

Sociology 208: Social Statistics Fall 2006

General Information:

Instructor: Neal Christopherson

Office: 208 Memorial (in the Registrar's Office)

Official Office Hours: 1:30-3:30 Tuesday

Unofficial Office Hours: over e-mail, by appointment, or just drop by. I'm in most of the time from 8-4.

Phone: x5056 (office), 524-0731 (home, but not after 10 p.m.)

E-mail: christnj@whitman.edu

Required Text:

Essential Statistics for the Social and Behavioral Sciences: A Conceptual Approach by Anthony Walsh and Jane Ollenburger.

On Reserve:

"A Basic Math Review" by James Harris. Appendix G in *Social Statistics for a Diverse Society* by Chava Frankfort-Nachmias and Anna Leon-Guerrero.

"How to Use a Statistical Package" by Joan Saxton Weber, with contributions by Thomas Linneman. Appendix E in *Social Statistics for a Diverse Society* by Chava Frankfort-Nachmias and Anna Leon-Guerrero.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: What will I learn in this course?

A: If you do the assignments and make an effort to understand the material, at the end of the semester you will have a basic working knowledge of statistical techniques used in sociological research. You will know what these techniques are, how to do necessary computations with and without the use of the SPSS computer program, when certain techniques should and should not be used, what types of sociological questions statistical methods will help you answer, and how to understand basic statistics in published research. In the social sciences, statistics are a tool we use to answer research questions, so hopefully by the end of the semester you will have a new set of tools in your research toolbox.

Q: I really want an A. How will I be graded?

A: Your grade will be determined through a combination of homework assignments and exams, using the following distribution:

Exam 1	22.5%
Exam 2	22.5%
Exam 3	25%
Homework	30%

Q: Why is Exam 3 worth more?

A: The topics in this course build on each other, so an understanding of the concepts covered in the first two exams will be necessary for you to do well on Exam 3. Thus, a good performance on Exam 3 demonstrates more overall mastery of the subject than a good performance on Exam 1, so Exam 3 is worth more. By the way, exams will be take-home.

Q: Do I have to come to class every day?

A: Coming to class will be to your benefit in that there will be in-depth explanations of how to answer the questions you will encounter on the homework and exams. There are not very many people in the class, so if you skip we will all notice and wonder what you were doing the previous night that prevented you from getting up on time! If you are going to miss class, please let me know ahead of time.

Q: I'm afraid of math. How much math do I need to know for this class?

A: You shouldn't need to know more than high school algebra. Check out "A Basic Math Review," which is on reserve in the library. It will remind you of things you may have forgotten. The hard part about statistics isn't the math, but rather knowing what to do and when to do it. This isn't really a math class, it's a *skills* class. I think you will find that there is much more emphasis on writing and explanations than you might expect.

Q: Will I need a calculator?

A: Yes. If you don't have a calculator you should buy one.

Q: What will a typical week in class be like?

A: On Monday I will introduce a new topic and give you some examples. On Wednesday we will continue with the topic and examples, and I will distribute the next homework assignment, which will be due *in class* the following Wednesday. Friday we will be in the Maxey computer lab and you will have the opportunity to try out the technique for yourself using the SPSS computer program.

Q: Can you tell me more about the homework assignments?

A: You'll have 10 homework assignments, each worth 3% of your final grade. I'll hand out the assignment on Wednesday, and it will be due in class the following Wednesday. On Friday in the computer lab you'll have an opportunity to ask questions about the homework, as well as during my official office hours on Tuesday afternoon. I grade each homework assignment on a scale from 0-100.

Q: What happens if I turn my homework in late?

A: Homework is due in-class on Wednesday. I will take off 10 points if you turn it in after class on Wednesday, and take off 20 points if you turn it in on Thursday. I will not accept homework after Thursday. *If you anticipate a problem turning your homework in late, come talk to me and we'll work something out.* The reason for this strict policy is that homework is due every week, and I don't feel comfortable returning graded homework until everyone has turned in the assignment. This policy "encourages" you to turn your homework in on time so everyone will benefit by having it returned before the next homework assignment is due.

Q: The textbook is boring. Do I have to read it?

A: Yes, the textbook will provide you with a knowledge base that will help you understand what's going on in class. When you read the book, don't just skim through it to try and figure out how to do the homework problems. If you see a formula, make sure you understand what all the different components are, and what questions you can answer with that formula. If you see a table or graph, make sure you understand what information that table or graph is telling you.

Q: Okay, I'll read the textbook. But when should I do the readings?

A: It will be to your benefit to do some of the reading before Monday's class, and you should try to complete the week's reading before class on Wednesday.

Q: This class stinks. How can I drop it?

A: Go visit the friendly folks in the Registrar's office and they will help you. You must withdraw by Wednesday, October 11, or else I will have to give you a 'W' at the end of the semester.

Fall 2006 Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignment
Aug. 30-Sept. 1	Introductions, Levels of Measurement, Frequency Distributions	Ch. 1 and 2	
Sept. 4-8	Measures of Central Tendency and Dispersion, Graphs, Intro to SPSS	Ch. 3	
Sept. 11-15	Probability, the Normal Curve, Z-Scores	Ch. 4	HW 1 due 9/13
Sept. 18-22	Central Limit Theorem and Confidence Intervals	Ch. 5	HW 2 due 9/20
Sept. 25-29	Hypothesis Testing	p. 97-104	HW 3 due 9/27
Oct. 2-6	Review, Catch-up; T-Tests	p. 104-117	HW 4 due 10/4
Oct. 11-13	T-Tests	p. 104-117	Exam 1 due Oct. 11
Oct. 16-20	Analysis of Variance	Ch. 7	HW 5 due 10/18
Oct. 23-27	Categorical Data Analysis, Chi-Square	Ch. 8	HW 6 due 10/25
Oct. 30-Nov. 3	Choosing the Right Procedure, Review, Catch-up		HW 7 due 11/1
Nov. 6-10	Correlation and Bivariate Regression	Ch. 11	Exam 2 due Nov. 8
Nov. 13-17	Multiple Regression	Ch. 12	HW 8 due 11/15
Nov. 20-24	Thanksgiving Break!		
Nov. 27-Dec. 1	Multiple Regression, cont, Statistics in the Research Process	Ch. 12	HW 9 due 11/29
Dec. 4-8	Review, Catch-up		HW 10 due 12/6
	Final Exam due Dec. 11 @ 4 p.m.		