

# William Lowell Putnam Mathematics Competition -- 2011

The **William Lowell Putnam Mathematics Competition**, known more briefly as the **Putnam Exam** or the Putnam, is an annual mathematics competition open to undergraduates in the United States and Canada. Administered by the Mathematical Association of America (MAA), the Putnam is widely regarded as the most challenging undergraduate mathematics examination given in America.

The exam is written to test both technical competence in undergraduate mathematics and problem-solving skills. The Putnam Exam is given the first Saturday in December. Southern students will take it here on campus, so there is no traveling involved. The exam itself consists of twelve problems; six are given during the three-hour morning session and six are given during the three-hour afternoon session. The two sessions are separated by a two-hour lunch break, with lunch provided by the Mathematics Department.

**This year's Putnam Exam will be given on December 3, 2011. To take the exam in December, a student must register in advance. There is no cost. To register, see Dr. Ross Gingrich in EN D132 or contact him by email at [gingrichr1@southernct.edu](mailto:gingrichr1@southernct.edu). Registration will need to be completed by October 5. If you are thinking about it but are still undecided, contact Dr. Gingrich, as there is no penalty for registering but not taking the exam.**

There will be a presentation, "**Introduction to the Putnam Exam**", on **Friday, September 16, 1:10-2:00 pm**, in **EN D122**. This presentation will be designed for people unfamiliar with the Putnam, although we hope to have participation from current students who have already taken it. There will be time for questions and answers, and there will be pizza. The presentation will be followed by an informal problem-solving session from 2:00-3:00 pm.

To help Southern students prepare for the Putnam Exam, the Mathematics Department is running the **Putnam Seminar** on Friday afternoons during the Fall Semester in EN D122, the Mathematics Seminar Room. The seminar is voluntary; a student can take the exam without participating in the seminar but still must register by October 5 with Dr. Gingrich. While each seminar session is scheduled from 1:00-3:00 pm, students need not attend every session and need not be there for the entire two hours. During the sessions, we will discuss various problem solving strategies and will work on solving Putnam-like problems and problems from past Putnam exams. The first regular Putnam Seminar will be **Friday, September 23, 1:00-3:00 pm**, in EN D122.

For more information about the Putnam Exam or our Putnam Seminar, please contact Dr. Gingrich or Dr. Joseph Fields in the Mathematics Department.