Various Useful Comments
on Lectures, Homework and Exams
Statistics 371, Spring Semester, 2012,
Professor Wardrop

My webpage and the course webpage are, respectively,

http://www.stat.wisc.edu/~wardrop/


Below I will describe the key components of the course materials.

1. There is no textbook for this course. The role of a text is played by the Course Notes (CN), posted on the course webpage. The CN provide a development of the material covered in Stat 371. In many cases the CN will present much more sophisticated math than you will need to be successful in the course.

   I expect you to read the CN before lecture. (I will announce and post the sections to be read before each lecture.)

2. At lecture I will assume that you have read and attempted to understand the assigned material in the CN. During lectures I will focus mostly on showing you how to use the material presented in the CN. I will do this by spending most of the lecture time working out detailed examples of how to use the material. Many of these examples are posted on the course website in the document Lecture Examples. You should bring Lecture Examples to lecture so that you can follow what I am doing; i.e. I won’t be writing Lecture Examples on the board. Also, the document Solutions to the Lecture Examples is posted on the course webpage and it should be brought to lecture.

   I have used this system for several semesters and it has worked well. Usually, I will need to spend some lecture time reviewing the major ideas of the day’s material—thus, it is ok if your understanding is not very good when you come to lecture—but, for the most part, I will spend lecture time working through examples.

   To Summarize: Bring—on paper or by electronic access— the relevant sections of the CN, Lecture Examples and Solutions to Lecture Examples to lecture.

3. There will be 13 weekly Homework Assignments, with one due every Thursday, beginning February 2 and ending with the last assignment due on the last day of class, May 10. Two exceptions are that there will be no homework due on Thursday, March 15, the date of the midterm exam, and there will be no homework due during Spring Break. The homework problems will be similar to some of examples in Lecture Examples; thus, attending lecture should make the homework easier. Also, you are enrolled in a weekly discussion. In discussion, the TA will show you how to do the homework assignment. From my point-of-view, the ideal is that you try to do the homework and then get help at discussion. If you don’t need help then you can skip discussion that week.

   After each homework is submitted I will email solutions to the homework to the class.
4. **Exams.** We will have one midterm and a final. The dates of the exams are:

- **Midterm:** Thursday, March 15, during lecture.
- **Final:** Thursday, May 17, 2:45 PM–4:45 PM for Lecture 1; Tuesday, May 15, 10:05 AM–12:05 PM for Lecture 2.

The midterm exam will be given in the lecture room. The rooms for the final will be announced and posted when they are known.

Note that the final is **not cumulative.** The midterm will cover Chapters 1–7 of the Course Notes and the final will cover Chapters 9–14 of the Course Notes.

The exam questions will be very similar to the Lecture Examples, homework problems and the (not yet posted) practice exams.

Here are the rules for taking the exams:

- The exams will be closed book. You will be allowed the following materials only on the desk in front of you during the exams:
  
  **Your writing instruments; your exam paper; the four pages of formulas provided by me (see below); and your calculator.**

  You may **not** use a cell phone or similar device as a calculator. If you violate these rules or if the proctor sees you using a cell phone or similar device, you will be charged with academic misconduct.

- I will provide four pages of formulas, definitions, etc. for your use during each exam. I will post and email these pages to the class approximately one week before each exam; this will help you know what you don’t need to memorize/learn. You must not bring the emailed pages to the exam; I will hand out the final ‘formula pages’ with the exam.

**A note on cheating on the exams.** Don’t do it. If I catch anyone cheating, I might choose to pursue it to the full extent through the university’s system for handling cheating, which could result in an expulsion from school.

At the cost of extra work to me, I use a system that makes successful cheating much more difficult for the student. I offer its details now because my goals are to dissuade cheating and to reassure honest students. Entrapping people is **not** my goal.

My system is described below.

Each exam consists of a number of problems. I create two or three versions of each problem. The versions are, by my design and in my opinion, of equal difficulty and cover exactly the same material/concepts. They simply have somewhat different numbers in them. I mix the different versions of each question in many ways to create 15 or more distinct exams. The people sitting around you possibly have no problems in common with you or, at most, a small number of problems in common. Thus, if you copy answers from a neighbor, chances are you will be writing down numbers that are not on your exam. When I find such answers, I give them no partial credit.

Here is a simple example of what I mean. Exercise 1 asks you to calculate the area of a rectangle (base times height). Version 1 has a base of 5 and a height of 12. Version 2 has a base of 7 and a height of 18. If a person with Version 2 writes on his/her paper: \(5(12) = 60\), then the person will receive 0 points for this wrong answer. If I find several such ‘borrowed’ answers on an exam I might choose to pursue charges of academic misconduct against the student.