

FOREWORD

The Institute for Mathematical Sciences at the National University of Singapore was established on 1 July 2000 with funding from the Ministry of Education and the University. Its mission is to provide an international center of excellence in mathematical research and, in particular, to promote within Singapore and the region active research in the mathematical sciences and their applications. It seeks to serve as a focal point for scientists of diverse backgrounds to interact and collaborate in research through tutorials, workshops, seminars and informal discussions.

The Institute organizes thematic programs of duration ranging from one to six months. The theme or themes of each program will be in accordance with the developing trends of the mathematical sciences and the needs and interests of the local scientific community. Generally, for each program there will be tutorial lectures on background material followed by workshops at the research level.

As the tutorial lectures form a core component of a program, the lecture notes are usually made available to the participants for their immediate benefit during the period of the tutorial. The main objective of the Institute's Lecture Notes Series is to bring these lectures to a wider audience. Occasionally, the Series may also include the proceedings of workshops and expository lectures organized by the Institute. The World Scientific Publishing Company and the Singapore University Press have kindly agreed to publish jointly the Lecture Notes Series. This volume, "An introduction to Stein's method," is the 4th of this Series. We hope that through regular publication of lecture notes the Institute will achieve, in part, its objective of promoting research in the mathematical sciences and their applications.

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