

Social Statistics (SOC 241.02; 3 credits)

Hunter College - SU2018 (7/16 - 8/16 (SU2, 5 weeks))

M, T, W, R 2:00 - 3:53

Rm: HW405, Lab: HN1001D

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Office Hours: **by appointment only**

Office: HW1637

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to statistics as applied to the social sciences. Statistics is the science of collecting, organizing, and interpreting quantitative or numeric data using mathematical techniques. Reports making use of the techniques of statistics are all around us—in public opinion polls, reports on unemployment numbers, income, family size, and, of course, in a great deal of academic research. So how do you understand such statistical analyses? How can researchers or pollsters make their claims? What is the basis on which they can make such claims?

This course provides you with the tools to answer such questions. It introduces you to the basic assumptions and premises behind statistics and to some of the mathematical concepts underlying statistical analysis so that you'll be better able to evaluate information that makes use of numeric data. In short, this course builds statistical literacy (the ability to critically assess and make sense of the statistical analyses) by providing you with an understanding of the premises and logic of statistics.

Objectives

- ☐ develop a solid understanding of the premises and concepts behind statistics and statistical analysis
- ☐ understand difference between descriptive statistics and inferential statistics
- ☐ understand the use of percentages, ratios, rates, probability in statistical reporting
- ☐ develop “statistical literacy” to understand and critically assess common everyday statistics
- ☐ introduce students to SPSS

Required Text(s)

- Healey, Joseph. *Statistics: A Tool for Social Research*, 10th ed. ISBN-13: 978-1285458854.
 - (I've ordered your textbook with Shakespeare & Co., I will lecture from the 10th edition, but given the cost, it's perfectly fine for you to buy the 9th edition; just recognize that there may be some differences)
- SPSS guide
 - This is a step-by-step guide developed by me to walk you through SPSS. This guide is available in Bb as a PDF or a hard copy may be purchased for about \$8.00. **The guide will be available for purchase in-class.** (I strongly recommend buying it-- past experience has shown that students find it much

easier to have a hard copy)

Methods of Instruction

The class has two components for learning statistics— lecture and practice. In my lectures, I focus on clarifying the concepts and principles that undergird statistical analysis as introduced to you by your readings. Although this course does NOT focus on mathematical calculations per se, we can not ignore them entirely since they are the cornerstone of statistics. Yes, there are mathematical formulas, but you are NOT expected to memorize any of them or perform many calculations. Instead, the focus is on developing your knowledge and understanding of the mathematical concepts behind statistics so that you're better able to evaluate statistical data.

The practicum component of this course introduces students to the statistical analysis software program SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Since virtually no statistical analyses are calculated by hand anymore, it makes sense to teach you at least one method by which statistical analyses are conducted. Here, the focus is not on learning a software program— you will be provided with guides that take you through the software step-by-step— but on a practical means of applying the concepts you learn from lectures and the textbook. Remember, a software program is just a tool; you are still the brains behind the operation!

To that end, we spend one day a week in a “regular” classroom (HW412) and one day a week in a computer lab (HN 1001A (lab A)). Your homework assignments will be a combination of textbook exercises and “SPSS assignments.” This course **REQUIRES** regular access to a computer and to the software package SPSS.

Options for Accessing SPSS

There are three options for accessing SPSS:

1. SPSS is available on any computer at Hunter
2. you may also rent SPSS for about \$43/6mths
 - [OntheHub](#) (choose **IBM® SPSS® Statistics Base GradPack 22 for Windows (06-Mo Rental)**)

We will also have various in-class and homework assignments that I hope will clearly show how statistics works in everyday life (don't worry, these activities should be relatively fun and easy).

This is NOT an easy class and since it's a summer class, we move at a very fast pace. It's been my experience that this course requires a significant commitment of time and effort on the part of students. That said, it's an extremely rewarding class; if you can not devote such time and effort to this class, please consider taking this class at another time.

Statement of Reasonable Accommodation

In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical and/or Learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY located in Room E1124 to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance please call (212- 772-4857)/TTY (212- 650- 3230).

Academic Honesty & Honor Code

Hunter College takes the Honor Code or Academic Integrity VERY seriously. Here is the statement about Academic Integrity from the Hunter College handbook:

“Any deliberate borrowing of the ideas, terms, statements, or knowledge of others without clear and specific acknowledgment of the source is intellectual theft and is called plagiarism. It is not plagiarism to borrow the ideas, terms, statements, or knowledge of others if the source is clearly and specifically acknowledged. Students who consult such critical material and wish to include some of the insights, ideas, or statements encountered must provide full citations in an appropriate form.

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.”

If I suspect you of cheating in anyway (including plagiarism or having someone else do your work for you), I have no choice but to report you to the college. In such cases, you risk expulsion from the college.

