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, career, and life in general. 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. If you plan to attend graduate school, this class will give you a solid foundation to continue your studies. Finally, statistics are everywhere! Learning how to be a critical consumer of statistics is an invaluable skill that I hope you gain through this course.
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 inferences 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.

I reserve the right to modify this syllabus during the semester to meet our learning goals.

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
- Midterm exam
- Final Stata project

Optional Office Hours
Twice a week (Wednesdays 9-10 AM, Thursdays 12:30-1:30 PM) I will hold optional office hours in my physical office. We may also meet via Zoom by request only. 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/office hours but would still like some additional help, please email me to make separate arrangements. I strive to reply to all emails within 24 hours during weekdays. Do not expect email replies during weekends, university holidays, or outside of normal business hours (9 AM –
How Will You Be Evaluated?

Weekly Useful/Confusing Discussion Posts: 10% of total grade
Each Friday morning, please post on the discussion board the answer to two questions: what so far has been useful in this week’s materials and what so far has been confusing in this week’s materials. Please provide the page number for any readings you may reference, especially where topics are confusing. These posts are due by 9:00 AM on Friday mornings unless stated otherwise in Canvas and the course schedule. Postings made on time (9:00 AM Fridays) that address the two questions below will receive 2 points. Questions that fail to answer one of the questions or are late (after 9:00 AM Fridays and before 1:30 PM on Friday) will receive 1 point. Failing to post by the 1:00 pm on Friday will receive 0 points.

1. What in the readings seems particularly useful or interesting this week?
2. What in the readings was confusing or hard to understand this week?

Homework Assignments: 20% of total grade
You will complete seven 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).

You may ask me for help with homework assignments via email or during our optional lab/office 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 try to award partial credit for attempted questions 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.

Midterm Exam: 20% of total grade
You will have one midterm examine covering material from the video lectures and homework. This exam 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. This exam is open note, but you may not work with anyone else. Dates for the midterm exam is listed on the course schedule, and I do not accept exams past the deadline. 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.

Scaffolded Stata Project Assignments: 20% of total grade
There will be three scaffolded Stata Project assignments, which amount to 20% of your total grade. These assignments work together and will help you in your Final Stata Project. These
assignments assess your ability to formulate research questions and apply appropriate statistical procedures to assess that research question.

**Final Stata Project: 20% of total grade**
You will have one final project which will utilize Stata to assess your ability to formulate a research question and answer that research question with statistical analyses. This final Stata project serves as your final exam. Further information regarding the Final Stata Project will be published on Canvas.

**Attendance and Participation: 10% of total grade**
Attendance and active participation are both required for this course. Note that simply being in the classroom does not count as active participation. Active participation includes being attentive and participating in class discussions. I expect students to come to class prepared, having read the materials for each class before we meet. If you have more than three unexplained absences (excluding COVID-related absences) during the semester, I reserve the right to lower your participation grade. Late arrival counts as an absence. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain lecture notes from your fellow students. Note that I reserve the right to remove students from the classroom in the case that they do not follow any relevant COVID-19 policies (i.e. face mask requirements) set by the university.

**Attendance as it pertains to COVID-19**
In the case that you are ill or suspect that you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, do not attend class. I can set up a zoom link for synchronous attendance for students that have contracted or come in contact with somebody who has COVID-19.

In the case that I catch COVID-19, the university closes due to inclement weather, or we otherwise cannot meet in person, I will share instructions for how we will meet for class via Canvas announcements.

Given the current transmission level of COVID-19 in our community, I respectfully request that you join me in wearing a face covering during our classes if the university lifts the current face mask requirement.
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage of final grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Useful/Confusing posts</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaffolded Stata Project assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Stata project</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-96.99</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.99</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86.99</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.99</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79.99</td>
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Note: I do not round or curve grades

Extra Credit: Up to 14 points that go towards your final Stata project
The course will not be curved. I am, however, offering up to 14 total points of extra credit that will be added to the total points you have in class. At my discretion I may choose to offer additional questions on assignments for extra credit points as well.

