

## Dartmouth SIAM Student Chapter Presents

### What do we Know About the Voynich Manuscript



Abstract: in 1912, a book collector named Wilfrid Voynich acquired a curious object from Europe: a 240-page, lavishly illustrated folio in an unknown script. Attempts to decipher the text have all hit a dead-end, with the jury out on which (if any) language it represents, or if it's a code or gibberish. The availability of statistical tools and ideas from machine learning opens up new ways of approaching this problem. I will talk about methods to infer simple linguistic patterns from a given text -- can we tell if a script denotes vowels and consonants? or if pages have "topics"? -- and what that might tell us about the Voynich Manuscript. Along the way, I will also introduce some commonly used machinery and algorithms in computational linguistics, and their applicability to other tasks.

By

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Carson Hall Room L02

6:00-7:30

Pizza will be served

