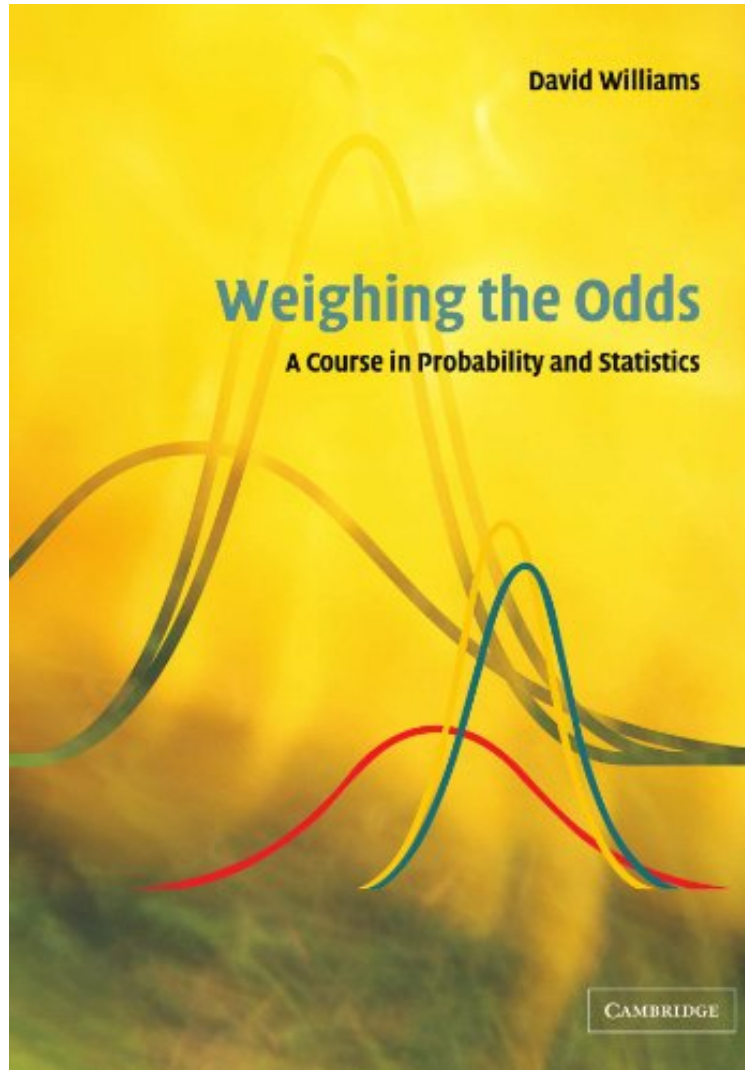


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# Weighing the Odds: A Course in Probability and Statistics

*David Williams*

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**David Williams : Weighing the Odds: A Course in Probability and Statistics** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Weighing the Odds: A Course in Probability and Statistics:

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Beautiful BookBy blissThe biggest problem with this book is that it might require a bit background to appreciate. To be fair to the author he makes this very clear on the first page of the preface, that it's intended for two types of people: (1) people with at least a year of probability/statistics and are familiar with the mechanics (2) people with pure math backgrounds. I fit in both categories and found the book very enjoyable. If you're neither, you'll probably find the book confusing. So most likely it won't be a good intro text or reference book or the only probability/statistics book you'll ever open, if you don't have a math background. (If you

have to buy Sheldon Ross's book to make sense out of a course, this book was not intended for you...)That aside the book is really beautifully written. He has a bit of a rambling style, probably because the book came from a class he taught, according to the preface. So there are qa's, side remarks, and all the examples/exercises are actually interesting and important. Someone complained about lack of proofs - you can find them in any standard text, but the intuition is much more valuable in order to make the material more than just mechanical. If you're like me and know what it feels like to have a bad professor who just copies the textbook line by line on the board without bothering to actually communicate with you, this is the opposite. It's amazing that he's distilled so much insight into this book and made it so accessible.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fun, engagingBy AmadeoFun, engaging, and at times challenging. This is definitely the best introductory probability book ... well, introductory if you are already mathematically sophisticated enough, and engaging if you are willing to do almost all the exercises.The only two things that I have with this book is, first, at places it reads too much like an encyclopaedia, especially in the parts on statistics. The author tries to cram too much stuff into too little space. Second, there are quite a number of typos, many of them in the exercises, which will take quite some time for the reader to debug (which may provide even better exercise than originally intended, but still ...)15 of 18 people found the following review helpful. vintage williamsBy A CustomerThis is a delightful introduction to probability and mathematical statistics. There are already quite a few nice probability texts at this level (Jim Pitman's PROBABILITY is a favorite of mine) and many serviceable introductions to mathematical statistics (Rice's MATHEMATICAL STATISTICS AND DATA ANALYSIS and Cassella Berger's STATISTICAL INFERENCE are good examples), but Williams is very different from these. He manages to teach a lot of beautiful probability along with some practical statistics. The approach is thoroughly modern (including in depth coverage of modern Bayesian methods) and reasonably applied (much more applied than you would expect from his other books). He is opinionated, but never boring.The only negatives I can think of are (1) too few problems, especially easy problems; (2) quite a few typos--it's a first printing; and (3) some asides, especially on measure theoretic issues, that the target audience may find more confusing than helpful.I wish this book had been around when I first studied this material.

In this lively look at both subjects, David Williams convinces Mathematics students of the intrinsic interest of Statistics and Probability, and Statistics students that the language of Mathematics can bring real insight and clarity to their subject. He helps students build the intuition needed, in a presentation enriched with examples drawn from all manner of applications. Statistics chapters present both the Frequentist and Bayesian approaches, emphasizing Confidence Intervals rather than Hypothesis Test, and include Gibbs-sampling techniques for the practical implementation of Bayesian methods. A central chapter gives the theory of Linear Regression and ANOVA, and explains how MCMC methods allow greater flexibility in modeling. C or WinBUGS code is provided for computational examples and simulations.

"This book presents most of the topics usually found in a full-year sequence on probability and mathematical statistics." The American Statistician"This well-written, interesting, and very useful book provides a lively look and interactions between mathematics, statistics, and probability...An excellent book. Highly recommended." CHOICE