College of Sciences & Mathematics Class Syllabus / Policy Sheet

Fall 2017
MTH 220
Introduction to Probability & Statistics

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Background: 21st Year at SFA, 44th time to teach course

Text and Materials:
Required Text: Weiss, Introductory Statistics (Custom Edition for SFA)
- You will get a code that allows you access to MyStatLab
- Just Google “MyStatLab” to get to the right website. Follow instructions handed out in class.

Case Study Manual: Available for Download on D2L after first day of class.

Three Ring Binder (required): Either 1.5” or 2” with a separator. One section of the binder must exclusively hold your Case Study Manual. You will need to three-hole-punch the pages after downloading. If you take notes in spiral, you can get away with a 1.5” binder for the manual. If you take notes on loose paper, include them in the second section of the binder and buy a 2”.

Course Requirements:

Course Goals: To equip students with the skills necessary to use data in order to make better decisions. Specifically, to master basic skills in the sciences of probability and statistics that will empower students when it comes to interpreting data. A major goal of the course is to teach the students that data drives decision making in all facets of life. Learning to organize, summarize and make inference from data will allow us to develop more successful policies in among other disciplines business, education, medicine, engineering, law, and politics.

Specific Topics Covered: the basic language of populations and samples, variation and distributions, the statistical inference process, the role of probability in making statistical decisions, analysis of one and two proportions, analysis of one and two means, regression and correlation.

Specific Course Policies: No make-up exams are given. Exception to the no make-up policy concerning exams is handled on a case by case basis only if the student provides notification to the instructor before 5:00 on the day that the exam was given. There is no need to notify me when and if you were to ever miss class – I keep no record of such
instances -- and missing a class with as much detail as this one polices itself as far as grades are concerned. (Consistently on faculty reviews, students tell me that getting notes from a friend and reading them is NOTHING like sitting through the lecture and it was a big mistake of theirs to think it would be OK)

If a lecture is missed, class notes are the students responsibility to obtain from a fellow classmate. My lecture notes are not available after the lecture has been given. Any handout given on the date of absence can be downloaded from D2L.

Exams: There will be three closed notes exams. All exams take seven to nine days to grade and return. You will not get your exam back the lecture after you take it. The Final Exam is comprehensive and closed notes. You must take the final at the designated time. You cannot switch times.

Exam Schedule:
Exam 1: Tuesday, September 26
Exam 2: Tuesday, October 24
Exam 3: Thursday, November 16
Final: Tuesday, December 12 at 7:30 AM

Homework: Online homework will be assigned using MyStatLab. The due dates for these assignments will be posted online and announced in class. This homework is graded by the online system.

Grading Breakdown: Homework 15%, Final Exam: 25%, Each Regular Exam: 20%.

If the Final is greater than your lowest test grade: Homework: 15%, Final Exam: 35%, Two Regular Exams: 20%, Lowest Exam: 10%.

Preferred Method of Communication: If you cannot come by during office hours or talk to me before or after lectures, the preferred method of communication is via e-mail. Although frequently you will be able to get through to talk to me on the phone, I tend to answer e-mail messages with more regularity than I check phone messages. Often, I screen phone calls or disconnect the phone in my office altogether. However, rest assured that outside of class or office hours you will be able to communicate with me via e-mail. I can check these messages from both home and off campus and can often reply at hours that are not during the typical work day. PLEASE ONLY USE THE E-MAIL ADDRESS LISTED ABOVE. I will not reply at other addresses which are posted in university literature.

Note about Expectations: I expect you to review the notes I give you in class on average four to five times a week. Studying just a few hours a week for this course is unacceptable. Not studying for this course for a period of three consecutive days is unacceptable. Just reviewing homework and the book for the test will not make you prepared. You must have a deep, deep understanding of the notes you take in class to be successful. Just being "loosely familiar" with the notes is not close to being prepared for exams.

Passive people are not the best learners. Cultivate a healthy and active passion to broaden your formal education. Success is often directly proportional to desire. You have to want it. Take responsibility for your own actions and decisions since I certainly will not take responsibility for your actions in your place. Learn to say “no” to the people and things that take away time that should be spent studying. Strike a healthy balance between academic and social activities. Tipping this scale in the direction of extracurricular activities is often academic suicide.

Don’t whine. It’s annoying and never convinces people that you are worth working with.

Learn to run far, not fast. Perseverance is the most underrated of all human qualities.

