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We introduce the $1/k$ - Eulerian polynomials, defined combinatorially as the distribution of a certain statistic over “ k -inversion sequences”. These polynomials arise naturally in the theory of lecture hall partitions, via an associated “ k -lecture hall polytope”.

We show that the Ehrhart polynomial of the k -lecture hall polytope can be computed explicitly. From this, the exponential generating of the $1/k$ - Eulerian polynomials is derived (and their name is explained). In doing so, we uncover a connection between the $1/k$ - Eulerian polynomials and the joint distribution, over the symmetric group, of excedance and number of cycles. (Received September 21, 2011)