

INTRODUCTION TO STATISTICAL THINKING IN SOCIOLOGY

ONLINE SECTION-201

Spring 2008

Sociology 261

Instructor

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Course Website: Desire-2-Learn (D2L) link off UWM Quick Links or
<https://uwm.courses.wisconsin.edu/>

IMPORTANT: Please note that I will be sending everything to your UWM email account. If you don't regularly use it, make sure you check it regularly or have your email forwarded to another account you do use regularly.

General Comments About this Course

As the course title suggests, this is an introductory course, and therefore I will assume that for most of you this will be your first exposure to statistics. In addition to a lot of "statistical thinking" and reviewing the concepts that are covered in the course textbook, this course will also include a good deal of very hands-on "statistical doing." By that I mean, the course has been designed to allow students to work with two real data sets, the General Social Survey and International Social Survey Programme, and use a statistical software package, SPSS, which is included with your textbook and will need to be installed on your computer (more on that later). So, similar to the more traditional face-2-face course I have taught for several years, this online section of the course will consist of a "lecture" and a "lab."

We will start off the course looking at some of the general principles for conducting research, and then move on to the nuts and bolts of statistics, focusing on:

- frequency distributions
- central tendency
- measures of dispersion
- bivariate association
- the normal curve
- sampling theory
- confidence intervals
- hypothesis testing
- chi square

I'm sure a lot of this sounds Greek to you right now, and in fact, some of this is Greek! You should know that while this course will require a good deal of effort on your part, I have tried to make the material as accessible as possible, and as a class, we will move in small steps that aren't too difficult if taken one at a time. Note on computation: There may be some students who are frightened by the prospect of doing math in this class. Although there will be math computation to do in homework and

quizzes, this course is not particularly mathematical in its focus. Of course, everything being relative, for you the student who has not had a class like this before, the course may seem very mathematical. So you will just have to trust me that by statistics course standards, this course is not especially mathematical in its emphasis. While you will be working with numbers and solving equations, the major emphasis will be on understanding the role of statistics in sociological research, and in interpreting findings. With that said, there will be computation problems you will need to know how to work out. During the third week there will be a math review assignment to help you brush up on your math skills.

Course Organization

This course will be conducted entirely online. You will use the D2L course site extensively. Course “lectures” will be presented using Powerpoint slides organized by weeks under the Content area. I will **post two kinds of slides:** one for viewing (but not printing) labeled “Slides + Notes for Viewing. This version is easy to read the slide and my accompanying slide notes that run along the bottom of the slide. If you want to read online rather than print the slides and notes, this is the way to go. The other type is the traditional Powerpoint format labeled “Slides + Notes for Viewing/Printing”. NOTE: when you print these, you must select “note pages” under “print what” in order to print both the slide and my accompanying notes. Otherwise, only the slides will print. When you print in note pages mode, you can only get one slide per page, so it does use more paper.

All quizzes in this course will be taken online (more info on this below), and homework assignments will be uploaded from your computer to the course D2L dropbox. There will also be a discussion forum organized by topics that correspond to each week of the semester. At the beginning of the semester you will also complete a short survey.

Since “online time” is less straightforward than in traditional face-to-face classes, I will help to structure the order of course work. You should think of the beginning of the week (Monday-Thursday) as the “lecture” and “lab” period when you should access lecture notes, do your text readings, and work on your chapter and SPSS homework assignments. Homework assignments will be due in the dropbox the week they are assigned by Sunday, 11:59:01 PM. And quizzes, for those weeks when one is assigned, will be accessible from Tuesday at 12:01AM through Thursday at 11:59:01 PM, and cover material from the previous weeks.

Instructor Availability

You should feel free to contact me with any questions you have regarding the course. The best way to contact me is via email, during the day (9:00-4:30), during the work week (Monday-Friday). I will do my best to respond to your questions promptly, but you may end up waiting a day or two. Hence, you should not wait until the end of the week to ask questions about assignments that are coming due, or material that will be covered on an upcoming quiz, as I might not get back to you in time to be helpful. Do know that if you leave everything to the weekend, you will not have me as a resource to answer a question if you get stuck before an assignment is due Sunday night.

