Course Announcement

ORIE 6334 Combinatorial Optimization, Fall 2011
[The Design of Approximation Algorithms]

Instructor: David Shmoys (231 Rhodes Hall, 255-9146; david.shmoys@cornell.edu)


Website: http://people.orie.cornell.edu/~shmoys/or6334

Schedule: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:40am - 12:55pm, Phillips 307, Fridays, 10:10am - 11:25pm, Hollister 320 (but not Friday, August 26th)

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1-2pm; Friday 10am-12pm (excluding times when lecture meets – see below).

Required work: There will be regular problem sets, every 2-3 weeks (70%), and a take-home final exam (30%). Collaboration for brainstorming on homework problems with named partners on a per-problem basis, with at most (other) 2 partners per problem set is allowed. Each problem set turned in must be written up individually. No collaboration for the final exam will be allowed.

As the choice of textbook suggests, the focus of this course will be the design (and analysis) of approximation algorithms. The material will largely be drawn from the required book. For those happy to read an online version, the book is available at


The particular material covered will be influenced by the interests, background, and previous coursework of the students enrolled in the class. Although there are no formal prerequisites, the mathematical maturity gained by taking a course such as ORIE 6300 (Mathematical Programming) or CS 4820 (Introduction to the Analysis of Algorithms) is required for the course.

Please note the unusual schedule. The class will not meet three times each week. However, due to a heavier than normal travel schedule, to ensure that there will be 25 lecture sessions by the end of the semester, there will be periodic lectures on Friday in addition to the standard Tuesday-Thursday slot. A complete list of active time slots will be posted on the course website.