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New Wave Mathematics Lectures at CUHK to put Chaos into Order

Can chaos be studied systematically? Assistant Professor in Mathematics, Dr. Tom Y. H. Wan, at the Chinese University of Hong Kong will explain to secondary students in public lectures this Saturday (Nov 25) how "simple chaos" only require high school mathematics to understand.

"First proposed in the U.S. academic circles in the 60s, the theories of chaos now have wide applications in conducting analyses and predictions in meteorology, biological sciences and even stock market fluctuations," he explained.

"We can comfortably forecast the weather for tomorrow, but not ten days later, because any minor errors in predictions will be amplified and the accuracy much reduced. Such is the characteristic of chaos which we are seeking to conquer in our mathematical analysis," said Dr. Wan.

The lectures are the third in a series of activities entitled "New Wave Mathematics" launched early this year by the Department of Mathematics of CUHK. It is hoped that students' participation in such activities can enhance their understanding of the beautiful interaction between mathematical theories and high-speed computations, and the resultant useful applications.

Due to the overwhelming response, three identical lectures will be conducted on Saturday at the Sir Run Run Shaw Hall -- from 10 to 11 a.m., 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. -- to accommodate the more than 1,200 participants.

To be conducted in Cantonese, the lectures will present numerous examples from various sources to demonstrate the phenomenon of chaotic behaviour. These will be followed by hands-on computer sessions, question-and-answer sessions and campus tours.

The first two New Wave Mathematics lectures were also well-received, with more than 1,300 secondary students and their teachers attending.

Pre-registration is required for participation in the lectures. Enquiries may be directed to Ms Serena Yip at 2609-7729.

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