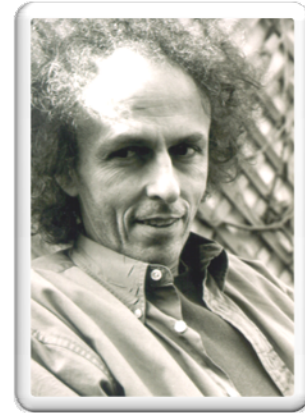


A Mathematician Plays the Stock Market

Professor John Allen Paulos
Professor of Mathematics,
Temple University, USA



Date : 5 March 2009 (Thursday)
Time : 4.30 pm – 5.30 pm
Venue: SPMS-Executive Classroom 2, MAS-03-07
School of Physical and Mathematical
Sciences

Intended for a general audience, we attempt to lay out, elucidate, and explore some of the basic conceptual mathematics of the market. We will examine - largely via vignettes and stories rather than formulas and equations - various approaches to investing as well as a number of problems, paradoxes, and puzzles, some old, some new that encapsulate issues associated with the market. Is it efficient? random? Is there anything to technical analysis, fundamental analysis, and other supposedly time-tested methods of picking stocks? How can one quantify risk? What is the role of cognitive illusion and psychological foible (to which, alas, I am not immune)? What are the most common scams? What are options, portfolio theory, short-selling, the efficient market hypothesis? Does the normal bell-shaped curve really explain the market's occasionally extreme volatility? What about fractals, chaos, and other non-standard tools? In short, what can the tools of mathematics tell us about the vagaries of the stock market?

Speaker Biography

John Paulos is an extensively kudzied author, popular public speaker, and monthly columnist for ABCNews.com and formerly for the Guardian. John earned his Ph.D. in Mathematics from the University of Wisconsin. His new book "IRRELIGION: A Mathematician Explains Why the Arguments for God Just Don't Add Up" has just been released. Other writings of his include Innumeracy (NY Times bestseller for 18 weeks), A Mathematician Reads the Newspaper (on the readers' list of the Random House Modern Library's compilation of the 100 best nonfiction books of the century), Once Upon a Number (chosen by the LA Times as one of the best books of 1998), and A Mathematician Plays the Stock Market (a brief tenant on the BusinessWeek bestsellers list). He has also written scholarly papers on probability, logic, and the philosophy of science, as well as various publications in the NY Times, the Wall Street Journal, Forbes, the Nation, Discover, the American Scholar, and the London Review of Books. John has appeared frequently on radio and television, including a four-part BBC adaptation of A Mathematician Reads the Newspaper and appearances on the Lehrer News Hour, 20/20, Larry King, and David Letterman. In 2002, he received the University Creativity Award and in 2003 the American Association for the Advancement of Science award for promoting public understanding of science.

Host: Prof. Sinai Robins, Division of Mathematical Sciences, School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences

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