SOCI 206 – Introduction to Social Research II
Summer 2019 – Eight-Week Session
This class is fully online – No required meetings in person

Instructor: Jerry Timbrook
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Lab hours held in Oldfather Room 728
Lab Hours (online or in-person):
Wednesday 10:30am to 11:30am
Thursday 1:30pm to 2:30pm
Additional lab hours can be made by appointment.

Time Zone: As students may be taking this class in different areas of the world it is important to note that all due dates and course activities will be based on Central Time (CT).

Prerequisite: SOCI 205: Introduction to Social Research I

“It is the mark of a truly intelligent person to be moved by statistics.”
- George Bernard Shaw

What Is This Course About?
Sociology is the scientific study of society: we explore patterns in social relationships, discover how our behavior is shaped by social structures, and consider the consequences of our social actions. Statistics are one of the tools we can use to study society. This course is designed to add basic statistical methods to your social science toolkit.

By the end of the course, your toolkit will include a set of practical data skills. You will be able to manipulate data sets, produce graphics, and, in general, be able to answer substantive sociological questions using real data. More specifically, you will be able to produce and interpret: descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and bivariate measures of association. You will learn to accomplish these goals using the statistical software package Stata. This software package is used in the real world, and experience with Stata will be a nice addition to your resume.

Sometimes students worry that they do not have the mathematical background to succeed in this statistics course. Don’t let math scare you! This course is designed with sociologists in mind, and I do not assume that you have any familiarity with math or statistics before taking this course. Putting it plainly: you do NOT need to have a math background to do well in this course.

My hope is that this class will prepare you for your future classes and career. If you are a sociology major at UNL, this course will set you up nicely for SOCI 495 (Senior Seminar), where you will produce a full research project on your own.
Research skills will also be essential if you work with faculty on a research project through the UCARE or USTARS programs. Basic research/data skills are also a great selling point on the job market. Finally, if you plan to attend graduate school, this class will give you a solid foundation to continue your studies.

What Am I Going to Learn?

By the time you leave this class, you will:

- Learn practical skills to analyze and draw conclusions from quantitative social science data. Emphasis will be placed on understanding, computing, and interpreting basic statistics; interpreting and evaluating survey research findings; and analyzing quantitative data with the statistical software program Stata.
- Acquire knowledge of how to answer social science questions and problems with quantitative and statistical data and make inference to a population of interest using descriptive statistics, bivariate associations, and multivariate techniques.
- Learn the uses of quantitative data analytic techniques and their relevance to social issues and social life.
- Analyze and draw conclusions from quantitative data with a particular emphasis on social science theories and questions.
- Become an informed consumer of statistics in everyday life.
- Learn to read, interpret, and understand published quantitative social science research literature.
- Understand how social science researchers use the scientific method and hypothesis testing for testing sociological theories and questions that are appropriate for quantitative analysis.

Achievement-Centered Education (ACE) Student Learning Outcomes

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln seeks to provide quality education to all of its students. To that end, it has designated certain classes as ACE certified. These classes provide and assess specific learning outcomes. As an ACE class, Sociology 206 - Introduction to Social Research II will facilitate Learning Outcome #3: Use mathematical, computational, statistical, or formal reasoning (including reasoning based on principles of logic) to solve problems, draw inferences, and determine reasonableness. This course introduces students to the basic statistical analysis of social data, including descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, bivariate measures of association, and multivariate techniques.

ACE learning outcomes in this class will be assessed by:

- Homework assignments
- Exams
How Will This Class Be Organized?
This class will take place entirely online (i.e., there are no required in-class meetings). You will work through one content module each week for eight weeks. Each module will focus on a specific statistical procedure. Due dates for each assignment within a module are listed on the course schedule. Also, much of the content in this course is cumulative, so be sure to work on the module content in the order it is presented to you.

Learning Statistical Procedures
Each week, you will watch lecture videos on a particular statistical procedure. You can also read the material in the textbook on that topic, but these readings are optional. For most topics, you will also watch a Stata tutorial video demonstrating how to conduct that statistical procedure in Stata.

Homework Assignments
You will complete six homework assignments that will allow you to practice the statistical skills you learn watching the lecture videos. These homework assignments will require the use of Stata and provide a hands-on opportunity to use the statistical tools we cover in the recorded lectures. Each homework assignment must be turned in on Canvas (i.e., I do not accept emailed homework assignments). I deduct one letter grade per day including weekends/holidays) that the homework assignment is late.

You may ask me for help with homework assignments via email or during our optional lab hours. You may also work with other students on the homework, but each student is responsible for running their own code and typing up their own assignment. If you copy another student’s assignment, then I will consider that plagiarism and you will receive a zero for the assignment. In general, you will be graded on the accuracy and clarity of your answers. I award partial credit for if you attempt every question, even if you do not get each question correct. So please do turn in each homework! As an observation, students who start the homework earlier tend to do better in the class. These homework assignments are worth 60% of your final grade.

