Beginning on November 14, 2013, I have sent several emails to the class. If you enrolled after that date, then you likely missed some of them. I present them below for completeness. You might want to give them a quick examination.

Date: Thu, 14 Nov 2013 20:39:00 -0600 (CST)
From: Bob Wardrop <wardrop@stat.wisc.edu>
To: "Lecture 4, Spring 2014 Stat 371" <stat371-4-s14@lists.wisc.edu>
Subject: Greetings and a test

Hi. You are receiving this email b/c you are enrolled in the class listed in the heading above. I am the instructor/lecturer/Professor Emeritus for this lecture.

There are two things you should know about this course. Well, more than two, but two are crucial today.

1. This is a blended/online course. There will be no lectures. The course appears in the timetable as having lectures at 1:20--2:10 on MWF somewhere, but I haven’t noted where b/c I won’t be there! (Actually, I will be there one day the first week in case you want to ask questions etc.)

The main benefit of having a lecture time listed is that it results in our being assigned a time for our final exam.

Note that it is perfectly ok if you also enroll in another class that meets 1:20--2:10 on any of the days Monday, Wednesday or Friday. (You will have at least three choices of time/day for both the midterm and final.)

I taught this blended course in Summer 2013 and am teaching it during the current semester. It works. Many students loved the freedom of not needing to walk thru the snow (no, that’s you guys) to attend lecture. Of course, some students did not like this new medium. As a result, if you don’t want this medium, I recommend you try to enroll in another lecture of 371 before it’s too late.

2. The discussions are real. The TA (or TAs, I never know how many will be assigned to me) will meet discussions every week, but discussions are optional. As a result, only about 50% of the students attend discussion which means that we don’t care when you attend! Thus, please do not ask me to change your discussion time; I can’t and there is no need for you to change it. Just attend when you want to attend!
My email last evening generated the following very good question; I decided to share my answer with all of you. Note that I have replaced the student’s name with ‘Anon.’

-------- Original Message --------
Subject: Re: Greetings and a test
Date: 2013-11-14 22:31
From: Anon
To: Bob Wardrop <wardrop@stat.wisc.edu>

Professor Wardrop,

I was wondering how the class being online works? Does this mean that there will be online videos posted for each lecture taught by you or is it more reading and learning on your own?

Thank you,
Anon

-------------------------------------------------------------

It would be inaccurate to say there are NO videos (see later in this email), but my course does NOT consist of video-taped lectures. In my experience, many people claim to ‘think outside the box,’ but only a small proportion do. (I could very well be wrong about this.)

Frankly, in my experience I fail to see what is so wonderful about lectures in intro stats that they need to be preserved! (Note: I am not stating an opinion about subjects I don’t teach.) Yes, I know the argument: students can’t learn from intro stats textbooks without a lecture. Think about this statement. The key is that EXISTING textbooks are not up to the task. I could write a paper on why this is so, but suffice to say that the key points would be: greed of publishers and authors; and determination to preserve the lecture medium of instruction.

Here is my alternative approach. Go to my webpage (google
'Bob Wardrop'), scroll down to ‘Courses’ and click on the link to this semester’s course. You will be taken to a list of links; click on Course Notes. I am currently revising the notes from Summer and, at this moment, only 18 of the 22 chapters are posted. (Good news, Springs notes will be exactly the same as Fall, plus an errata sheet---nobody’s perfect!) If you have the time, read Chapter 1. This is how you will learn; by reading the Course Notes, doing the homework and, if needed, attending discussions and office hours. Also, make friends in the class and work together.

Regarding videos. If you examine the CNs you will see that they contain ‘hyperlinks’ to various websites. These sites cover the following materials:

---Stat computing. You will not be learning a software package; instead, you will learn about sites that analyze your data for you. These sites are very easy to use and much more time efficient than learning a computer language.
---Segments or summaries of movies that give insight to the course material, including: The Princess Bride, A Few Good Men and Blade Runner.
---Sites, usually Wikipedia, to provide additional info for those who are interested.
---Various other sites: The origin of Goldilocks and why she is useful in Stats; tests of color-blindness and ESP; and even a few sites that illustrate what passes for humor in Stats.

You guys are actually lucky. Things used to be tougher. (Don’t you love it when old people say this!) Here is what I mean.

In Summer 2013, I emailed my class: This is an experiment. I think it will work, but I have no evidence that it will. Good luck.

