

Sociology 3112-001**Introduction to Social Statistics**

Summer 2011

University of Utah

Tuesdays, 6:00-7:30 PM in BEHS 110

Instructor: Tom Quinn

Office: BEHS 423

Office Hours: By Appointment

Teaching Assistant(s): TBA

So what's this class all about, anyway?

How is it that pollsters are able to predict how the entire country is going to vote in a presidential election after talking to only 1000 people? How can social scientists draw conclusions about a large population after studying only a small sample? This course explores the answers to those questions and more as we take a look at both descriptive and inferential statistics within the context of the social sciences. The ultimate goal of this class is to improve your critical thinking skills and make all of you more discerning consumers of information.

Course requirements and grading

Class attendance is an essential component of success in this course. Because we'll be going over so much material in such a short amount of time, missing even one class could be detrimental to your grade. Your final grade will be based on the following: exams (40 percent), homework (25 percent), group quizzes (20 percent) and labs (15 percent). Homework and labs will comprise the online portion of this course, and will need to be done on your own time. All exams will be taken in the testing center. A detailed schedule of homework assignments, labs and online materials will be available on the first day of class.

Can I, like, get any extra credit?

Yes. You may earn extra credit by bringing in newspaper and/or journal articles that incorporate any of the topics we go over in class. I reserve the right to assess how much extra credit is awarded for each article. Additional extra credit will be given for instances where you can point out mistakes made by the author(s). Expect to receive about five to 10 points per article, and be aware that I will only allow extra credit to "bump your grade" by one letter grade. That means you can go from a C- to a C or a B to a B+, but you can't go from a D to an A based solely on extra credit.

Course materials

You will need a calculator with a square root function. It doesn't need to be anything fancy, but please remember to bring it to class.

There is no required text for this course. I will provide online notes as well as links to videos, websites, etc. that will be useful in furthering your understanding of the material discussed in class. However, for those of you who (like me) need a well-written textbook in order to grasp what the teacher is talking about, you might consider *Social Statistics for a Diverse Society* by Chava Frankfort-Nachmias and Anna Leon-Guerrero. There are plenty of previous editions floating around, and it's even available on Kindle. Also, I own several copies and will have them on reserve at the Marriot Library.

My advice to you

Many students find the material in this course challenging. The fact that we have to cover an entire semester's worth of statistics in just seven weeks will make it even more so. Having said that, I am confident that every student is capable of succeeding in this course provided he or she is willing to put in the necessary effort. If you start falling behind or feeling overwhelmed, please talk to me. I am more than happy to meet with you outside of class to answer any questions that you might have. Be aware, however, that "cramming" is not an effective strategy for success in this course. If you wait until the night before an exam to talk to me, your odds of performing well will be slim to none.

What happens if I cheat?

Following the Student Code means zero-tolerance for academic misconduct in this course. "Academic misconduct," according to the University of Utah Student Code, *"includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information...It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct."* All instances of academic misconduct will be referred to the Department Chair or the Dean of the College. For detailed definitions and possible academic sanctions please see: <http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html>.

What do I do if have a learning disability or need other accommodations?

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

Tentative Class Schedule

Week 1: Introduction, Frequency Distributions, Graphic Presentations

Week 2: Measures of Central Tendency and Variability, EXAM #1

Week 3: The Normal Distribution, Sampling and Sampling Distributions

Week 4: Estimation, Testing Hypotheses, EXAM #2

Week 5: Measures of Association for Nominal and Ordinal Variables

Week 6: Correlation and Regression, Review for Final Exam

Week 7: Final Exam

Please be advised that this syllabus is only a rough outline of the course. I reserve the right to make changes in accordance with the needs of the class. Per University policy, the class will be notified prior to the implementation of any such changes.