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Chapter 1 : Douglas G. Kelly (Author of Introduction to Probability)

Designed for post-calculus undergraduate probability courses. This text thoroughly covers the concepts of probability, random variables, distributions, expected value, and the ramifications and applications of limit theorems.

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Chapter 2 : Introduction to Probability

Introduction to Probability / Edition 1 Designed for post-calculus undergraduate probability courses. This text thoroughly covers the concepts of probability, random variables, distributions, expected value, and the ramifications and applications of limit theorems.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. The author identifies a primary goal of wanting "to introduce all the important ideas as early in the course as possible, so that every major topic can be rehearsed often, in examples and exercises, before the course ends" p. Accordingly, Chapter 1, "Probability Models: Definitions and Examples," covers a lot of ground. Here students encounter discrete and absolutely continuous probability spaces, as well as Bernoulli and Poisson processes. The chapter also introduces basic concepts of random variables and of probability mass and density functions. Students perform calculations in- volving binomial, geometric, Poisson, hypergeometric, normal, exponen- tial, and uniform probabilities at this early stage. By exposing students to these central ideas early in the course, the author hopes to establish the foundation on which students can build a deeper knowledge and under- standing of the ideas as the course progresses. The order of topic presentation becomes more standard following the first chapter. Chapter 2 covers the algebra of probabilities that one typi- cally sees at the beginning of a probability book. Chapters 3 and 4 deal with probability distributions, including multivariate distributions, and ex- pected values. Following are chapters on functions of random variables and the central limit theorem. Conspicuously absent from this list is combinatorial probability; although the text does use examples with equally likely outcomes, it pays little attention to the counting methods on which many books dwell. Students meet the standard normal distri- bution in Chapter 1 as an example of a probability assignment to intervals of an absolutely continuous probability space; they also learn to read a table of standard normal probabilities at this point. Kelly then returns to standard normal probabilities for examples and exercises related to the al- gebra of probabilities in Chapter 2. Bivariate standard normal distributions appear in the third chapter as an example of joint distributions. Nonstan- dard normal distributions appear for the first time in a Chapter 5 exercise applying the cdf method of finding the distribution of a function of a ran- dom variable. Detailed descriptions of normal distributions then appear in Chapter 6 in the context of the central limit theorem and again in Chapter 8 as a member of the catalog of common distributions. Kelly remains true to this principle throughout the text. For example, a definition of joint probability density functions and a theorem for finding marginal densities appear only after an example of these ideas has been presented and analyzed thoroughly. Kelly strives to be "honest about mathematical details while conveying an intuitive idea of what is involved" p. He achieves this balance ad- mirably in Chapter 1 by providing informal descriptions of abstract ideas such as Borel sets and sigma fields. The text emphasizes the important role that these ideas play without expecting students to understand them in de- tail. Another illustration of the care with which Kelly handles these issues is his mention of Riemann-Stieltjes integrals for defining expectations of random variables that might be neither discrete nor absolutely continuous. The book is written very clearly. Kelly often provides studying advice for the student reader, giving hints about reading and communicating math- ematics as well as about problem solving. For example, he advises students about rounding and significant digits p. He also sprinkles his exposition with historical and biographical sketches of figures such as Polya p. I particularly like the fact that many classic problems, entertaining puzzles, and important applications appear in the exercises rather than as solved examples. Many of these exercises include detailed descriptions of the his- tory of the problem and of the principles illustrated by them. Examples of the classics include the birthday problem, derangements, the "problem of points," and the St. Among the more contempo- rary puzzles and applications are the Monty Hall problem, whether banks should have several waiting lines or just one, whether asteroids or comets present a

greater threat to the earth, models of family sizes, and a multitude of gambling dilemmas. The text includes some computer exercises asking the student to perform investigations through simulation. Answers to most of the exercises appear not at the end of the book but within a page or two of the exercise; these answers do not describe methods of solution. Al- though many exercises encourage students to explore random phenomena and to extend their knowledge and understanding, very few ask students to prove results. With the exception of an introduction to Bayesian inference in its fi- nal chapter, the book devotes little attention to the role of probability in statistical inference. Few of the exercises contain "real" data, and ideas such as p values that might be emphasized appear but briefly. Instructors who teach probability as preparation for a course in mathematical statis- tics might prefer a text that more closely links the two subjects. The book contains an appendix providing a concise review of topics from calculus and set theory that are prerequisite to studying the book; these include basic counting rules. A very thorough index includes references even to some of the exercises. Whether or not an instructor will want to adopt Introduction to Probabil- ity will depend largely on her or his reaction to its distinctive organization of topics, particularly the unusual first chapter. I recommend that instruc- tors give this book serious consideration, for it is a distinctive and valuable addition to the collection of undergraduate probability texts. Multitaper and Con- ventional Univariate Techniques. Cambridge University Press, This is a great book for any one who uses or wants to learn to use spec- tral analysis. The emphasis is on applying spectral techniques to univariate time series. The aim is broad and requires the skill that one would acquire in a basic course on mathematical statistics. The authors promise a com- plementary volume covering advance topics such as spectral analysis for multivariate time series and high-order spectra, and I hope that they keep their promise. The authors take an applied approach, not a watered-down approach. The technical details necessary for a thorough understanding of the material are included in the text or in the problem sets, and the authors supply the reader with ample references to the more theoretical details. The authors move step-by-step through the entire wonderland of the spectral analysis of time series. This includes treatment of continuous- time and discrete-time processes. Further, they give philosophical as well as practical advice. My only complaint is that there is too much notation, but one soon gets past this notation is described in a table at the front of the text. The Lectures in Mathematics series of ETH Zurich contains transcripts of postgraduate courses in various fields of mathematics. It gives a very readable account of probabilistic methods as applied to second-order lin- ear and nonlinear partial differential equations. The examples treated are chosen in such a way as to stress the versatility of the methods used. By conception, the book lends itself ideally for a postgraduate course. Cam- bridge University Press, This content downloaded from Issues and Applications [pp. Food Stamp Participation [pp.

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