In Fall 2013, I emailed my class: It worked in Summer, but, of course, Fall is different from Summer. Those Summer students were desperate (scattered around the world or local and working full time) and highly motivated (graduate early and save $$$). Good luck.

Now, I can tell you that it worked in Fall too.

Good luck. I hope you stay in the class, but if it’s not for you, that’s ok. You were not put on this planet to make me happy.
Dear Dr. Wardrop,
Thanks for your email! I’m really looking forward to it. This sounds strange to you, perhaps, but is it realistic for us to be able to start the homework early?

Cheers,
Anon

Beginning on the Wednesday of the second week of classes, you will take weekly online quizzes (you may take them earlier than Wednesdays, if you want):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quiz</th>
<th>Chapter(s)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 and 2</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3 and 4</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6 and 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8 and 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then there will be an in-person midterm, covering Chapters 1--9.

Between now and January, you COULD do Chapters 1--18 (quizzes end after Chapter 18, the final covers Chapters 10--22) and be really really far ahead in the class, but I recommend against that.

Somewhat more realistically, feel free to do Chapters 1 and 2 before the semester begins. Or, if you really love the stuff,
Chapters 1--4, but I would not go into the Course Notes farther than Chapter 4.

If you choose to start early note that I ADAMANTLY REFUSE :-], seriously, to answer any questions until the class begins. Also, we won’t have a TA until the class begins and we won’t have access to Learn until the class begins.

--Bob Wardrop

FYI, this is a blended class; i.e., there are no lectures. If you want to learn how this course works, go to http://www.stat.wisc.edu/~wardrop/371onlinespr2014.html

(If you don’t want to type all of the above, google ‘Bob Wardrop’; go to my site and scroll down to Statistics 371, Lecture 4 (Blended/Online), Spring 2014)

If, after reading this document, you decide to stay in the class, watch for more info on the course in future emails. If, however, after reading this document you decide you DON’T WANT A BLENDED CLASS, go to Finding a Space in Statistics 371, Spring 2014

on my webpage for tips on how to get into one of the other lectures, especially Lecture 2.
If this fails, you might need to wait until Summer or Fall for a traditional 371. (Sorry, but funding for 371 never quite meets student demand. Why? Sorry, this is above my pay grade.)

--Bob Wardrop

Date: Fri, 20 Dec 2013 15:02:18 -0600 (CST)
From: Bob Wardrop <wardrop@stat.wisc.edu>
To: "Lecture 4, Spring 2014 Stat 371" <stat371-4-s14@lists.wisc.edu>
Subject: Course Schedule/Important Dates

The attached document presents the due dates of various assignments for Stat 371, Lecture 4, during Spring 2014.

Notably absent from this document are the due dates for the two projects; I will announce these no later than January 20.

This document is posted on our course webpage:


Finally, this document will be posted on our course page on Learn@UW. Because you will take quizzes and submit homework on Learn, this last posting will likely prove most convenient for you.

--Bob Wardrop

Date: Fri, 20 Dec 2013 15:17:00 -0600 (CST)
From: Bob Wardrop <wardrop@stat.wisc.edu>
To: "Lecture 4, Spring 2014 Stat 371" <stat371-4-s14@lists.wisc.edu>
Subject: Getting an early start on Stat 371

A few minutes ago I emailed you the schedule for homework and quizzes for our Stat 371 course in Spring.

If you want to get an early start on the course, you may go to the course webpage:


and start reading the chapters in the Course Notes. (Starting with Chapter 1 is a good idea; starting with the last chapter in order to discover who did it is not such a good idea. :-])

I recommend against reading past Chapter 4 (or, if you find the material really easy and interesting, Chapter 5) until the course actually begins and you have access to the TA and myself for asking questions. (Whereas I am happy if you want to start early, I don’t want to! :-])

Also, the Learn site is not set up yet, so it is impossible to submit homework or take quizzes at this time.
Questions? Comments? Suggestions?

--Bob Wardrop

Date: Sat, 11 Jan 2014 12:44:35 -0600 (CST)
From: Bob Wardrop <wardrop@stat.wisc.edu>
To: "Stat 371, Lecture 4, Spring 2014 -- Eric Obscherning"
Subject: Re: stats 371 (fwd)

FYI:

---------- Forwarded message ----------
Date: Wed, 08 Jan 2014 09:51:55 -0600
From: wardrop <wardrop@cs.wisc.edu>
To: XXX
Cc: Bob <wardrop@stat.wisc.edu>
Subject: Re: stats 371

On 2014-01-07 20:26, XXX wrote:
> Hello!
> I reviewed the synopsis of the class online and I just wanted to
> check that I understood everything correctly. Does the class only meet
> once a week during discussion? And if that is correct why are there
> time slots in my schedule for lectures every Monday, Wednesday and
> Friday?
> 
> Sincerely,
> XXX

Yes, it only meets once per week, for discussion.

