

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Social Work Statistics

Course Number:	SW 318	Instructor:	Max Kassler, Ph.D.
Unique Number:	65195	E-mail:	maxkassler@gmail.com
Semester:	Fall 2008	Contact #:	512.809.3406
Meeting Time:	M / W, 4:00-5:30	Office Location:	SSW 3.104-A
Meeting Place:	SSW 1.214 (IT Classroom)	Office Hours:	Monday 3:00-4:00, or by appt
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I. Standardized Course Description

This course is one of the two courses in research for undergraduate social work majors. Completion of the liberal arts math requirement is a prerequisite for this course. This course provides a basic introduction to the conceptual and quantitative tools used to describe and interpret data in the conduct of social work practice and research. Students will learn how to select, calculate, and interpret appropriate statistics applicable to common data analysis situations related to direct practice, administration and planning, and policy. The course provides students with the opportunity to acquire personal computer skills in Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS), version 13.0 to calculate statistics and present results. Students are required to complete SW318 prior to entering the major. Students majoring in social work must earn a grade of C or better in this course.

II. Standardized Course Objectives

The goal of the course is to help students develop critical eyes for adopting research. It is important to develop keen eyes to statistical information provided and to understand the fundamental reasoning of the use of particular statistical methods in obtaining the result. Upon completion of this course the students should be able to:

1. Explain the logic of the research process and its relationship to social work knowledge and practice;
2. Explain, calculate, and interpret descriptive statistics including: basic terminology, scales, notations, frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion, and the normal distribution;
3. Read and analyze basic charts and graphs, contingency tables, and SPSS output results;
4. Explain, calculate, and interpret inferential statistics including probability and hypothesis tests;
5. Identify and apply the correct statistical technique to the research question;
6. Understand that statistics are value neutral, but can be used to support discriminatory and prejudicial value positions contrary to the values of social work, especially against special populations (e.g., women, people of color, people with disabilities, gays and lesbians);
7. Use computer technology to compute descriptive and inferential statistics; and
8. State several examples of how statistics are used as a tool in the "real world" by social service agencies to analyze client outcomes.

III. Required University Notices and Policies

The University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Professional Conduct in Class

The professor expects students to act like professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometime we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism.

Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/>).

Documented Disability Statement

Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

Religious Holidays

By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to their e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

Safety

As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor’s instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you’re given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

IV. Methods of Instruction

The primary methods of instruction are interactive lectures, class discussion, written homework, and an SPSS exercise. Assigned reading and written homework assignments are to be completed before each class.

V. Required Course Materials

1. Required Text

Weinbach, Robert W., & Grinnell, Richard M. (2007). *Statistics for Social Work Majors (Seventh Edition)*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

2. Computer Requirements

We will use SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to do a statistical calculations project in this course. There are school computers with SPSS available to students — all of the computers in the IT classroom, computer labs located at the Social Work LRC (Learning Resources Center), and computers at the Flawn Academic Center. You will need to have your UT EID and password ready. If you do not have an accessible PC at hand, it is best to check the availability and accessibility in advance. In order to inquire about their business hours and available services, go to <http://www.utexas.edu/computer/fac/>. Dr. Robert Canon (office 1.212AA located at the LRC entrance) is also available for installing the SPSS software or with setting up UT EID accounts to obtain authorization to use the LRC computer lab.

4. Blackboard Use

Class materials (e.g., syllabus, PowerPoint lecture notes, data sets as needed) will be posted on Blackboard. Grades and other announcements will also be posted on blackboard.

VI. Student Evaluation

1. Attendance and Class Participation, -2% per miss after two excused absences

Class attendance is *required* and *attendance will be recorded* each class period. You will receive two excused absences (e.g., for medical emergencies, doctor's appointments, and university sanctioned activities that may occur during the semester). Any further absences will result in -2% per absence off your final grade. For example, if you miss five classes and finish with a 95% in the class, you will receive -6% from absences and finish the course with an 89%.

