exam. All grades are numerical. The highest possible grade cutoffs are: A/B – 90%, B/C – 80%, C/D – 70%, D/E – 60%, by which I mean “A-/B+”, etc. I will try to keep you posted on any curving as the semester progresses. There are two exceptions to the numerical grading: anyone who gets 96% on the Final gets an A and anyone who gets 75% on the Final will pass. Experience has shown me that these exceptions are rarely relevant.

Philosophy: Learning, like life, is a great adventure. I’ve been teaching college mathematics since the mid 70’s, and I’ve taught the standard section of probability a half dozen times. I taught Math 285 C&M once about 8 years ago. I’ve rarely been more unclear how things were going to work out in a given semester. But I have confidence in your sincere willingness to work through the course materials. Let’s have fun and do some probability!