

THE SECOND ANNUAL  
THOMAS L. PIRNOT  
LECTURE IN MATHEMATICS

3:30 P.M.

APRIL 14, 2009

LYTLE HALL 228

*Ramsey's Theorem:  
The Extremal Limits of Party Planning*

DR. MICHAEL PICOLLELLI  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS  
DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS  
LAFAYETTE COLLEGE

ABSTRACT

Out of any six people, there are three mutual acquaintances or three mutual strangers." This simple-looking statement may appear as little more than a recreational problem for mathematics contests (where it did once appear).

In fact, it is the very tip of a mathematical iceberg known as Ramsey Theory, a field which has played a pivotal role in the development of modern combinatorics.

In this talk, we will explore the fundamental result in this area, Ramsey's Theorem, which guarantees, among other things, that a large enough party will be very good or very bad.

**Refreshments served between 3:00 and 3:30 p.m.**

**The talk begins at 3:30 p.m.**