Course Requirements

Assignments

There will be a homework assignment nearly every week. I will drop the lowest one from your final grade. You may opt to skip one week’s assignment, or do all of them and have your lowest score thrown out. These assignments combine end of chapter problems and SPSS problems to be worked out using the SPSS computer program (SPSS problems come right after the SPSS demo at the end of each chapter; end of chapter problems come after the SPSS problems under the title Chapter

Exercises). See the assignment schedule for chapter and SPSS problems. On those weeks problems are assigned, they must be submitted by Sunday, 11:59:00 PM. Late assignments will not be accepted. No exceptions. Homework answers will be posted the following day, prior to the quiz.

***All assignments must be submitted in MS Word (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf). If you have the most recent version of Word (Word 2007) with files that end in (.docx), the university does not yet support this latest version. You will need to save your file in an earlier version of Word by going to “save as” and in the save file type box, and select Word 97-2003 RTF. If you use a format that I cannot read, I will not grade it.

Note on computation: It is important that you try to show as much work as possible. Because you will be submitting your homework in an electronic format, you will have to type out your computation work on a word processor. There are two ways to go about this: 1) you can use the Equation Editor which is built into MS Word (on the Insert menu, select object and scroll through until you find equation editor); or, 2) you can use a combination of symbols and words to express equations in the regular typing character mode. The important thing is that you include as much of the computation as possible so if you make a mistake, we can assign partial credit and indicate where you went astray.

Note on SPSS problems: For SPSS assignments, you should copy the statistical output (tables, graphs, etc.) that pertains to the problem right into a Word document along with your interpretive text and answers to the questions. This is easy to do: simply select by highlighting tables and copy and paste.

Quizzes

A total of six quizzes will be given over the semester. I will drop your lowest score for the final grade, **but you must take all six quizzes.** These quizzes will be timed and have a strict time limit. The quizzes will cover material from the previous two or three weeks' course work. For example, the first quiz during the week of Feb.18 will cover material from the previous three weeks. A set of flashcards for each chapter are posted to help you review terms and concepts to prepare for quizzes. The quizzes will be completed on D2L and will be available for a designated time period (Tuesday 12:01AM - Thursday, 11:59PM). It is important to pay close attention to the quiz time periods because once that time period has passed, you will not be able to complete the quiz. There are no makeup quizzes for any reason. **Absolutely no exceptions!!!** You will also have only one attempt, so you cannot save your work and return at a later time. You should think of these quizzes in the same way you would a walk-in exam: you have a set time that is designed to measure how well prepared you are for the exam; you will not have enough time to consult your notes or a text.

Data Analysis Paper

Each student will do a short data analysis paper that involves using SPSS and one of the data sets that is included with your text. The work we do over the first eight weeks will form the basis of the data analysis paper (in other words, everything covered by week 8 will be enough to complete the paper). I will provide more information about this assignment shortly.

Discussion Forums

I will occasionally pose a question to the class that relates to some chapter/lecture material covered that week or ask what needs clarification. Students will need to post short written responses to these questions or problems. Students can also post their own questions to the forum on any topic to be answered by me or a fellow student. The point of these forums is to give students an opportunity to engage/interact with the material and with each other, and to give me a sense of where everyone is.

Grades

Student grades can be viewed on the D2L site under Grades on the main navigation bar.

Grades will be distributed according to the following out of a total of 435 points:

Quizzes	45%
Homework Assignments	35%
Data Analysis Paper	15%
Discussion Posts	5%

Required Materials

1) Access to an IBM-compatible (PC) computer with Windows 98, ME, 2000, or XP operating system. Apple computers or are not compatible with the SPSS software we're using. PC computers with the new Vista operating system will require a patch and different version of the software from the publisher.

2) Calculator with basic functions.

Required Text

Frankfort-Nachmias and Leon-Guerrero. Social Statistics for a Diverse Society, 4th Edition **with student version of SPSS**, Pine Forge, 2005. It is very important that you purchase the 4th edition of this textbook, and the version that includes the SPSS software which you will need to install on your computer. This book is available in the UWM bookstore. However, be sure to purchase the text under my name; the other section of 261 is using the same book (identical title and cover, 4th edition, etc.), but it does not include SPSS. You may purchase the book in the store or order it online at the bookstore's website: <http://uwmbookstore.aux.uwm.edu/home.aspx> or at another book vendor like Amazon.com. If you go to the UWM bookstore site, select "textbooks," then "sociology," and select 261.