It is expected that students will attend class where many topics are explained in better detail than the text offers. It is also expected that students will participate in class by asking questions, answering questions posed by the lecturer, and participating in group projects.

Your attendance, attention, and participation are expected for all class sessions for the entire class period. Students are expected to demonstrate respect for others, be willing to share ideas and opinions, and participate in class exercises. Please turn off cell phone ringers and

refrain from text messaging and other non-class activities during the class period. If a student needs to miss class, notification is required in advance.

2. Homework Assignments, 30% (6 at 5% apiece)

There will be six homework assignments to be completed across the semester. All homework assignments will be done by hand and a calculator (i.e., there will not be an SPSS component on each homework).

Homework must be handed in at the beginning of the class period in which it is due. Late homework *will not be accepted* without a prior agreement.

After homework has been graded and returned, you may submit a corrected homework assignment for half of the points that were deducted from the original submission. For example, a homework that initially scored an 84% could be corrected and resubmitted for a score of 92% (assuming all of the corrections were correct). A homework assignment that is turned in late or missed can be turned in as corrected for half of the missed points.

3. SPSS Assignment, 10%

There will be one SPSS assignment given this semester. It will be near the end of the semester and will encompass much of the material that has been covered.

4. Exams, 60% (3 at 20% apiece; optional final exam)

There will be three exams given during the course of the semester.

A cumulative final exam will be given at the end of the semester. *This exam is optional.* If you choose to take it, and score better on it than one of your previous exams, it will replace your lowest regular semester exam grade. Your grade on the final exam cannot lower your current grade.

5. Grading

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A	90.00%	—	100%
B	80.00%	—	89.99%
C	70.00%	—	79.99%
D	60.00%	—	69.99%
F	0%	—	59.99%

Point totals will not be rounded up to a higher grade. Since students have the opportunity to correct homework assignments to improve their grade, and a chance to replace their lowest test grade with the optional final, there is ample opportunity to assure that they have sufficient points to secure a desired grade

VII. Course Schedule — Fall 2008

#	DATE	DAY	CHAPTER	TOPIC	NOTES
1	8/27	Wed	—	Class Introduction; Syllabus Review	
—	9/1	Mon	—	LABOR DAY — No Class	
2	9/3	Wed	1	Introductory Concepts	
3	9/8	Mon	2	Organization of Information (tables)	
4	9/10	Wed	2	Organization of Information (graphs)	
5	9/15	Mon	3	Describing Distributions Numerically	HW#1 Due
6	9/17	Wed	3	Standard Deviation	
7	9/22	Mon	4	Z-scores	
8	9/24	Wed	—	Jeopardy I	HW#2 Due
9	9/29	Mon	—	EXAM I	
10	10/1	Wed	—	Review Exam I	
11	10/6	Mon	—	Probability	
12	10/8	Wed	6	Sampling Distributions	
13	10/13	Mon	6	Sampling Distributions	
14	10/15	Wed	5	Hypothesis Testing	HW#3 Due
15	10/20	Mon	11	T-tests	
16	10/22	Wed	7	Selecting a Statistical Test	
17	10/27	Mon	—	Jeopardy II	
18	10/29	Wed	—	EXAM II	HW#4 DUE
19	11/3	Mon	—	Review Exam II	
20	11/5	Wed	8	Correlation	
21	11/10	Mon	9	Regression	
22	11/12	Wed	8/9	Correlation / Regression (as needed)	HW#5 Due

23	11/17	Mon	—	SPSS Review Day	
24	11/19	Wed	11	ANOVA	
25	11/24	Mon	10	Cross Tabs / CHI Square	HW#6 Due; SPSS Due
—	11/26	Wed		TURKEY DAY	
26	12/1	Mon	—	EXAM III	
27	12/3	Wed	—	Review Exam III	
28	TBD	TBD	—	Final Exam	