Grading Policy

The grade scale used in this class is the one specified by the college. It's worthwhile to take a moment to consider what grades actually mean. You do not earn an A in this class for showing up (although showing up is important) or working hard or being a nice person (as I'm sure all of you are). Rather, your grades reflect the extent to which you are able to critically think about and assess the core concepts of the course. The table below ([adapted from Professor Els de Graauw](#)) describes what type of work of is expected at each grade level.

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A Excellent work	Shows superior work on every front— near perfect understanding and excellent analysis of the course materials, as well as originality and analytical rigor. Student has grasped the course materials, produced good analytical writing, shown originality in thinking, and has engaged with the subject matter.
B Good, competent work	Shows a strong grasp of the course materials, as well as some analytical rigor, but there are some errors. Not the most original or thought-provoking work. There is some engagement with the material but occasional errors.
C Average work	Student demonstrates limited grasp or misunderstanding of the course materials. While there might be repetition of the course readings, there is limited analysis; the most common evidence of this type of analysis is when students describe each reading but are unable to link them to larger ideas (I refer to this type of work as a laundry list). Student is not fully engaged, and makes frequent errors. May be hard to discern what the student is arguing or trying to say.
D Poor work	The student appears to have made little effort and produces below average work. Very serious errors or misunderstanding of the course materials. Unclear what the student is arguing or trying to say.
F Unacceptable or no work	Student either did not turn in work or what was turned in showed little to no effort to keep up with course materials.

Late Work

Late work is NOT accepted except in extreme circumstances such as hospitalization, death in the family, or natural disaster. In such cases, you must make an appointment to meet with me to discuss your work.

Extra Credit

There is NO extra credit for this class.

Attendance & Tardiness

Please see Assignments section below.

Please note that I reserve the right to change this syllabus as necessary.

Assignments

Below are the assignments and criteria that will make up your grade for this class.

- 10% Attendance & Participation
- 36% STATS hmwk-- 6 assignments worth 6% each
- 20% Quizzes (in class)-- 4 quizzes worth 5% each
- 16% Midterm (Chapters 1 - 5)
- 16% Final (comprehensive)
- 2% misc assignments including pop quizzes, etc.

(10%) Attendance & Participation

I am loathe to make attendance a requirement since you are all adults. That said, 2% of your grade is based on participation and you can't very well participate if you are absent. Thus, you are expected to attend class regularly.

What qualifies as an excused absence?

- Funeral, family emergency, natural disaster or other incident out of students' control
- School-sponsored event

What is considered an unexcused absence?

- Out of town for a wedding (including cousin's, niece's, pet dog's wedding)
- Out of country on vacation
- Visiting boyfriend/girlfriend/partner
- Went to see a must-see movie
- Overslept/too tired to come to class
- Stood in line all night for new Apple gadget...

Tardiness

Tardiness is a close cousin of attendance. I understand that there will be times when the universe will conspire against you and you are just not able to make it to class on time. However, I believe that this is a rare occurrence. Excessive tardiness is inconsiderate and shows a lack of respect for your classmates and our time together. Thus, 3 tardies = 1 of absence.

(36%) SPSS Homework

There are 6 HMWK assignments (worth 6% each). All hmwk must look neat and pulled together-- as if you were submitting a report. Grammar and syntax matter. Except in rare cases, charts, tables, etc. must be clear and well-formatted- they may not spill across pages, etc.

- SPSS HMWK #1: Survey Design and Data Collection

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- SPSS HMWK #2: Introduction to SPSS & Creating a Dataset
- SPSS HMWK #3: Frequency Distributions, Central Tendency, & Dispersion
- SPSS HMWK #4: One-sample & Two-Sample T-test
- SPSS HMWK #5: Chi-sq
- SPSS HMWK #6: Crosstabs & Scatterplots

Please note that you may NOT use instruction sheets as an answer sheet; instead, create a new document, put your name, date, course, and homework title in the upper left hand corner. For example:

	Jane Doe
	Due date of assignment
	SOC241.02
	HMWK2: Introduction to SPSS
1) lorem ipsum....	
2) lorem ipsum....	

In addition to these assigned and graded homework, I will also regularly assign homework from your textbook. The book homework is NOT graded nor turned in, but it is expected that you work on the problems assigned. It is standard practice that you do extra work to better understand a subject regardless of whether you receive credit for your efforts.

Policy on Late HMWK

Late HMWK is not accepted except as fits the criteria for excused absences (see [Attendance Policy](#)). I do not accept work turned in via email! If you will be absent one day, it is YOUR responsibility to find a classmate who will print out your work for you and hand it in on time. If homework is collected at the beginning of class and you arrive 10 minutes late and I have already collected the homework, your homework is considered late.

Unacceptable excuses for late homework:

- I was printing my homework when class began.
- I forgot it at home.
- I've been really busy at work so I didn't have a chance to work on it until this morning.