In many ways I would prefer if NO lecture time was specified, but that
decision was made above my pay grade. :-) There ARE some advantages
to having a time listed:

1. By having a lecture time, the U assigns us a time for the final.

2. The time and room are convenient for a review before the midterm and
final; it’s nice to ‘own’ a room. B/c students are free to enroll
in another class at our nominal time, 1:20 MWF, we need to have
additional times for reviews, the midterm and the final.

3. It is POSSIBLE (not decided yet) that I might hold optional enrichment
meetings at 1:20 on Fridays. These would be for the students who
want to learn more background on Stats or, more likely, discuss connections between Stats and their other course/academic work.

--Bob Wardrop

Date: Sat, 11 Jan 2014 13:40:21 -0600 (CST)
From: Bob Wardrop <wardrop@stat.wisc.edu>
To: "Stat 371, Lecture 4, Spring 2014
Subject: The first week of classes

Hi. The purpose of this email is to tie up certain loose ends about the class before the semester officially begins on Tuesday, January 21.

1. I have limited ability to change material on Learn (long story). Anyways, Learn won’t open for our course until 1/21; if you want to get started early, go to


You may start reading the Course Notes or inspect other documents located at this site.

2. Throughout the semester, I will refer to the above site; i.e., http://www.stat.wisc.edu/~wardrop/courses/371spring2014.html

as the ‘course webpage.’ I recommend you bookmark it on all of your computers.

3. There is tremendous overlap between the course webpage and the course materials on Learn. Sometimes the two sources have slightly different wordings of the same notion. If you are confused about any discrepancy, contact me.

It is my impression that last semester most of my students preferred to use Learn almost exclusively, perhaps b/c they also use it for other classes. There are some advantages to the course webpage:

---The Course Notes include ‘hyperlinks.’ This means that if the notes state, for example, ‘‘Blah blah blah Table 1.3,’’ the ‘Table 1.3’ will be in blue type and clicking on it will take you to Table 1.3. Note the following:

***The Course Notes on Learn have intra-chapter hyperlinks and
hyperlinks to webpages. If you load all 22 chapters of
the Course Notes on the course webpage, then you will also
have inter-chapter hyperlinks too.

---The course webpage contains, in one location, links to all
of the computing webpages we will use.

4. Discussions will meet the week of Jan. 21--26. (Obviously, the
Monday discussion---345---will not meet on 1/20 b/c the U is
closed.)

There won’t be any material covered this first week, but it
will give you the opportunity to meet your TA. The TAs are:

Ruosi Guo: Disc 341, 343, 344 and 346 and
Timothy Idowu: Disc 342 and 345.

Ruosi was my TA last semester; thus, he knows everything about
our online course. Timothy has been a TA for several years,
including working with me before. I am very pleased and fortunate
to have had them assigned to work with me.

In the spirit of this being an online course, discussion attendance
is optional. Also, if you cannot attend your official discussion,
feel free to attend a different one. If possible, try to stay
with your TA (e.g., if you cannot attend Ruosi’s 341, try to attend
343, 344 or 346); if this is not possible, that is ok too. But b/c
your official TA will grade your homework, you probably will prefer
dealing with him.

Please do NOT send me questions about homework; I only get involved
if I need to mediate a dispute beween you and your TA.

5. On Friday, January 24, I will be in room 331 SMI (our official lecture
room, which is odd for a course w/o lectures!) in case you have any
face-to-face questions for me.

6. This course is my only job duty. It is a part-time job. Hence,
I will NOT be in office 40 hours per week; probably not even
10 hours per week. I will be available for office hours, but
am not prepared today to be more explicit; let me explain this
a bit.

Most of our interaction will be electronic; last semester I spent
a large amount of time answering emails.
I will likely spend one full day in my office each week. I don’t know the day yet b/c it will coincide with a committee job I have, which is to advise the Stat Dept on developing additional online courses. The committee will meet weekly, but I don’t know the day yet.

I will likely be in my office one additional day after 4:45 PM. (Free parking becomes available at 4:30.)

