

Sociology 305: Quantitative Research Methods
Monday, Wednesday, & Friday 12:50pm-1:45pm
Brown Learning Lab (219)

Instructor: John T. Lang

Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 9:00am – 10:30am

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Course Website: <http://moodle.oxy.edu>

INTRODUCTION

This course introduces quantitative research methods and statistical analysis from a sociological perspective. We will address the major components of the research process and will stress the importance of critical thinking in all matters numerical. We will cover measures of central tendency, the normal curve, probability, frequency distributions, correlation, and regression. We will also work on thinking, writing, and speaking about quantitative data.

By the end of the course, you will have mastered basic statistical concepts and techniques and learned how to write about quantitative data in a concise and cogent manner. You will also be able to critically examine and evaluate common (mis)uses of statistical concepts.

Statistical thinking will one day be as necessary for efficient citizenship as the ability to read and write.
—H.G. Wells

Please Note

Prerequisite: Sociology 101.

First year students may not enroll in this class.

This course may be used toward the Core Science/Mathematics requirement.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

You will be expected to use a calculator frequently in the class. It does not have to be fancy. It must be something other than the calculator on your cell phone.

The required textbook is available at the Occidental College Bookstore. You can also find it online at your favorite bookseller.

Salkind, Neil J. 2011. *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics, 4th Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Paperback.

ISBN: 978-1412979597

Companion Website: <http://www.sagepub.com/salkind4e/study/>

Errata and Corrections: <http://www.statisticsforpeople.com/Corrections.html>

ASSIGNMENTS

There will be five homework assignments, each worth 20% of your final grade. These assignments will require you to apply the techniques learned in class. Each assignment will come with its own detailed set of instructions.

COURSE GRADES

Do NOT count on a curve. I will assign letter grades for the entire course as follows:

93.0 and higher = A	73.0 to 76.99 = C
90.0 to 92.99 = A-	70.0 to 72.99 = C-
87.0 to 89.99 = B+	67.0 to 69.99 = D+
83.0 to 86.99 = B	60.0 to 66.99 = D
80.0 to 82.99 = B-	59.99 and lower = F.
77.0 to 79.99 = C+	

Letter grades in this class have the following meaning:

- A *Outstanding performance.* You have demonstrated very thorough knowledge and understanding of all the material, truly superior critical thinking, and expressed insightful and original thoughts clearly. You have completed all required assignments and they have been among the best in the class.
- B *Good performance.* You have demonstrated solid knowledge and understanding of the material and good critical thinking. You have also shown the ability to express your ideas clearly. You have completed all required assignments and they have been of good quality.
- C *Satisfactory performance.* You have demonstrated basic knowledge and understanding of the major concepts taught in the class and some critical thinking. You have completed all or most of the required assignments and they have routinely been free of significant problems.
- D *Deficient performance.* You have only acquired a limited understanding of the class material. You have failed to complete required assignments and/or they have routinely had serious problems.
- F *Failure.* You have failed to learn a sufficient proportion of the basic concepts and ideas taught in the class. You have failed to complete required assignments and they have routinely had serious problems.

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

I will hold you responsible for the information in this syllabus, so I expect you to read it, understand it, and ask questions about anything you don't understand.

Attendance: I regard all absences as "excused." As busy, responsible adults, you may sometimes find yourself unable to attend class, because of illness, family crises, etc. I do not differentiate among these reasons and expect you to be responsible for your attendance. The activities and discussions that take place in class are an integral part of the learning experience and cannot be made up. Therefore, absence affects your course grade as follows:

- 1-2 absences: no effect
- 3 absences: grade lowered one full letter, at the discretion of the professor
- 4 absences: grade lowered two full letters, at the discretion of the professor

Please inform me immediately if you have considerations that present a challenge to your meeting the attendance expectations. Plan in advance—and communicate before you find yourself in a jam.

Office Hours: I hold three official office hours each week. I also encourage you to make an appointment outside of office hours or come by my office anytime to see if I'm available. I am happy to discuss class concepts, college more generally, musings about majors, future planning, or graduate school.

Feedback: I love getting feedback on my teaching and how the class is going. I value your input and I am willing to make changes to the class according to your preferences. Please share with me any comments, suggestions, and ideas you may have, and help me make this a great class. If you would like to do so anonymously, you can type and print out a note and drop it in the mailbox outside of my office.