Course Policies

Drop Date: The last day to drop is March 14. By then you should have a good sense of how you are doing based on several quizzes and homework assignments. Use this information wisely to decide whether you want to stay in the course.

Changes to syllabus: Students are responsible for any changes in this syllabus which are announced on D2L announcement page.

Academic Misconduct: Any students found guilty of academic misconduct (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) will be given a grade of "0" on the relevant assignment and disciplined according to the UWM Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures (see attached list of "University and Department Policies").

Class Schedule

Week Beginning	Topic	Reading	Chapter Exercises	SPSS Problems
Week 1 Jan. 22-27	Introduction to the course	See task and check lists	Complete the D2L Task List	Complete the SPSS Introduction Check List
Week 2 Jan. 28-Feb.3	The What and Why of Statistics	Chapter 1, SPSS Demo	2, 3	SPSS Problem
Week 3 Feb.4-10	Frequency Distributions	Chapter 2, SPSS Demo, Appendix F	12, math review	1
Week 4 Feb.11-17	Statistical Charts and Graphs	Chapter 3, SPSS Demo 1&2		1
Week 5 – Quiz #1 Feb.18-24	Measures of Central Tendency	Chapter 4, SPSS Demo 1	2, 7	3
Week 6 Feb.25-Mar.2	Measures of Variability	Chapter 5, SPSS Demo 1, Skip Box 5.2	2, 7	1
Week 7 – Quiz #2 Mar. 3-9	Cross-Tabulation	Chapter 6, SPSS Demo 1&2	2	2
Week 8 Mar. 10-16	Lambda and Gamma	Chapter 7, pp. 227-234	1	4
Week 9 Spring Break Mar. 17-23				
Week 10 – Quiz #3 Mar.24-30	Regression and Correlation	Chapter 8, SPSS Demo 1-4	2	1
Week 11 Mar.31-Apr.6	The Normal Distribution	Chapter 9, SPSS Demo	4	1
Week 12 – Quiz #4 Apr.7-13	Building Blocks of Inference	Chapter 10, SPSS Demo	12	SPSS Problem
Week 13 Apr.14-20	Estimation	Chapter 11, SPSS Demo	12	2
Week 14 – Quiz #5 Apr.21-27	Testing Hypotheses	Chapter 12, SPSS Demo 1&2	5	2
Week 15 Apr.28-May 4	The Chi-Square Test	Chapter 13, SPSS Demo	2	12
Week 16 May 5-8	Work on Paper: due Thursday, May 8 at noon.			
Final Exam Week Quiz #6 May 13-14				

UNIVERSITY AND SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICIES

The Secretary of the University maintains a web page that contains university policies that affect the instructor and the students in this course, as well as essential information specific to conduct of the course. The link to that web page is: <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf>

Students with Disabilities. Verification of disability, class standards, the policy on the use of alternate material and test accommodations can be found at the following:
<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/DSAD/SAC/SACltr.pdf>

Religious Observances. Policies regarding accommodations for absences due to religious observance are found at the following: http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S1.5.htm

Students called to active Military Duty. Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty are found at the following: <http://www3.uwm.edu/des/web/registration/militarycallup.cfm>

Incompletes. You may be given an incomplete if you have carried a course successfully until near the end of the semester but, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond your control, have been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of course work. An incomplete is not given unless you prove to the instructor that you were prevented from completing the course for just cause as indicated above.

The conditions for awarding an incomplete to graduate and undergraduate students can be found at the following: http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S31.pdf

Discriminatory Conduct (such as sexual harassment). Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience and well-being of students, faculty and staff. Policies regarding discriminatory conduct can be found at:
http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S47.pdf

Academic Misconduct. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Policies for addressing students cheating on exams or plagiarism can be found at the following:
<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/OSL/DOS/conduct.html>

Complaint Procedures. Students may direct complaints to the Sociology Department Chair or the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the Sociology Department Chair, the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences, or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. Policies may be found at:
http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S49.7.htm

Grade Appeal Procedures. Procedures for student grade appeal can be found at the following:
http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S28.htm

Final Examination Policy. Policies regarding final examinations can be found at the following:
http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S22.htm

Book Royalties. In accord with Department of Sociology policy, the royalties from the sale of faculty-authored books to students in their classes are donated to a UWM Foundation/Sociology Account to support future awards and activities for UWM students in Sociology.