Stanford

Richard Sommer

Lecturer

Mathematics

Bio

BIO

Rick Sommer received both his bachelors and PhD degrees in Mathematics from UC Berkeley, where he began his research in mathematical logic. Rick held a research position at MSRI in 1989 - 1990, and became a Gabor Szego Assistant Professor in the Department of Mathematics at Stanford in 1990. In 1995, Rick co-founded the Stanford University Mathematics Camp, for which he served as Director for over 25 years, and continues in a role as Consultant and Instructor. Also in the mid-90s, Rick took on a leadership role in developing online courses and residential summer programs for Stanford's Education Program for Gifted Youth (EPGY). In 2012, EPGY transformed into Stanford Pre-Collegiate Studies (SPCS), providing a home to the Stanford Online High School as well as over a dozen summer and year-around pre-collegiate programs, many of which Rick played a role in designing, developing and leading. Rick served as Executive Director of SPCS from 2015-2020. Rick is currently Lecturer in Mathematics teaching a range of courses (Math 56, 101, 110, 113, 115, 120, 161), and he also teaches logic courses in the Philosophy Department (Phil 151/252, 152/252, 352). Rick has a strong interest in mathematics education, and more generally in educational programs designed to inspire and develop the curiosity of young people. Rick is Co-Founder and Board Member of AI4ALL, working to ensure that the next generation of AI leaders reflects humanity, and he is Treasurer and Board Member of the Gathering for Gardner Foundation, stimulating curiosity and the playful exchange of ideas in mathematics and related fields, in the spirit of Martin Gardner. Additionally, Rick is on the Steering Committee of the Summer Mathematics Programs Consortium, and on the Advisory Committees of National Math Camps, Julia Robinson Math Festival, and the International Logic Olympiad. In his spare time, Rick runs marathons, tends his garden, enjoys travel, and spends time with family.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Lecturer, Mathematics

Teaching

COURSES

2025-26

- Advanced Set Theory: PHIL 352 (Win)
- Groups and Rings: MATH 120 (Spr)
- Number Theory for Cryptography: MATH 110 (Aut)
- Proofs and Modern Mathematics: MATH 56 (Win)

2024-25

- Linear Algebra and Matrix Theory: MATH 113 (Aut, Win)
- Metalogic: PHIL 151, PHIL 251 (Win)

- Number Theory for Cryptography: MATH 110 (Aut)
- Set Theory: MATH 161 (Spr)

2023-24

- Computability and Logic: PHIL 152, PHIL 252 (Spr)
- Functions of a Real Variable: MATH 115 (Aut)
- Math Discovery Lab: MATH 101 (Win)

2022-23

- Advanced Set Theory: PHIL 352 (Win)
- Set Theory: MATH 161 (Aut)