7. I imagine that each of you falls into one of the following three categories:

A. Very happy to be in an online version of Stat 371. (Well, conditional on your NEED to complete 371; I know that you did NOT choose this U b/c of intro Stats!)

B. Cautiously hopeful that the course will work out.

C. Seriously unhappy about being forced to enroll in an online course.

Obviously, some of you might be undecided between A and B or between B and C. It’s not a big deal; my point is below.

The Stat Dept faced a huge difficulty when planning the course offerings for this semester. For decades the funding for intro Stats has been such that all lectures eventually fill completely. Thus, the simple fact that this lecture closed does NOT imply that students are thrilled with it. (Of course, the same is true for each of the traditional lectures available.) Making matters worse, some (many? most? who knows?) students enrolled for this lecture believing it was a traditional course with lectures 1:20 MWF.

Anyways, here is my request to you. If you are definitely in Category C above, AND want to switch to one of the existing other lectures, let me know. (Include a desired discussion too.) I can’t promise anything, but I will attempt to help you in the next week.

8. The Course Notes are online. They are free. They are copyrighted, but you have my permission to print them. This raises an issue.

I have discovered that many students prefer to have a paper copy
of the Course Notes. More alarmingly, I discovered that one of my Summer students printed the CN at the library for 10 cents per page! This was distressing, b/c one of the reasons I created the course was to save you money.

Last semester I sold copies of the CN to students at cost, two cents per page, making the entire cost $12. (Actually, I charged them $10 b/c of the inconvenience for them of getting the notes in pieces---they were still a work in progress.)

This semester I would prefer to use Bob’s (no relation) Copy Shop, but I don’t know what they will charge. If they charge too much---say, more than 18 dollars, which is 3 cents per page---I will sell copies again. But before I go to Bob’s or make any promises, it would help if I had a count of how many people will want a paper copy of the CN.

Thus, if you think---no commitment---that you would want to buy the entire CN---a bit over 600 pages---please let me know.

Thanks.

Bob Wardrop

Date: Sat, 18 Jan 2014 11:35:15 -0600 (CST)
From: Bob Wardrop <wardrop@stat.wisc.edu>
Subject: Stat 371, Lecture 4, Blended/Online

This is my final (?)! email to you before classes begin on Tuesday.

This email’s recipients include five students who are waiting to enroll/have not decided yet.

The class initially closed at 144 students. Since that time, by my latest count, 25 additional students have enrolled (matched by 25 drops; the total is still 144). Thus, I suspect that some of you have missed some or all of the emails I have sent to the class, beginning on November 14. Therefore, I have posted all emails on my webpage; go to


and click on ‘‘Emails ... ‘’
Sadly, this document is quite long (11 pages) and much of it is redundant. Thus, at most, I suggest you skim it. Note that all documents that are ‘attached’ to emails are now posted on http://www.stat.wisc.edu/~wardrop/courses/371spring2014.html

Your first homework is due at 11:59 PM on Sunday, January 26. It covers Chapters 1 and 2 of the Course Notes. You will upload your homework on Learn@UW; thus, you cannot submit your homework until after you are officially enrolled and Learn has acknowledged your presence. If you have any difficulties with this or other time limits, let me know.

As a general rule, if your homework is late you will not be able to submit it b/c the dropbox closes. The easiest way to handle this is to submit the homework to the next chapter’s dropbox and email your TA with your reason for being late. I encourage my TAs to be compassionate about this, unless and until it becomes a pattern of behavior.

Speaking of TAs, Timothy Idowu teaches 342 (12:05 W) and 345 (4:00 M) and Ruosi Guo teaches the other four. ALL questions about homework should be addressed to your official TA; i.e., T.I. if you are officially enrolled in 342 or 345, R.G. otherwise. My job is to mediate any disputes between you and your TA and, I hope, this will occur rarely, if at all.

We don’t care which discussion you attend or, indeed, if you attend at all. At the other extreme, you are welcome to attend all six discussions in any week! If possible, attend a discussion taught by your official TA (e.g., 342 or 345 if T.I., any of the others if R.G.) b/c it is easier if you meet with the person who grades your homework. WE ARE NOT GOING TO CHANGE YOUR OFFICIAL DISCUSSION OR THE PERSON WHO GRADES YOUR HOMEWORK. THUS, DO NOT ASK FOR THIS AND DO NOT SET UP ANY INFORMAL AGREEMENT WITH YOUR TA! The TAs and I are being very flexible about this issue and will appreciate your cooperation.

