EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
FALL SEMESTER, 2002
Introduction to Quantitative Sociology, SOCI - 3213

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Course Description: One of the major contributions of social scientists in the twentieth century was the development of methods by which to collect systematic data on an enormous number of issues. As a result, the twentieth century is the first century in the history of the United States (and much of the rest of the world) for which we have relatively complete data by which we can truly examine trends on everything from the diffusion of indoor plumbing to infant mortality to crime to people’s attitudes about different racial and ethnic groups. As newspapers, television programs, magazines, etc bombard us on a daily basis with the results of surveys, opinion polls, economic indicators, and other statistics, this contribution can sometimes seem more negative than positive. As a result, no active member of our society can function effectively within it without some understanding of these techniques. Some might argue that our reliance on “data” as a society has become a social problem, rather than a solution to social problems as many first envisioned it would be. Yet, when used appropriately, quantitative data and the statistical techniques we use to analyze that data continue to be valuable tools by which we can unravel the myths and mysteries of society. Therefore, the primary goal of this course is to teach you the skills to make you better consumer of statistics. In other words, when you successfully complete this course you will be more knowledgeable and savvy when you are faced with statistical information.

The following specific goals guide this course:

• To enable students to better understand statistical information and to sort out what is useful and accurate from what is misleading.
• To teach students how to utilize univariate and bivariate statistical techniques to answer research questions.
• To teach students how to perform univariate and bivariate analyses by hand and by using computer statistical packages.
• To introduce students to SPSS for Windows.


Other Supplies: Students should bring to class their textbook, a calculator capable of performing square root functions, and a notebook with handouts that are given out in class. Students will likely also find it useful to have a pencil, in addition to a pen.

Homework: Statistics can only be learned by practicing the techniques discussed in readings and class through homework. Homework assignments are listed in the schedule and are in the book and on the course website. Late assignments will NOT be accepted unless the student was absent for an excused, unplanned absence on the due date. In other words, homework due on days you miss for a scheduled event or sleeping in, etc. will not be accepted late. Students are advised to take full advantage of the Skills Exercises in the book, for which the answers are listed at the end of each chapter. These are not assigned but strongly suggested.
During the semester you will complete three assignments that will require you to use SPSS (a data analysis program) to analyze data. These assignments will require you to apply what you have learned to real data. Although students may discuss the assignments and how to work with the program, written work for the assignments must be completed independently by each student. In other words, the written product which carries your name must be solely your own work; no one else’s. Students wishing to gain greater mastery in SPSS should consider doing the SPSS Exercises at the end of each chapter.

Quizzes: Short quizzes will be given throughout the semester. Quizzes may be announced or unannounced. Missed quizzes can only be made up for an excused absence.

Exams: There will be three in-class exams in this course. All exams are cumulative.

Exam 1 October 3rd
Exam 2 November 12th
Exam 3 December 10th

Make-ups will be permitted only in dire circumstances. If something occurs which forces you to miss an exam, I expect to be informed (either in person or by voice mail) by 5:00pm of the day of the exam and you may be asked to provide written proof.

Take-Home Final: A take-home final exam/project will be due on Friday, December 13. The requirements for this take-home exam/project will be distributed no less than two weeks before the due date.

Extra Credit: Attendance will help your grade; however, it is not required. Students with perfect on-time attendance will earn three percentage points on their final grade. In other words, perfect attendance would raise an 89% average to a final average of 92%. You will not be counted as present if you sleep or read during class; in fact, you may be asked to leave.

Students who are members of athletic teams, etc and other students with excused absences which are planned events (as opposed to unexpected illnesses, deaths, etc) must complete an excused absence form and contact the instructor before the missed day to schedule to take quizzes or exams they will miss. Students with unplanned excused absences should contact the professor ASAP to schedule any make-ups and complete an excused absence form upon their return to school. Generally, missed quizzes or exams must be made up within a week of their scheduled date. Note: Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah are excused absences; registering for classes is not.

Final Grades: Your final grade will be computed as follows:

3 In-Class Exams = 45% (15% each)
Take Home Final = 10%
Quizzes = 15%
Homework = 15%
SPSS Assignments = 15% (5% each)

I grade on a 10 point scale (90-100%=A, 80-89%=B, 70-79%=C, etc).

