Research Methods and Statistics in Sociology
Sociology 550A - 11459
BC 119, MWF 11-11:50
Spring 2016

Office: BC 121A
Office Hours: Everyday 1-2
(Also see “office hours” below)
Email: dwestfal@emporia.edu

This course will provide you with advanced training in social research methodologies including statistical analysis techniques. It will build on, and assume that you understand, the material presented last semester in SO 450. [Note: Sociology 450, Research Methods, is a prerequisite for this class. You must have enrolled in, and passed, SO450 with a grade of C or higher before you can enroll in this course.] During this course you will learn statistical and computer techniques, and participate in designing, conducting, and reporting the results of a research project.

Social research skills are essential for students preparing for graduate studies as well as for the world of work at the baccalaureate level. An increasing number of public and private agencies, marketing research and opinion polling firms, social research foundations, and graduate schools are seeking sociology majors with research skills. Consequently, this course will provide you with the important practical skills for which there is an increasing demand.

Statistical material that will be covered in this course includes but is not limited to: levels of measurement, descriptive and inferential statistics including measures of central tendency, computation and use of standardized scores, the construction and interpretation of frequency distribution tables, frequency polygons and histograms, probability theory and sampling, Pearson’s r correlations, OLS regression, coefficient of determination, difference in means z and t tests, the construction and interpretation of confidence intervals, ANOVA, and chi square analysis.

Much of our time this semester will be spent continuing your project from last semester. Students will learn to use SPSS for windows and will also become familiar with the General Social Survey (GSS) and other data sources.

Required Material

You will need a calculator with a square root key (NO cell phones).
Optional Material

100 Questions (and Answers) About Statistics, by Neil Salkind

Objectives – Upon successful completion of the course students should be able:

1. To have acquired social research skills that will prepare you for the job market of the next millennium, or for graduate school.
2. To have grasped the underlying assumptions and rationale of basic statistical analysis
3. To compute, by hand and SPSS, basic statistical techniques
4. To analyze and comprehend statistical findings
5. To perform some of your schoolwork in an environment comparable with many work environments – that of a work group.
6. To have improved their conceptualization and analytical capacities.

Method of Instruction

As much as possible, this course will focus on learning by doing. There will be a lot of practical “hands on” activities. This semester will be an intense and fast-paced survey of descriptive and inferential statistics as we progress towards Linear Regression (where many graduate school quantitative courses begin). Attendance is imperative as is completion of assignments in a timely manner.

This course will require a lot of personal initiative, as it will probably not have the structure of other courses that you have taken. There will be occasions when class time will be spent at the library, working on a project, or at the computer lab. A high degree of commitment and dedication will help you get the most out of this class.

Office Hours

I recognize that some will find the material in this course difficult. If you find yourself in this situation, please know that it is normal. Also know that you are not alone. There are a few ways to alleviate this:

1. It is helpful if you form study groups. Use it as a time to help each other understand.
2. Ask questions and come see me. I’m ugly and socially awkward, but not mean. I really do want you to succeed! I will be in my office every day from 1-2. Most days I will be around after 2, but please let me know if you’d like to meet later so I don’t leave. I know that many will have the same questions and my office hours may not work for everyone, so...
3. If you have your study group, have questions and I am around/not teaching, come get me. Additionally, if as a class you come up with a time or two during the week
that people can attend if they need help, let me know and I will be more than happy to drop in and address questions.

Method of Evaluation

The progress that you make in this course will be evaluated in three ways. First, because there is a specific body of knowledge that you must acquire to be a good researcher, some tests will be necessary – 3 or 4. Each examination will be worth 100 points. There may be the opportunity to substitute the final exam with a presentation at a University event. Second, we will have a series of smaller assignments worth 100 points total. These assignments will assess your understanding of the concepts/techniques we are learning. Finally, you will complete the research paper started last semester.

While I do not like attendance policies, the concepts in this class build upon each other and are often difficult to understand. Because of this, I will allow 3 excused absences. Each absence beyond that will result in 5 points being deducted from your point total at the end of the semester. Attendance will be taken daily. You MUST attend class faithfully.

