

Undergraduate Colloquium in Mathematics

Wednesday, Nov. 1st, 3:30-4:30 PM

STV 308

Mathematics and Astronomy

Sunil Chebolu, ISU

What is the distance to the Moon? What is the distance to the Sun? What is the circumference of the Earth? What is the orbit of Mars and other planets?

Nowadays it is easy to answer such questions with the help of Google. But for the ancients, these were very difficult questions. I will explain how the ancient Greek astronomers came up with ingenious methods using simple geometry and trigonometry to answer these questions with a reasonable degree of accuracy. The only tools they had used in their experiments were sticks, rulers, sundials and sextants.