Optional Lab Hours
Twice a week (Wednesdays from 11:00am to 12:00pm and Thursdays from 1:30pm to 2:30pm) I will have optional lab hours online and in-person. If you would like to join in-person, I will be in the sociology lab (Oldfather Hall Room 738). If you would like to join online, you can click the Zoom Lab Hours link on the left-hand side of our class Canvas page. During this time, I will be available to talk about any topic related to the class (e.g., homework assignments, statistical procedures, Stata, exam preparation). If you find that you are unable to attend lab hours but would still like some additional help, please email me to make separate arrangements.
Exams
You will have two exams covering material from the video lectures and homework. Both exams will be downloaded from Canvas and completed using Stata and a word processor. You will also turn in your exam by uploading it to Canvas. These exams are open note, but you may not work with anyone else. These exams are not cumulative. Dates for each exam are listed on the course schedule, and I do not accept exams past their due date. Make-up examinations will only be offered in cases of documented illness or emergency, and you must notify me before missing an exam to be eligible for a make-up. Each exam is worth 20% of your final grade.

How Will My Grade Be Determined?
Your grade for the course will be based on how well you demonstrate your learning in the following ways:

- Homework Assignments: 60%
- Midterm Exam: 20%
- Final Exam: 20%

I strive for a one-week turnaround time on graded assignments.

Grade percentages will be converted to letter grades based on the following scale:

- A+ = 97 – 100%
- A  = 93 – 96%
- A-  = 90 – 92%
- B+ = 87 – 89%
- B  = 83 – 86%
- B-  = 80 – 82%
- C+ = 77 – 79%
- C  = 73 – 76%
- C-  = 70 – 72%
- D+ = 60 – 69%
- D  = 60 – 69%
- F   = 0 – 59%

Extra Credit: Up to +1% to your final class grade
The course will not be curved. I am, however, offering up to 1% of extra credit that will be added to your FINAL class grade. This extra credit is earned by completing the syllabus quiz and bio-sketch by Wednesday, May 22nd, at 11:59 PM.

The syllabus quiz is a 5-question quiz that will ask you questions about the syllabus. The goal is to have you read the syllabus by the middle of the first week of class so that you are ready to begin the semester. You can earn up to 0.5% of extra credit towards your final grade for completing this quiz. The syllabus quiz will be completed in Canvas.

The bio-sketch asks you to answer a few questions about yourself so that I and your classmates can learn more about you. While the assignment is completely optional, I encourage you to participate as this will help to create a classroom feel in the online environment. You can earn up to 0.5% of extra credit towards your final grade for completing this extra credit assignment. The bio-sketch will be posted in a discussion forum in Canvas.
What Materials Do I Need for This Course?

Course Website
This course will take place on Canvas, UNL’s Learning Management System. You can access Canvas by navigating to: https://canvas.unl.edu/. If you have any problems accessing Canvas, you can contact the Huskertech Help Center at (402)-472-3970.

Reliable Access to a Computer and the Internet
This is an online course, so having consistent and reliable access to a computer and the internet is essential. It is your responsibility to make sure that your technology is functioning prior to taking this course.

Software
This course will make use of the statistical software package Stata. Stata is available on the sociology server, which you may access from any computer on UNL’s campus or via remote server. I have provided a video tutorial for how to access STATA both on-campus and off-campus using a PC or MAC computer. You do not need to buy any software for this course, although you are welcome to buy a copy Stata for your own computer if you like. If you want your own copy on your computer, you can purchase a six-month Student version of Stata/IC, which is 45 dollars: http://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/gradplans/student-pricing/

Calculator
Students will need a calculator in order to answer some of the homework and exam questions. The calculator on a smartphone or computer will be fine for this class.

Optional Course Text
Statistics: The Art and Science of Learning from Data (3rd Edition), by Alan Agresti and Christine Franklin
ISBN: 0321755944

The textbook is NOT required, but you may find it useful as we learn together this summer. I have selected an old edition of the book on purpose, as used copies are available on Amazon and other used book sites for a very low cost. Please note that the textbook is NOT available in the school bookstore because this is an older edition. There is no CD or unique registration code with the book.

What Resources Can You Recommend to Help Me Along the Way?

Your Instructor (That’s me!)
As your instructor, I am the most important resource available to you! We can meet during lab hours or by appointment to discuss any aspect of the course or any difficulties you may be experiencing. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have a question about course material, how to study for an exam, or your progress in this course. I try to respond to email within 24 hours on weekdays.
**Writing Support for This Course**

The UNL Writing Center can provide you with meaningful support as you write for this class as well as for every course in which you enroll. Trained peer consultants are available to talk with you about all forms of communication, including lab reports, presentations, research papers, cover letters, and application essays. You can visit at any stage of the process, from brainstorming and organizing ideas through polishing a final draft. The UNL Writing Center is located in 102 Andrews Hall, with evening hours in the Adele Hall Learning Commons and other satellite locations. You can schedule 25- and 50-minute appointments any time by visiting [unl.mywconline.com](http://unl.mywconline.com). For more information about the Writing Center, including hours and other locations, please visit [unl.edu/writing](http://unl.edu/writing).

**Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact me for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

**Honor Code**

All coursework is subject to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s Honor Code. Academic dishonesty is an offense that I take very seriously, and is grounds for failing an assignment. If you have any questions or concerns about this policy and how it relates to your work, please contact me.