Please remember the requirement that sociology and crime and delinquency studies majors/minors must earn a minimum of C grades in all major/minor courses including SO550. If a sociology major earns a D or an F in this course, it must be repeated until the student has earned at least a C. Faculty members are strictly prohibited from inflating grades to assist students in meeting this requirement or altering final grades after the semester ends. Final grades are non-negotiable!

The grade you earn will be based on the following:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Exams</td>
<td>300 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam or Presentation</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>600 points</strong></td>
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A = 560-600 points
A- = 540-559 points
B+ = 520-539 points
B  = 500-519 points
B-  = 480-499 points
C+  = 460-479 points
C   = 440-459 points
C-  = 420-439 points
D   = 360-420 points
F   = 359 points or less
Emporia State University Policies

Disability Services: Emporia State University will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students need to contact the Director of Disability Services and the professor as early in the semester as possible to ensure that classroom and academic accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. All communication between students, Disability Services, and the professor will be strictly confidential.

3D.0701 ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY (FSB 95002 approved by President 1/31/96; FSB 03002 passed by Faculty Senate 1/20/04; approved by President 2/9/04; FSB 05002 passed by Faculty Senate 1/17/06; approved by President 2/7/06; title update approved by President of the Faculty 8/22/2010; FSB 10007 passed by Faculty Senate 3/15/2011; approved by President 3/21/2011).

Academic dishonesty, a basis for disciplinary action, includes but is not limited to activities such as cheating and plagiarism (presenting as one’s own the intellectual or creative accomplishments of another without giving credit to the source or sources).

The faculty member in whose course or under whose tutelage an act of academic dishonesty occurs has the option of failing the student for the academic hours in question, or for any components or requirements for that course. Departments, schools, and colleges may have provisions for more severe penalties. Emporia State University may impose penalties for academic dishonesty up to and including expulsion from the student’s major or from the University. In addition, acts of academic dishonesty shall be grounds to deny admission to a department or program. In addition to the penalties above, the faculty member shall notify in writing his/her department chair and the registrar of the infraction. The department chair shall forward a report of the infraction to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life. The registrar shall block the student from withdrawing from the course to avoid the penalties that result from the infraction.

The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life shall act as the record keeper for student academic infractions. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life will notify the student in writing that an infraction has been reported and inform the student of the right to appeal and of the appropriate appeal procedures. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life shall notify the student, the department chair, and the faculty member that initiated the proceedings, of any additional action taken beyond those already imposed by the faculty member. Should a single infraction be so egregious, or should a student have a record of multiple infractions, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life may impose additional penalties, including expulsion of the student from the University.

The student has the right to appeal the charge of academic dishonesty (see Student Conduct section). If after an appeal it is found that the student did not commit an act of academic dishonesty, no penalties will be imposed on the student. A chair of a department or director of a program may request from the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life a list of all currently enrolled ESU students within that major or program who have committed acts of academic dishonesty. This request may be a standing request to be filling automatically during each semester until the chair or director rescinds the request. In addition, a chair of a department or director of a program may submit to the office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life a list of applicants to a program or major and the chair or director may be informed if any of the applicants has committed any acts of academic dishonesty. Prior to the beginning of the next academic year, the office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life shall send to the Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate a list containing nonspecific student identifiers, such as Student 1, Student 2, etc., their specific academic
infraction(s) reported to the Provost’s office, the total number of infractions that have been reported for each student, and any actions taken by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life.

