

SOC 320
Introduction to Social Statistics
Spring 2005

General Information:

Classroom: 420 Shillman Hall (lecture) and 36 Dockser Hall (Computer Lab)

Time: Monday and Thursday 11:45-1:25

Instructor: Mark Melnik

Office: 583 Holmes Hall

Office Phone: (617) 373-3967

E-mail: melnik.m@neu.edu

Office Hours: Monday 1:30-3:00pm
and Thursday 10:00-11:30am, or by
appointment.

Teaching Assistant: Sarah Cope

Office: 532 Holmes Hall

Office Phone: (617) 373-2329

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Office Hours: Wednesday and Thursday
2:30-4:00pm, or by appointment.

Course Description and Objectives:

Whether you plan to go on to graduate school or to find a job in an applied setting after graduation, a working understanding of statistics is essential for any sociologist. Sociologists rely heavily on statistics. Social scientists attempt to use statistics as evidence for analyzing various problems in the social world. This course is designed to introduce social science students to key concepts in the field of statistics and how they are used by sociologists. Students will be taught basic statistical formulas and their applications, as well as being introduced to SPSS, a statistical software package widely used in the social sciences. When you finish this course you should understand the logic behind basic statistical formulas, how to “think statistically”, to develop skills to organize and analyze quantitative data using SPSS.

Text and Class Materials:

Required: Levin and Fox, *Elementary Statistics in Social Research*, 9th edition, 2003.

Required: Scientific Calculator

Recommended: For Windows SPSS Guidebook.

Recommended: Floppy disk for lab classes.

Class Policies

Regular class attendance is expected and will be a small part of your overall grade (5%). In short, I will be taking attendance in this class. More than most courses you’ll have in college, statistics requires **proactive** learning. Reading the text, being in class, and doing practice problems are the best ways to succeed in this class.

Makeup exams and homework extensions will also not be granted. All the assignment dates are on the tentative schedule, giving students plenty of time to prepare for the exams and complete the papers. Makeups and extensions may be granted in cases of **extreme emergency** (with documentation).

University rules on plagiarism and academic misconduct will be strictly enforced. If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty please consult the student handbook.

Student Evaluations:

Your grade will be based on 100 total points.

Attendance: 5 %

5 Group Homework Assignments: 6% each (30 % total)

Individual Hand Calculations: 2 ½ % each (10% total)

Midterm: 25 %

Final Exam: 30 %

100 %

Your grade will be determined on the following scale:

93-100 = A

83-86 = B

73-76 = C

63-66 = D

90-92 = A-

80-82 = B-

70-72 = C-

60-62 = D-

87-89 = B+

77-79 = C+

67-69 = D+

59 > = F

Attendance

As mentioned previously, class attendance is mandatory. I will pass around a sign-in sheet everyday. You will be permitted two (2) unexcused absences during the semester. Starting with the third absence, half a point will be taken off of your total of 5 possible attendance points. Once a student misses 12 classes, they will receive none of the possible attendance points.

Five Group Homework Assignments

During the first week of class I will ask students to split up into groups of 3 or 4 in order to work on group assignments together. Each assignment will be worth 6 points. Homework will consist of 30% of your overall grade. Everyone in the group will be asked to sign off that each member worked equally in completing the assignment. All group members will receive the same grade. If there develops a problem of a “free loader” in a group, please see me. It is essential that you understand how the homeworks were solved. A good portion of the midterm and final will be derived from the logic of these homework assignments. Homeworks will consist primarily of computer application with some hand calculations. On lab days (see schedule-36 Dockser Hall) I will provide helpful hints in how to do each homework assignment.

Throughout your professional life, you will need to be able to work well in groups. In addition, peer-to-peer learning can be very beneficial when learning statistics. If you are doing well in the class, you will see how much it helps to try and convey that knowledge to your peers. If you are struggling a bit, one of your fellow classmates may do a better job explaining the material to you than I do. Whatever the case, peer homework assignments in stats can be very useful. I will discuss group homework assignments in more detail as those assignments approach.

Individual Hand Calculation

During the term, there will be 4 individual hand calculation assignments. The individual hand calculations will be related to the lecture material around the assignment. These assignments are intended to help gauge the students' understanding of the class material. These are **individual** assignments. Though I encourage people to work together and form study circles, the work on the individual hand calculation should be your own. Each hand calculation assignment is 2 ½ of your overall grade. Independent hand calculations will make up 10% of your total grade.

Midterm and Final

The midterm will be 25% of your overall grade. The final exam will be comprehensive and make up 30% of your overall grade. Both exams will consist of multiple-choice questions, as well as some hand calculations and statistical interpretations. Both exams will be discussed in more detail later in the quarter.

Tentative Schedule

Week One: 1/6

- Introduction

Week Two: 1/10-1/14

- Read Chapters 1 and 2 in the text.

Week Three: 1/17-1/21

- **1/17-University Closed**
- Read Chapters 3 and 4 in the text.
- **1/20-Individual HW #1 assigned**

Week Four: 1/24-1/28

- **1/24-Lab day, HW #1 assigned**
- Read Chapter 5 in the text
- **1/27-Individual HW #1 due!!!**

Week Five: 1/31-2/4

- **1/31-HW #1 due!!!!**
- Continue with Chapter 5
- Read Chapter 6 in the text
- **2/3-Individual HW #2 assigned**

Week Six: 2/7-2/11

- Continue with Chapter 6
- Read Chapter 7 in the text
- **2/10-Individual HW #2 due!!!**

Week Seven: 2/14-2/18

- Continue with Chapter 7
- **2/14-Lab day, HW#2 assigned**

Week Eight: 2/21-2/25

- **2/21- HW #2 Due!!!**
- 2/21-Midterm Review
- **2/24-Midterm!!!**

Spring Break:2/28-3/4

Week Nine:3/7-3/11

- Read Chapter 8 in the text
- **3/10-Individual HW #3 assigned**

Week Ten: 3/14-3/18

- **3/14-Lab day, HW #3 assigned**
- Read Chapter 9 in the text
- **3/17-Individual HW #3 due!!!**

Week Eleven: 3/21-3/25

- **3/21-HW #3 Due!!!**
- **3/21-Lab day, HW#4 assigned**
- Read Chapter 10 in the text

Week Twelve: 3/28-4/1

- **3/28-HW #4 Due!!!**
- **3/28-Individual HW #4 assigned**
- Continue with Chapter 10
- Read Chapter 11 in the text

Week Thirteen: 4/4-4/8

- Continue with Chapter 11
- **4/4-Individual HW #4 due!!!**
- **4/4-Lab day, HW#5 assigned**

Week Fourteen: 4/11

- 4/11-Review for final
- **4/11-HW #5 Due!!**

Finals Week: 4/15-4/22

- **Date and Time of the final to be announced**

I reserve the right to make changes to the schedule as necessary during the semester