(20%) Quizzes

- Quiz #1: Measurement in Stats (Chapters 1 & 2)
- Quiz #2: Central Tendency & Variation (Chapters 3 & 4)
- Quiz #3: Hypothesis Testing (Chapters 5, 6, 7, & 8)

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- Quiz #4: Association & Correlation (Chapters 12 & 13)

(32%) Exams

There is a midterm and comprehensive final exam in this class. Each is worth 17% of the your final grade..

(2%) Misc.

I've learned to include this category for various assignments that might come up. Some in-class assignments will count in the Misc.

Student “Job” description

Below are the policies that govern this class. They may also be read as what I view are student responsibilities and my expectations of you as students.

Covered in this section:

- Courtesy
- In-Class Phones/Tablets/Laptops Policy
- How to Email Your Professors
- Readings
- Taking Notes
- Writing
- Keeping Track of Your Own Grades
- Academic Honesty & Honor Code

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required. As previously noted, 2% of your grade is based on participation and you can't very well participate if you are absent. Thus, you are expected to attend class regularly. We meet for only 20 days in a summer class. Missing just three days (almost 6 hours) is the equivalent of missing 4 classes during the regular semester and I assure you, these absences will be more than sufficient for you to fall behind in this class.

Courtesy

Common courtesy and respect are expected in this class. The most basic idea is not to disrupt your classmates or your instructor during class. Please avoid behavior such as the following: habitually coming to class late, carrying on conversations in class (especially conversations not relevant to our class topic), taking a call (or making a call) during class, disrupting each other, and generally being rude or disrespectful of each other. Please note that the same applies to discussions that take place on class listservs, discussion groups, etc.

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In-Class Phones/Tablets/Laptops Policy

No phones or smartphones are allowed in this class. Please turn them off and put them away for the ENTIRETY of the class. During class, you may NOT check your email, send a text, etc. Of course I understand that there may be special circumstances whereby a student must absolutely have access to his/her phone during class; in these situations, please let me know ahead of time so I don't mistake your behavior in class. If you absolutely must send that text message, please step outside the class

The same policy applies for tablets such as iPads, Android tablets, and laptop computers. Again, if you elect to buy a digital version of your textbook that you access on your tablet, please let me know first.

The Wi-Fi service at Hunter is a great resource for students, but please do not abuse it. Checking email, sending a text, and browsing the Internet during class is inappropriate behavior. If you prefer to browse the Internet, shop for clothes, watch videos, etc., please do me and your peers the courtesy of leaving the class. If I have to speak to you more than once about using a phone, etc. in class, I will deduct points from your participation grade (after all, you can't be participating if you're texting, browsing, etc.).

How to Email Your Professors

- [See post about how to email your professors.](#)

Readings

You are expected to complete ALL readings PRIOR to coming to class. I've had many students tell me that they prefer to read the assigned readings after our discussions or lectures, but that's not the way it works in college. It is expected that you struggle with the material and try to understand the material on your own first.

Note that some professors give regular quizzes to ensure that you read the material. I find this a little patronizing. I repeat that it is YOUR responsibility to complete the readings. We may or may not have time to go over every reading in minute detail in class, but you are still responsible for the material in the readings.

Taking Notes

In recent years, I've noticed that students increasingly do not take notes. Taking notes is a good practice. No matter how well you think you will remember something, you will not. Research has shown that taking notes helps you to better remember discussion and important notes.

Moreover, they may come in handy when I give you a pop quiz where I allow you to use your notes but not your texts.

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Writing

Writing in a stats class is not a practice in beautiful college writing. Instead, writing in Stats means properly reporting appropriate statistics.

Keeping Track of Your Own Grades

In recent years, I have received more and more requests by students for regular updates to their grades. Although, faculty sometimes make use of the gradebook in Bb or send you grade reports, this practice is a courtesy to students, NOT an entitlement. It is not an unusual requirement that you be responsible for keeping track of and calculating your own grades. To be sure, part of my responsibility is to grade your work in a timely manner, but I am not responsible for making sure you know what your grade is at every moment.

Instructor Job description

Below are some of the things you may expect that I will do for you.

- Clarify and guide students through principal ideas and theories of readings and substantive content of the course.
- Provide feedback: You should expect me to respond and provide you feedback in a timely manner (this does not mean that you turn in an assignment and you get back it back the next meeting). Looking over and providing thoughtful feedback on student work takes time. That said, I will always let you know when to expect to return your work to you.
- Respond to student questions: When you write to me with questions, I will always do my best to respond to you (again, this does mean that if you send me an email at 2am, I will wake up and respond, but usually you will receive a response within a day or two).
- Clarity about policies, expectations, and grading: you should have a clear idea of what is expected of you and how you will be graded.
- Office hours: You may always make an appointment to meet for office hours.