The first source of extra credit is earned by completing the bio-sketch during week 1 of the semester (see course schedule for more information). 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 personable classroom environment. You can earn up to 2 points of extra credit towards your final Stata Project for completing this extra credit assignment. The bio-sketch will be posted in a discussion forum in Canvas.

The second source of extra credit is earned by completing a midterm course evaluation, which will be due during week 9 of the semester (see course schedule). This midterm course evaluation will ask you questions about how the course is going so far and how (or if) you would like to see anything changed going forward. I will be reading each of these midterm evaluations and may decide to change aspects of the course accordingly, so please consider taking this opportunity to voice your opinion and get 2 extra credit points toward your Final Stata Project in the process.
Another source of extra credit is a reflection paper which will be due during week 15 of the semester (see course schedule). This paper will require you to reflect on your understanding of statistics over the course of the semester and apply themes from *Naked Statistics* to these reflections. This reflection paper will be worth 10 extra credit points which goes towards your Final Stata Project. Further details about this paper will be provided during the semester.

**Late Work Policy**
Homework and scaffolded Stata Project assignments can be turned in late for partial credit. The first day that the assignment is late (starting at 12:00 AM the day after it is due), there will be a 10% reduction in the grade you receive. The second day that the assignment is late, there will be a 20% reduction in the grade you receive. The third day that the assignment is late, there will be a 30% reduction in the grade you receive. The fourth day and later that the assignment is late, there will be zero credit given. The reason for not accepting late work after a certain number of days is so that I can post homework and assignment keys. If I were to accept late work indefinitely, I would not be able to publish assignment keys, which I have been told are very helpful in learning the course materials.

Useful/confusing discussion posts, the midterm exam, and the Final Stata Project assignment **cannot** be turned in late for course credit.

Please reach out to me *a minimum of 24 hours before the assignment due date* if you need extensions for any assignments because of extenuating circumstances and I will do what I can to accommodate your circumstances.

**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/](https://canvas.unl.edu/). If you have any problems accessing Canvas, you can contact the Huskertech Help Center at (402)-472-3970.

**Please note:** all of your assignments will be turned in via Canvas in the file format stated for the assignment portal. I will not accept assignments via email or any other format.

**Reliable Access to a Computer and the Internet**
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. You can rent computers from UNL using this website: [https://its.unl.edu/services/equipment-checkout/](https://its.unl.edu/services/equipment-checkout/).

You can also download the entire Microsoft Office Suite (including Microsoft Word, Excel, etc.) using your UNL login here: [https://its.unl.edu/emailhome/download-microsoft-office](https://its.unl.edu/emailhome/download-microsoft-office).

**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: [http://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/gradplans/student-pricing/](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.

**Course Texts**


I am providing a PDF copy of both texts for you. Therefore, it is not required for you to purchase a physical copy of the books for this course. However, you may choose to purchase a physical copy for yourself if you would prefer to have one. If you choose to do this, I am more than willing to provide recommendations for where you can get these books.

**Other Policies You Should Be Aware Of**

*University-Wide Policies:* [http://go.unl.edu/coursepolicies](http://go.unl.edu/coursepolicies)

*Respect for the Community*

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln honors and respects the dignity and differences among all students, staff, faculty, and members of the community at large. As such, discriminating, threatening, and harmful behavior is not tolerated in this course. Contact the Sociology department chair, Dr. Jolene Smyth at jsmyth2@unl.edu or the Dean of Students at 402-472-2021 with any concerns regarding this course.

**Land Acknowledgement:**

A “Land Acknowledgement” is a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of this land and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories. The Institute for Ethnic Studies has developed the following Land Acknowledgement:

The University of Nebraska is a land-grant institution with campuses and programs on the past, present, and future homelands of the Pawnee, Ponca, Oto-Missouria, Omaha, Dakota, Lakota, Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Kaw Peoples, as well as the relocated Ho-Chunk, Iowa, and Sac and Fox Peoples. Please take a moment to consider the legacies of more than 150 years of displacement, violence, settlement, and survival that bring us together here today. This acknowledgement and the centering of Indigenous Peoples is a start as we move forward together for the next 150 years.