

**IDS 101-19: Living Mathematics**  
**Fall 2008**  
**Paper #1: The Value of Mathematics**

**Paper topic:** What is the value of mathematics? Does mathematics have inherent value for its own sake, independent of its usefulness in the world? If so, what is it? Is mathematics valuable because it's beautiful, or because it's useful, or for some other reason(s)? We've read a variety of strong opinions on this subject in the readings, and heard them in class discussions and in *The Math Life*. Articulate your own opinion, and relate it to other opinions we've seen (by either agreeing or disagreeing with them, or both). You aren't required to answer all of these questions; they're just the starting point for you to begin formulating your ideas.

**An excellent paper should include:** All the items in our "features of good academic papers" list developed in class. I will edit this list and distribute it in class on Tuesday.

**What's due when:**

1. A thesis topic, one or two sentences, in class Thursday September 11.
2. At least one meeting with Alicia sometime between now and October 3. You are encouraged, but not required, to meet with her twice: once for your first draft, and once for your final draft. Please make your appointment several days in advance.
3. A first draft of your paper, 1100–1400 words, Thursday September 18. Bring 3 hard copies of your draft to class and e-mail me an electronic copy.
4. A final draft of your paper, 1100–1400 words, Thursday October 3. Bring 1 hard copy to class and e-mail me an electronic copy.