On the other hand, I handle online quizzes. Thus, questions about the online quizzes should be directed to me, not a TA.

Obviously, disc. 345 will NOT meet this week b/c Monday is a school holiday. If you need help with the homework for Chapters 1 or 2, go to discussion this week. Next week’s discussions
will give you another opportunity to ask about these chapters before their quiz.

About the quizzes: Students have complained that they are ‘‘Different from the homework.’’ True, somewhat. The set of quiz questions overlaps the set of homework questions, but the former is NOT a subset of the latter. Why? Because I want you to read the entire chapters and not simply do the homework.

I plan to be in the official lecture room from 1:20--2:10 on Friday, January 24, in case you have questions that you want answered in person.

Finally, regarding the Course Notes. I am awaiting a price quote from Bob’s Copy Shop (no relation) and will let you know what the deal is as soon as I know. If their price is too high, I will copy them at the Department and sell them to you at cost. So far, 11 students have expressed an interest in purchasing them.

Questions? Comments? Suggestions?

--Bob Wardrop

Date: Mon, 20 Jan 2014 21:59:19 -0600 (CST)
From: Bob Wardrop <wardrop@stat.wisc.edu>
To: "Stat 371, Lecture 4, Spring 2014 -- Anna Mcgee" <amcgee2@wisc.edu>,
Subject: Photocopied Course Notes

I have decided that the Course Notes are not completely ready for this semester; thus, I will be making the copies and selling them to you at cost; i.e., without a complete copy today, it doesn’t seem possible to use a commercial copy shop.

The total cost will be $15. (The only estimate I have from a commercial shop was ‘‘Approximately $50.’’) If you prefer, you may borrow the master copy from me and make your own photocopies. (By borrow, I mean that you will need to give me a refundable security deposit.)

The first installment is Chapters 1--9, enough for the midterm. The cost of these chapters is $5.

You may pick up Chapters 1--5 from me this week for $5. This means that when Chapters 6--9 are ready---about one week from
now---there will be no charge for them. Then $5 for Chapters 10--16 and, finally, $5 for Chapters 17--22. It is your decision whether you want a paper copy; one is not required for the course. Also, you are welcome to print the CNs from my webpage.

I will be in my office this week on Wednesday, from about 12:00 to 7:00 and Friday, from about 10:00 to 5:00.

Date: Tue, 21 Jan 2014 08:52:39 -0600
From: wardrop <wardrop@cs.wisc.edu>
Subject: Greetings! The first day of ‘class’

Here are a few items.

1. Please go onto Learn and tell your classmates (and the TAs and I) a bit about yourself.

2. I have been swamped with requests for copies of the Course Notes. I will honor all requests, but there might be some waiting involved. Remember that you may pick them up on Wednesday (tomorrow) or Friday. (My next week’s schedule is undetermined at this time--I love teaching online! :-])

Remember to bring 5 dollars (cash; if necessary, a check) which will cover Chapters 1--9. It is possible that I eventually will be stopped from doing this, but I absolutely guarantee the first nine chapters will be printed.

3. I know the following is confusing, but bear with me please. There are three versions of the Course Notes floating around right now. The good news is that the differences are essentially trivial.

(a) The photocopied CNs. Currently existing for Chapters 1--5 only, these are the ‘gold standard.’
(b) Currently posted on my website. These are identical to (a) except for two minor changes which I will correct tomorrow. For those who have already printed your their copy from my webpage, I will post an errata sheet. Literally, for Chapters 1--5, you can hand write the changes on your copy in 15 seconds or less.
(c) The version on Learn. These will NOT be updated; thus, when you use them, you should refer to the very brief errata. Long story, but it is too difficult (i.e., I can’t do it nor can I easily get someone else to do it) to change the CN on Learn.
4. It is ok if you change your mind about wanting notes printed. As the course proceeds, you might change your desires based on how your learning proceeds. This is partly why you are making commitments in pieces: for 5 dollars you get Chapters 1--9; once you pay me your 5 dollars you may not change your mind on Chapters 1--9, but may change your mind on later chapters. Conversely (?), you may decide later in the course to start buying photocopies.

5. I do encourage you to consider the following. Keep your notes in relatively good condition (highlighting is certainly ok) so that you can sell them to my Summer students. It’s not so much that you will earn money, but it will conserve paper AND make it easier for me to continue to offer this low cost service to my students.