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Ledzewicz applies math to health sciences

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For many people, mathematics is the first subject that is almost detached from reality. Yet, many of the most important things we do in life can be related to mathematics. Professor Ursula Ledzewicz teaches a class called "Drawn in Copper, Italian Prints in the Middle Ages," which leads students to understand the kind of accidents and safety issues we can prevent.

"I grew up in a very abstract world of mathematics. It was a different world. It was like nothing I've seen," Professor Ledzewicz said. "It was one of my colleagues from Poland who first thought of using mathematics in the Universe of Science." Ledzewicz was born in Poland and attended a distinguished high school there. She earned a degree in mathematics and statistics at the University of Warsaw in 1975, and she went on to study in London, Poland. Ledzewicz obtained her doctorate in mathematics at the University of the Massachusetts at Amherst in 1980.

"I just came back two weeks ago from a conference in New York, and I was helped by two beautiful young women, Fugan and Saba, who are both actually Iranian, but they were all part of medical schools, so they were medical doctors at the same time. One was a mathematician, the other was in the medical field and I was terrified of giving a talk at Scientific Communication. It was just how you want you want to be a woman in Iran during that time and the details aside." She noted that mathematics is one of the few subjects that have direct applications to the health sciences.

"I think for a woman giving a talk is not just the answer to the question, but also how to give the drug in the sense of dosage, frequency and sequence. If it is more than one drug, that can make a tremendous difference in the outcome of treating cancer, for example," Ledzewicz explained. "And at the same time, they have absolutely no clue from the medical point of view other than just a gut feeling or intuition of how to do it, and here where mathematics come in the picture. You construct the model which somehow makes what's out there in terms of high quality, high prescriptive books." These selection books are geared for what's out there in terms of high quality, high prescriptive books. "The Omnivore's Dilemma" by Michael Pollan is one of the best-decorated book.

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