Class Demeanor: While we may find ourselves disagreeing, we must do so with respect, a commitment to hearing what others have to say, and a willingness to think and rethink our own positions. Personal insults have no place in the college classroom.

Technology in Class: Please turn off your cell phones when you come to class. Similarly, text messaging will not be tolerated in class. You may bring your laptop to class and use it to take notes, access readings we're discussing, and the like. You are not welcome to surf the web, check email, use social media, or otherwise perform non-class-related activities during class. If you aren't using it to perform a task specifically related to what we are doing in class at that very moment, put it away.

Special Accommodations/Learning Differences: Any student eligible for and needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a disability should talk to me sometime in the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. Students who experience significant physical or mental impairments can contact Disability Services at (323) 259-2969 to learn about available services and support. More information is available at:

<http://www.oxy.edu/disability-services>

Assignments: Assignments must be handed in at the start of class on the scheduled due date. Late assignments are docked 1 grade per day. Computer and printing problems are not a good excuse for missing a deadline. Make sure to print your papers early enough to be able to address any problems before class. Keep a paper and electronic copy of everything you hand in until you receive your course grade.

Academic Integrity: As is always the case, you are responsible for your own work. If you find yourself questioning whether you have documented or cited your sources properly, it is your responsibility to come see me about these issues prior to submitting an assignment. If you are thinking about submitting work that is not your own due to pressure, frustration, perfectionism, or any other reason, please talk to me. I am here to help you resolve these issues before they become a problem for your academic career. Academic integrity violations, including plagiarism, will be taken very seriously. A description of Occidental's academic ethics policies is available in the Student Handbook and on the following webpage:

<http://www.oxy.edu/student-handbook/academic-ethics/academic-ethics>

CLASS SCHEDULE

It is possible that we will make some adjustments during the semester. I will give as much notice - both in class and on the course website - when changes are necessary.

	January 22	January 24
	Welcome to the class	Salkind: Chapter 1, Statistics or Sadistics?
January 27	January 29	January 31
Salkind: Chapter 2, Means to an End	Salkind: Chapter 3, Vive la Différence	Salkind: Chapter 4, A Picture Really Is Worth a Thousand Words
February 3	February 5	February 7
Managing Data	Introduction to SPSS and SPSS Exercises	SPSS Exercises continued
February 10	February 12	February 14
Salkind: Chapter 5, Ice Cream and Crime	Correlations in SPSS	Salkind: Chapter 6, Just the Truth
February 17	February 19	February 21
No classes.	Salkind: Chapter 7, Hypotheticals and You DUE: HW#1	Salkind: Chapter 7, Hypotheticals and You
February 24	February 26	February 28
Salkind: Chapter 8, Are Your Curves Normal?	Salkind: Chapter 8, Are Your Curves Normal?	Catch up and review
March 3	March 5	March 7
Salkind: Chapter 9, Significantly Significant	Salkind: Chapter 9, Significantly Significant	Salkind: Chapter 9, Significantly Significant DUE: HW#2
March 10	March 12	March 14
Spring Break: No classes this week.		
March 17	March 19	March 21
Salkind: Chapter 11, t(ea) for Two	Salkind: Chapter 11, t(ea) for Two	SPSS

March 24	March 26	March 28
Salkind: Chapter 12, t(ea) for Two (Again)	Salkind: Chapter 12, t(ea) for Two (Again)	Writing with numbers
March 31	April 2	April 4
Salkind: Chapter 15, Cousins or Just Good Friends?	Salkind: Chapter 15, Cousins or Just Good Friends? DUE: HW#3	SPSS
April 7	April 9	April 11
Writing with numbers	Salkind: Chapter 16, Predicting Who'll Win the Super Bowl	Salkind: Chapter 16, Predicting Who'll Win the Super Bowl
April 14	April 16	April 18
Salkind: Chapter 16, Predicting Who'll Win the Super Bowl	SPSS and Writing	Catch up and Review DUE: HW#4
April 21	April 23	April 25
Salkind: Chapter 17, What To Do When You Are Not Normal	Salkind: Chapter 17, What To Do When You Are Not Normal	Salkind: Chapter 17, What To Do When You Are Not Normal
April 28	April 30	May 2
SPSS and Writing	Putting it all together	Reading Day
May 5		
DUE: HW#5		