Academic Dishonesty: Academic integrity is expected in this class and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. See the Student Handbook for an explanation of what constitutes academic dishonesty, procedure, penalties and appeal process. Cheating on a quiz or exam or plagiarizing a paper or homework assignment will at least earn you a 0 for the quiz/exam/paper/assignment, and may earn you an F for the course as a whole.
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

I reserve the right to change the schedule of work and add or subtract from homework assignments throughout the semester in accordance with the needs of the course. However, I will not change the number of assignments or exams, or alter the grading system as described above.

August 22  Introduction to Course
    _____  Homework 1 (due 8/27):  Hand in one sheet of paper on which you report a statistic that you have found in a newspaper, journal article, or textbook that you think is interesting, summarize what you think it means, and why you think it is interesting/important. Provide a complete citation for the source of the statistic and attach a copy of the page in the document on which the statistic appears. Your work must be typed with your name on top.

August 27  Introductions, Interesting Statistics

BASICS OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

August 29, Sept. 5  Fundamentals of Research Design  Chapter 1
    _____  Homework 2 (due 9/5):  General Exercises Chapter 1 plus Homework 2 Questions on Website.

Sept. 3  No Class, Go to Monday Classes
Sept. 10  Levels of Measurement  Chapter 2
    _____  Homework 3 (due 9/10):  General Exercises Chapter 2 plus Homework 3 Questions on Website.  Note: SPSS Exercise Chapter 2 will help you check answers to General Exercises.

Sept. 12  Introduction to SPSS Data Entry  Chapter 3
    _____  SPSS Assignment 1 (due 9/17):  SPSS Assignment 1 will require you to set up and enter data into a SPSS database using a survey the class will conduct. Instructions will be given out in class.

UNIVARIATE STATISTICS

Sept. 17, 19, 24  Frequencies, Percentages, Proportions, Rates  Chapter 4 (skip 105-122) Handout
    _____  Homework 4 (due 9/24):  General Exercises Chapter 4 plus Homework 4 Questions on Website.

Sept. 26, Oct. 1  Measures of Central Tendency  Chapter 5
    _____  Homework 5 (due 10/1):  General Exercises Chapter 5 plus Homework 5 Questions on Website

Oct. 3  Exam 1

Oct. 8, 10, 17  Measures of Dispersion  Chapter 6
    _____  Homework 6 (due 10/17):  General Exercises Chapter 6 plus Homework 6 Questions on Website.

Oct. 15  Fall Break
BIVARIATE STATISTICS

Oct. 22, 24 Contingency Tables Chapter 7 (except 270-274)
_____SPSS Assignment 2 (due Wed. 10/23): SPSS Assignment 2 will require you to run univariate statistics using SPSS and describe the sample of respondents. Instructions will be given out in class.
_____Homework 7 (due 10/24): General Exercises Chapter 7 and Homework 7 Questions on Website.

Oct. 29 Difference of Means Chapter 9 (thru 348)
_____Homework 8 (due 10/29): Homework 8 Questions on Website

Oct. 31, Nov. 5, 7 Pearsons r and r-squared Chapter 9 (349 thru 381)
_____Homework 9 (due 11/7): Homework 9 Questions on Website
_____SPSS Assignment 3 (due 11/14): SPSS Assignment 3 will require you to run bivariate statistics to assess the relationships between two variables using SPSS. Instructions will be given out in class.

Nov. 12 Exam 2

INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

Nov. 14, 19 Making Inferences with Univariate Statistics Chapter 11
_____Homework 10 (due 11/19): Homework 10 Questions on Website

Nov. 21 Making Inferences with Biv. Stats Null and Research Hypotheses Chapter 12 (pages 463-467)
_____Homework 11 (due 11/21): Homework 11 Questions on Website

Nov. 26, Dec 3 Making Inferences with Bivariate Statistics: T-Statistic Chapter 13
_____Homework 12 (due 12/3): Homework 12 Questions on Website

Dec. 5 Making Inferences with Bivariate Statistics: Chi Square Chapter 12 (pages 468-494)
_____Homework 13 (due 12/5): Homework 13 Questions on Website

Dec. 10 Exam 3

Take Home Final Due December 13th 4:00pm