

Math is Key Public Lecture

How To Bake Pi: making abstract mathematics palatable

Why does mathematics inspire love in some people and fear in others? Why do some people think mathematics is important for everyone while others think it is a collection of gibberish touching little of the world beyond the brains of some rare geniuses? Why do some think it is a creative art akin to poetry and music, while others think it is a boring tool for producing answers?

In this talk I will present mathematics as a way of thinking, and not just about numbers. I will use a variety of unexpectedly connected examples including music, juggling and baking. My aim is to show that math can be made

fun, intriguing and relevant for people of all ages, by means of hand-on activities, examples that everyone can relate to, and peculiar anecdotes. I will

present surprisingly high level mathematics including some advanced abstract algebra usually only seen by math undergraduates or PhD students, yet show how to make it accessible even to children.

My message is relevant to those who wish to spread their love of math, as well as those who wish to overcome their fear of it. There will be a distinct emphasis on edible examples.



Dr. Eugenia Cheng



Dr. Eugenia Cheng, scientist-in-residence at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and senior lecturer of pure mathematics at University of Sheffield, will give the Math Is Key talk on Tuesday, March 6.

Her new book, *Beyond Infinity: An Expedition to the Outer Limits of Mathematics*, sends non-mathematicians on a journey to explore the concept of infinity. Cheng's mathematical interests include higher-dimensional category theory. As a scholar, public speaker and author she has also explored her passion of explaining mathematics to non-mathematicians to rid the world of math phobia – often using food and baking analogies. She has appeared on *The Late Show* with Stephen Colbert and has been interviewed by NPR and the BBC.

She is also the founder of *Liederstube*, a non-for-profit aiming to bring classical music to a wider audience. She also performs classical piano as a solo and collaborative pianist, gives piano lessons and is a voice coach.

Tuesday, March 6, 2018 at 3:30 p.m.
in MATH 175 (Lecture Hall)

Refreshments to precede talk at 3 p.m. in the Mathematics Library Lounge.
A book signing will take place after the talk in lobby outside MATH 175