

Discrete Mathematics Seminar

Illinois State University

2:00–2:50 pm, August 26

Speaker: Michael Santana, Grand Valley State University

A Graph Theory Approach to Seating People at Parties

You're hosting a party with at least three people, and you want to seat everyone around a large table so that each person is friends with the person on their left and the person on their right. How do you know when you can do this? This seemingly innocent question turns out to be quite difficult to answer! On the other hand, the question becomes (MUCH) easier when you don't require that everyone be seated at the table (so you're okay with some people standing around). In this talk we'll consider both questions (focusing mainly on the second question), look at several extensions of these questions, and see how doing research in mathematics can be like playing the wooden block game, Jenga. This talk will be prepared for a general audience and no graph theory background or knowledge is required.

