Course Overview

This course is an undergraduate-level introduction to social statistics. Many people have a negative view of statistics. Some see statistics as a political tool that can be used to prove anything. Some are afraid to even approach statistics because it involves using math and unfamiliar symbols. This is unfortunate, because statistics class has the potential to be one of the most important classes you will ever take. The world is full of statistics. Whether we are reading a newspaper or a magazine, watching the nightly news, or attending a lecture it seems that we are constantly being exposed to statistics. In this course we will learn to think critically about statistics. This class will focus on explaining the intuitive meaning behind a variety of common social statistics and on providing practical experience in evaluating statistical information.

Course Goals

Throughout the course, we will learn to:

- Calculate and interpret commonly used statistics.
- Use statistics to evaluate sociological questions and problems.
- Access sociologically relevant information from real social survey data.
- Become proficient in performing calculations by hand and through the use of a commercially available statistical software package (SPSS).

Student Objectives

When you have successfully completed this course you will be able to:

- Critically think about, discuss, and provide well-informed opinions on topics presented in this course.
- Use statistics in ways that are relevant to studying social phenomena.
Course Requirements

Class Participation/Attendance
My teaching style for this course will rely heavily on a lecture format. My goal is to create an atmosphere in which all students get a chance to learn and participate in class discussions. Therefore, for class sessions to go well it is important for everyone to come to class prepared to participate actively. This involves voicing your opinion, being courteous to others when it’s their turn to speak, completing course readings and out-of-class assignments, and attending lectures. Class attendance is strongly encouraged, and you are responsible for all content disseminated in class.

Course Readings
The required text for this course is Frankfort-Nachmias and Leon-Guerrero. 2006. *Social Statistics for a Diverse Society*, 4th edition (seen in course schedule as SSDS). A course schedule will be provided in a separate document. In addition to the text, I will provide an outline of my lecture notes. While based on the readings, these notes sometimes expand upon areas that I feel the text does not cover adequately. The lecture notes outlines are not meant as a substitute for reading the text. The text usually goes into more detail than the lecture notes outline, and the text contains many more examples of course concepts. You are strongly encouraged to complete the reading before the lecture in order to get a more comprehensive understanding of the concepts being taught. The lecture notes outline is meant to help you follow the lecture.

Assignments
Almost every week throughout the semester you will be asked to complete out of class assignments. These are designed to give you hands-on experience with the subject matter that is being taught in class; doing assignments is critical to good performance in the course. Assignments reinforce the concepts that are being taught in class. Doing the assignments helps you to understand the material more fully. Concepts learned in earlier lectures are frequently used in later lectures. Therefore it is essential to turn in assignments on time. Assignments are not optional. If time allows we will go over the assignments in class to ensure that everyone knows how to do them correctly. If you miss even a single assignment do not ask me to give you extra work to do to improve your grade. That would defeat the purpose of giving you assignments in the first place.

Exams
In order to assess your grasp of material and provide you with some feedback on your progress, I will give a total of three exams. The first midterm exam will be given in class on Friday, February 17. The second midterm will be given on Monday, March 27. A final will be given on Monday, May 8 from 8:00am to 11:00am. The final will not be cumulative. The exams will ask you to apply course concepts, which often require calculations.

Grading

General Comment on Grading
Grading will reflect each student’s grasp of the material. The graded exercises will allow you to monitor your progress throughout the term. If you need a certain grade for a reason (e.g. graduation, to retain your scholarship), please make me aware of this as soon as your grade drops
below your goal. Simply making me aware of your need won’t get you the grade you want, but it will allow me to help you reach your goal. I do not provide the opportunity for extra credit. No adjustments will be made after the final exam. Grades reflect your work throughout the semester. The end of class is too late for me to help you with your grade. Please talk to me if you’re having trouble with the material as soon as possible.

Appealing Unfair Grading
If at any point in the semester you feel that you’ve been graded unfairly, please submit a written appeal to me within a week of when you received the grade in question. In the appeal include information on what you feel you deserve more credit on and why you deserve it. A written appeal will help you to articulate your specific objections, and it will give me time to review your case. After one week subsequent to the time that you received a particular grade, I will not accept appeals. Also, the appeal process does not apply to the final exam.

Grading Scale
I use the following grading scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Letter grades represent the following levels of achievement:
A = Excellent work: exceptional understanding of all the material, general ideas and specific details, facts as well as applications and connections.
B = Good work: very good understanding, but some gaps in understanding details, applications, or connections.
C = Fair Work: satisfactory understanding of general ideas with substantial gaps in understanding of details, applications, or connections.
D = Marginal work: minimally acceptable, superficial understanding of general ideas with significant failure to grasp details, applications, and connections
F = Unacceptable: lack of understanding of the general ideas, applications, and connections

Your final grade will be based on the course requirements as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm 1:</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm 2:</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final:</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Policy on Make-up Work
Exams and assignments cannot be made up or turned in late except under what I consider extreme circumstances. If you miss a class, assignment, or (especially) an exam or final you must have a valid (preferably written) excuse for missing class (e.g. medical emergency, unexpected death in the family). I may require that your academic advisor is involved in the writing of this excuse under cases that I deem appropriate. If you know that you have to miss class, please let me know in advance.

Honor Code
Please complete your work through your own efforts, unless otherwise encouraged to collaborate by the instructor. You are expected to complete exams without the help of notes, books, other people or any kind of external aid (expect those specified by me at the time of the test). Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. The university has specific requirements regarding honor code violations. The University Honor Code will be in effect through all exams and written assignments. Please carefully review the provisions of the Honor Code:

http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/studinfo.html

Contacting Me
I encourage you to stop by my office hours and/or speak to me outside of class. The easiest way to reach me is via email (piotrow@email.unc.edu); I check email frequently. My office hours will be held MW after class from 11am-12pm in room 308a University Square A. If you cannot make this time, I will be happy to make an appointment with you. Feel free to come see me if you have any questions or comments about the course.

Class Resources

Web Page and Class Listserv

Many resources will be available on the class web page (http://www.unc.edu/courses/2006spring/soci/052/001/). For example, you can find a copy of the course syllabus, schedule of readings, lecture notes outlines, and other course documents on the course web page. You can also use the web page to keep track of the schedule, and learn more about sociology.

There will also be a class listserv at: soci52_spring2006_001@listserv.unc.edu. Although I will generate the original member list, each of you is responsible for making sure you are on the list. I will send a test message to everyone in the course. If you do not receive the test message, or if you wish to receive messages at a different email address, you will need to subscribe yourself to the listserv. You may do this either using email (listserv@unc.edu) or through the Lyris website: (http://listserv.unc.edu). Instructions on how to join the listserv are available on the ATN website: (http://help.unc.edu/cgi-bin/gendocs?docnumber=ieg08).

This listserv is private, so those who are not registered for the class will not be able to see posted messages. Please use the listserv to post questions or comments about assignments, readings, or
discussions. Also, I’ll use the listserv to notify you about changes and clarifications to the syllabus and assignments via email, so please check email regularly.

Data Sets and SPSS

We will utilizing a statistical program called Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS). You will use this program to run statistics on real data sets. You will have an opportunity to work with SPSS in lab sessions held during class. Lab sessions will meet in Saunders 322 most Wednesdays. The SPSS program is available in most computer labs on campus. We will use data sets available on the course web page.