Realize that there is a consequence for the decisions you make – the good ones and the bad ones. Don’t use the word “given” when it comes to grades – grades are “earned” – not “given”. Break down whatever barrier might exist between you and your unwillingness to come talk to me. I am here to help you – take full advantage of this time. Don’t wait – be active – do it now. Remember – you choose how you spend your time. Not anyone else. You waste it – it’s your fault. You manage it well – it’s your gain. It is your choice.

Things You are Not Allowed To Do:

1) You are not allowed to have your cell phone out during class. This is a meeting. If you went to a committee meeting at the organization you will work for after you graduate and sat there and texted or looked at your phone all during the meetings it would be frowned upon. Cell phones should not be a part of meetings. Don’t let me catch you with your cell phone on your desk or looking at it during class. My method of punishment is to embarrass you in the most extreme of ways. People tell me I’m pretty good at it.

2) You are not allowed to ask me what your current course grade is or what you need to make on a test in order to get a certain grade in the course. You passed high school algebra – do it yourself.

3) You are not allowed to ask questions during exams. Sorry, other people ruined it for you. There are those among you that would ask 20 ticky-tack “fishing for help” questions during exams, getting up and disturbing others, commenting on why I centered one phrase and left-justified another, asking me if what is italicized is italicized for any particular reason, asking me to restate the question three different ways, asking if you can write on the back of the paper, asking if I will take off points if you doodle stick figures while you are thinking, etc., etc. It got out of hand. So, we just won’t do it anymore. No questions during exams. Blame the generation before you.
4) **Please do not tell me why you missed class or even that you did miss class.**
Exception #1: A university sponsored event (band, club/organization travel that is university approved, athletics, giving a research talk with a professor or similar).
Exception #2: Death in Family.

Reason for this policy: I don’t need to know why you couldn’t make it to class. I fully realize people get sick from time to time. But, frankly, you are an adult. I don’t need to know why you make the choice to come to class or not. Leave me out of it. I have a job to do for the people who are here.

5) **You are not allowed to contact me between the final exam and when grades are posted.** You finished the class. Go home. Stop worrying. Study for your other finals. Go shop for Christmas gifts for your family and friends. Grades get posted when I’m done. You aren’t helping yourself by asking me: Are you done grading yet? Are you done grading yet? Are you done grading yet? You sound like the five year old in the back seat of a car asking their parents: “Are we there yet?” How does that make your parents feel? Yeah, avoid that. I don’t return student emails during Finals week. It is one of the busiest times of the year for faculty and I assure you that I am grading diligently. Learn to accept when people tell you: “It’s done when it gets done. Chill.”

6) **No whining and complaining.** “I really like how intricate of a complainer she is” or “He has this really amazing quality of knowing just what degree of whining to utilize” SAID NO ONE EVER! Everyone needs to blow off steam and express frustration from time to time. It’s normal. Do it in the privacy of your own dorm, apartment, etc. in front of family and friends that can relate and don’t do it out in public where you’ll make yourself look like a baby.

**Just a few things about me that might help us to understand one another and work together better:**

My mom taught public school for over 25 years in some tough neighborhoods in Houston. She taught me this about teaching: Be Firm, Be Fair, and Be Friendly, but only in that order. That’s how I roll. Virtually all of the best teachers I had in school were really demanding and seemed rigid at first, but then after you got to know them they were friendly and really accessible. That’s me. On day one, I may not even seem nice. That’s because I need to establish guidelines and expectations because I don’t compromise on them. Then, slowly, as you establish a work ethic and we mutually gain each other’s respect as teacher and student, we can relate in less of a militaristic way.

I am very compartmental in my life. Faith, family, my work, baseball and volleyball are about the only five things in life I care much about. If something doesn’t fit into one of those compartments I usually let it pass me by. When I am at work – I’m focused on teaching, students and research. When I’m with my wife and kids – they have my full attention. I am fully devoted in my faith. When working with SFA Volleyball, my academic side is put away and the writer, broadcaster, and sports enthusiast is all you see and hear. So, I’d just encourage you to figure out what really matters to you and then be
willing to cast all your energy towards those things. This sometimes takes patience, but I’ve found it better to devote a lot energy to just a few really super important things as opposed to fracturing your efforts across tons and tons of little things. If something only gives you temporary gain or happiness, it probably isn’t worth it to include in your life. Don’t devote a lot of time or give away a large portion of yourself to things that basically equate to idle time or only benefit you for a short time.

**Academic Integrity (A-9.I)**

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

The circumstances precipitating the request must have occurred after the last day in which a student could withdraw from a course. Students requesting a WH must be passing the course with a minimum projected grade of C.
Students with Disabilities

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.