**3D.07 STUDENT CONDUCT (FSB 01011 approved by President, 4/29/02)**

Excessive absenteeism is defined as a number of absences beyond which the faculty member has determined on his/her syllabus that a student cannot complete the course without the academic integrity of the course being compromised. Emporia State University is committed toward development of sensitive and responsible individuals and believes this goal is best achieved through a sound educational program and reasonable policies concerning student conduct, both in and out of the classroom. Operating from this concept, recognition is given to the importance of an honest approach to learning which ideally is shared by the instructor and the student. Faculty members may make the disposition of any cases of disruptive behavior, excessive absenteeism, or academic dishonesty within their classes as they deem appropriate. Following such cases, the faculty member shall make available to the chair of the department and to the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs a record of such student absenteeism or disruptive behavior and the action taken by the faculty member. (This information will be helpful in dealing with those students who may have had similar problems in other classes or departments.) If the problem is not settled between the faculty member and the student, assistance will be given from the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. If the problem cannot be resolved at this point the student may request a hearing. This request must be in writing. If a case of dishonesty, excessive absenteeism, or disruptive behavior also involves a disagreement regarding a grade, the student may be referred to the committee which hears academic appeals. If the behavior is such that broader disciplinary action by the school/college is recommended, a hearing board shall be established by the President of the University to make disposition of the case. (In all cases of disciplinary action the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs is available for assistance.) At any point where student conduct directly interferes with the health, safety, or well being of individuals in the campus community, the University may apply sanctions or take other appropriate action. Since the University is responsible for the subsidiary duties of maintaining property, keeping records, providing living accommodations, and sponsoring a variety of nonclassroom activities, it is necessary that a climate supportive of such duties be maintained. Student status will not be a basis for any special consideration from the University when a community, state, or national law has been violated, although every effort will be made to assist with the rehabilitation of a student violating such laws. This is done by working with law enforcement or other agencies, and ordinarily further sanctions are not applied after such a case is closed. No disciplinary sanction as serious as suspension, probation, or adverse notation on permanent records (available to other than official personnel of the college) will be imposed without proper notification given to the student in writing. This notification will state the charges and will give the accused the opportunity to appear alone, or with appropriate representation before the proper committee, judicial council, court, or official. Included will be the nature and source of evidence and the encouragement for the student to present evidence in turn. Following this review final disciplinary action will be taken by the University. Students may also request that such 3-64 appearance before committees, councils, courts, or officials be waived and the case be determined in conference with appropriate campus officials. The University conduct policy commits all individuals serving on any of the above named groups dealing with student problems to a code of confidence. Failure to comply may lead to sanctions from student, faculty, or administrative governing bodies, or officials. Students, faculty, and administration shall have the opportunity to participate fully in the formulation of policies and rules and their enforcement. Penalties for men and women shall be based equally; like penalties following like violations.
4E.13 FACULTY INITIATED STUDENT WITHDRAWAL (FSB 76006; FSB 95008 approved by President 5/9/96; FSB 09016 approved by President 5/3/2010)

If a student’s absences from class, disruptive behavior, lack of prerequisites, or academic dishonesty become detrimental to the student’s progress or that of other students in the class, the faculty member may advise the student to withdraw from the class. Withdrawal may also be advised if the student is inappropriately enrolled in the class. If the faculty member chooses to withdraw the student, he/she shall attempt to notify the student in writing that a faculty initiated withdrawal is in progress. This notification will be copied to the department chair and Academic Affairs office to serve as the request for withdrawal. If efforts to contact the student have been unsuccessful, or unacknowledged, the faculty member shall then seek the aid of the Academic Affairs office in contacting the student. The Academic Affairs office shall provide the student with information about the existing appeals procedures. Upon receiving a written request for withdrawal from the faculty member, the Academic Affairs office may initiate a student withdrawal from the class. None of the above implies or states that faculty members are required to initiate any student withdrawal.

Class Policies

Canvas. Please check Canvas for various kinds of information usually provided in handouts or other kinds of feedback. It is your responsibility to check these sources for any announcements or information pertinent to class and class assignments.

Class Etiquette. Be sure that your cell phones are turned off. Texting, facebooking, surfing the net, talking, arriving late, and packing up early are distracting to your colleagues AND the instructor. Please be respectful. If laptops become a nuisance, you will be asked to close them. Out of respect, I ask that all laptops remain closed each time we have a guest speaker. I also ask that all laptops remain closed during videos. While discussion and question asking is certainly part of the class, side conversations are disrespectful and distracting. Please be respectful or you will be asked to leave the class.

Late Assignments. Typically, late assignments will be penalized 10% for each day past due.

Makeup work. Typically, no makeups for exams or other assignments will be given. You are expected to notify me at least one week in advance if you must miss a scheduled assignment.

Incompletes. A grade of incomplete will be considered only under extraordinary (emergency) circumstances; an expected incomplete must be arranged prior to the end of the semester. In no case will an incomplete be given to a student who simply fails to attend class and complete assignments.

Semester Schedule

Assignments will be announced in class. We are working our way towards Linear Regression, completed research projects, and will progress at a speed appropriate for the class.