

1067-11-1896

James P Fulton* (fultonj@sunysuffolk.edu), Suffolk County Community College, 533 College Rd, Selden, NY 11784. *A Humanistic Approach to Teaching Mathematics to the Liberal Arts Student.*

Mathematics for the Liberal Arts can be one of the most difficult classes to teach. The goals and purposes of the course are very obscure. Traditionally there are two approaches: The first randomly splices together topics such as logic, set theory, number systems, etc., with no real connection between topics. The other highlights the utility of mathematics in modeling the world around us, however, modeling requires a level of sophistication beyond many taking this course. Since this is their last exposure to mathematics we'd like it to be meaningful.

Our humanistic approach is to treat it as one of the liberal arts-a mathematics appreciation course with an underlying theme, and purpose, giving mathematicians the opportunity to showcase the real beauty and importance of mathematics. We focus on the origins of mathematics and the fundamental questions related to its development through philosophy, history, epistemology, cognition, and psychology, thereby connecting it to their other freshmen courses. Our motivation is that an educated person needs to understand the place and relevance of mathematics. They should read and understand NY Times bestsellers on mathematics. This talk presents our approach, student remarks, and the accompanying textbook developed for the course. (Received September 22, 2010)