



CLAREMONT CENTER for  
the MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES

CCMS COLLOQUIUM

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AN INTRODUCTION TO SURFACE TENSION  
(OR WHY RAINDROPS ARE SPHERICAL)

by

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**REVISED ABSTRACT**

A common misconception is that raindrops take the form of teardrops. In fact, they tend to be nearly spherical due to surface tension forces. This is an example of how at small scales fluid molecules' tendency to adhere to each other is the dominate effect driving a fluid's motion. In this talk we will explain how surface tension arises from intermolecular forces. We will also examine some examples of the behavior that can occur at small scales due to the balance between fluid-fluid and fluid-solid forces, with applications as varied as understanding how detergents help clean clothes to the design of fuel tanks in zero gravity environments.

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**Wednesday, October 28, 2009, at 4:15pm**

Millikan 134, Pomona College

**Refreshments served at 3:45 p.m.**

Harry Mullikin Room, Millikan 209

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*The dinner will be hosted by Prof. Allon Percus  
If interested in attending, call ext. 70744*