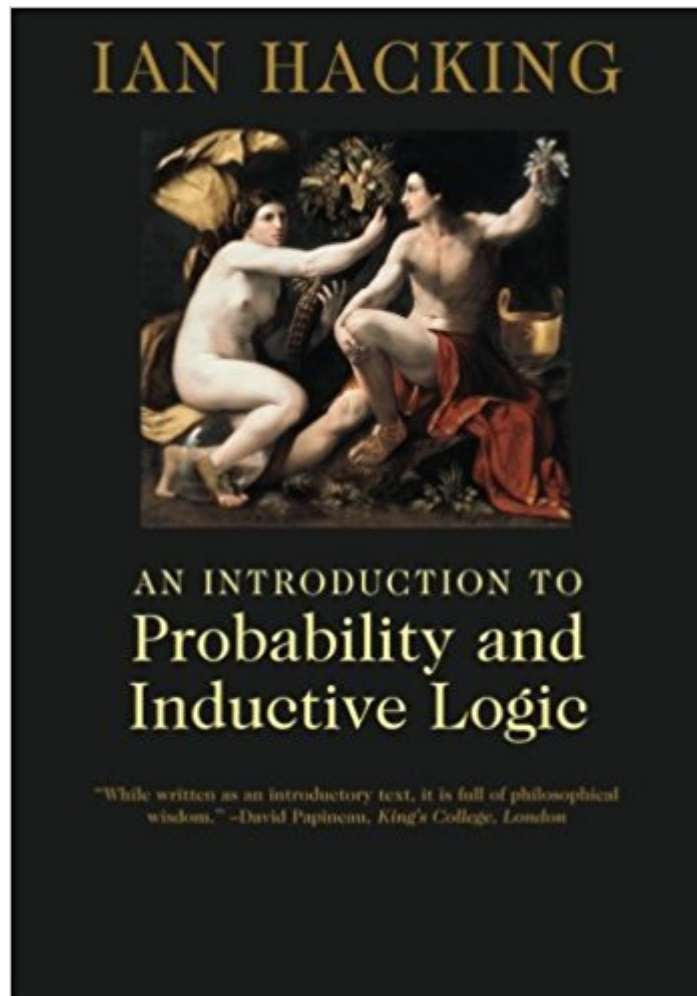




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An Introduction To Probability And Inductive Logic



Synopsis

This is an introductory textbook on probability and induction written by one of the world's foremost philosophers of science. The book has been designed to offer maximal accessibility to the widest range of students (not only those majoring in philosophy) and assumes no formal training in elementary symbolic logic. It offers a comprehensive course covering all basic definitions of induction and probability, and considers such topics as decision theory, Bayesianism, frequency ideas, and the philosophical problem of induction. The key features of the book are: * A lively and vigorous prose style* Lucid and systematic organization and presentation of the ideas* Many practical applications* A rich supply of exercises drawing on examples from such fields as psychology, ecology, economics, bioethics, engineering, and political science* Numerous brief historical accounts of how fundamental ideas of probability and induction developed.* A full bibliography of further reading Although designed primarily for courses in philosophy, the book could certainly be read and enjoyed by those in the social sciences (particularly psychology, economics, political science and sociology) or medical sciences such as epidemiology seeking a reader-friendly account of the basic ideas of probability and induction. Ian Hacking is University Professor, University of Toronto. He is Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, Fellow of the British Academy, and Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. he is author of many books including five previous books with Cambridge (The Logic of Statistical Inference, Why Does Language Matter to Philosophy?, The Emergence of Probability, Representing and Intervening, and The Taming of Chance).

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Customer Reviews

"While written as an introductory text, it is full of philosophical wisdom. Moreover, this is wisdom that most students of philosophy need but find very hard to acquire. Hacking explains all the basic ideas of probability theory, the philosophical puzzles they raise, the standard lines of response, their strengths and weaknesses. He writes with the authority of someone who has helped form the debates and understands everything properly, but at the same time he gives a fair hearing to all positions worth taking seriously. At some point in the career of most philosophy students, graduates and undergraduates alike, they read stuff, which uses probabilistic ideas and turn to their teachers for guidance. I can imagine that the teachers' automatic response for some decades to come will be to send these students to Hacking." David Papineau, King's College, London

"Hacking's textbook is likely to become the standard for inductive logic courses. He writes simply, in a lively style, without oversimplification. It starts at the beginning, and throughout uses only the simplest calculations. As it goes on, tools including P-values, confidence intervals, expected values, the basics of decision theory, and Bayesianism are introduced with mathematical honesty and refreshing philosophical scrutiny. Lively and original examples drawn from everyday life create the appropriate context to prepare students to think critically about the barrage of statistical arguments that confront us on a daily basis. From Madison Avenue's "4 out of 5 dentists choose..." to highly sophisticated economic modeling we poll and make prophecies based on statistical information regularly. Hacking's textbook sheds much needed light on the mystique reasoning." Katherine van Uum, Grinnell College, Iowa

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Offers In-depth understanding of probability despite the title. Content need to be read several times and carefully. Reflections are needed for better understanding of the topics. More appropriate for an audience with interest in science and critical thinking.

(FOUR AND A HALF STARS) This is more an intro to the PHILOSOPHY of probability and inductive

logic than an intro to the MATHEMATICS of probability of inductive logic, although some of the basic mathematical ideas are covered (which is useful if you're gonna discuss the philosophy). Do not get this book if you're just looking for a typical mathematical intro to statistics. But DO get this book if you want to know about the foundations of Bayesianism or are interested in the Frequentists vs. Bayesian debate. It is the best intro out there on the Frequentists/Bayesians issue, and it is extremely helpful for someone who is trying to get a handle on Bayesian reasoning. Also, those who are more into the mathematical aspects of probability could find this book useful in giving them a wider perspective on the subject. On the whole, it's clearly written and fun to read, although it is not an "easy" book. A basic knowledge of probability theory and some initial grasp of induction are good to have before reading this. But overall, it's highly recommended for those who want to know about the conceptual underpinnings of probability/induction in general, and Bayesian and Frequentism specifically.

This closely reflects my own (college law) teaching style: use the smallest words and simplest examples possible, to start with, and then add on the technical terminology. Starting from a very ad hoc knowledge of logic and probability, and wishing to become formally proficient, I have been digging through various books on these topics to find one remedial enough to suit me (and the more advanced books in my library are thus waiting for later perusal). Bingo! Some highbrows may feel this style is "spoon-fed" or "dumbed down." However, a good teacher, to my mind, is one who builds a good steady bridge from where the student actually is, to more advanced concepts, and this serves admirably.

I love this book. It is easy to read and provides excellent examples. Not only does it introduce the reader to Bayes' Theorem, but it also covers various gambler's fallacies. A nice addition is the lucid philosophical commentary that keeps the reader informed about the various debates about inductive logic that have taken place over the ages. With this book, a beginner can get up-to-date with the theorem (Bayes') that has recently taken both the philosophy of science and probability worlds by storm. It is great to see a solid logic book for philosophy that is not deductive. Inductive logic is important too!

Excellent book!

An essential book for understanding probability. Very clearly written.

Great for teachers and layperson willing to understand statistics and probabilities and students of philosophy.

good book

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