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News From the Graduate School - Educational Mathematics Spring 2021

Otterbein Office of Graduate Programs

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Graduate School News Highlights



From Dr. Barbara Schaffner, Associate Provost for Graduate Studies

Take Time to Appreciate the Work You Do

We are fast approaching the end of the COVID-19 pandemic in our country, and we could not be more pleased or thankful. Now is a time for reflection of our recent past, one that forced us all to face and acknowledge the horror of the disease and the effects on all our communities.

History from the 1918 “Spanish flu” pandemic, which wiped out entire U.S. communities, allows us to review the response from some of the nurses that served during those horrific times. As recorded in *The Spanish Influenza Pandemic of 1918-1919: New Perspectives*, a student nurse named Mabel Chilson decided to join the ranks “of helpers” but wondered “were we helpless or could we fight?” Chilson recounted her experiences as challenging, but also as positive, “emphasizing the opportunity it held for meaningful ministrations.” [Continue reading >>](#)

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Graduate Orientation



**Graduate Fall
Guest Lecture Series
October 2021**

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Educational Mathematics Broadway's Greatest Hits: A Love Affair with The Golden Ratio

The Golden Ratio is one of the traditional topics that teachers highlight when trying to convince students that “math is everywhere.” From ancient Greek architecture to the modern design of ukuleles, that eponymous irrational number of phi can be found in the human engineering of aesthetically-pleasing products.

We know that artists, builders, composers, and choreographers intentionally and purposively have used (approximately) 1.618 as a metric for designing that mimics the underlying natural patterns established through the Fibonacci sequence. What may be more surprising is that, even unbeknownst to their creators, the most successful theatrical performances have the Golden Ratio in the show's bones.

Recent research (Langston, 2021) has uncovered that Cats, Miss Saigon, Phantom of the Opera, and even (arguably) the most successful contemporary musical — Les Misérables — contain pivotal composition moments occurring in intervals that can be sub-divided into 16 golden ratio points. Although these key pivots cannot be declared the reason for the critical accolades and their long-running stature, it is difficult to dismiss that a strong correlation exists between the prevalence of phi and the popularity of a show. Furthermore, according to Langston, “There is no documentary evidence from the composers that imply any intention of aligning the musicals with the golden ratio.” [Continue reading >>](#)

Jeff Smith
MAEM Graduate Director

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