

Syllabus: Math 17 Introduction to Statistics (Spring 2011)

Section 01

Meetings: MW 10-10:50AM, Seeley Mudd 206; Tues 1-3:00PM, Seeley Mudd 014

CONTACT INFORMATION

Professor: Shu-Min Liao

Office: 501 Seeley Mudd

Phone: x5417

Office Hours: Mon 1-2; Tues 3-4; Fri 1-2; or by appointment

Email: sliao@amherst.edu

(Please feel free to email me directly. Email is definitely the best way to leave me messages after class. In addition, please do not hesitate to come to my office hours ~ don't be shy! I enjoy talking to students, and have found conversations and discussions during my office hours very beneficial to both you and me. In case that you can't make it to my scheduled office hours, please email me or talk to me after class.)

COURSE WEBSITE: via CMS

We will use **CMS** in this course. Important course materials and announcements will be posted, so you should plan to access the website regularly.

TEXTBOOK

De Veaux, Velleman and Bock. INTRO STATS, 3rd edition. Pearson Addison Wesley 2009. Available at Amherst Books.

SOFTWARE

We will use **R/Rcmdr** (R commander) for our data analysis in this course. It is a free program and you are encouraged to install and use it for your homework and project as appropriate. It is also available on computers on campus. I will help you learn how to use this program in lab.

SUMMARY OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Regular homework and computer lab assignments, one group project, three midterm exams, and a comprehensive final exam are required. Textbook readings will be assigned weekly and you are expected to complete readings *before* class so that the lecture material should make more sense.

| Item | Percentage |
|-----------------|---|
| Homework & Labs | 20% |
| Group Project | 15% |
| Midterm Exams | 40% (Lowest is 10%; other two are 15% each) |
| Final Exam | 25% |

I reserve the right to curve (or not) the final course grades. This curve will never decrease your score. I also reserve the right to adjust the final grade of any student based on his/her *class performance* besides the grading items above. This adjustment can be either up or down.

LIKELY EXAM DATES (tentative, subject to change)

Midterm 1: February 23, Wednesday, in class.

Midterm 2: March 30, Wednesday, in class.

Midterm 3: April 27, Wednesday, in class.

Final Exam: TBA. (It will be scheduled later by the Registrar. It will be **comprehensive**.)

SOME DETAILS ABOUT COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Homework & Labs

Weekly-based homework will consist of lab activities, exercises from the text, and (likely) written problems. Please **staple** your work and write your name on each sheet you turn in. Homework is due to me at the **beginning** of class on the due date. It will be downgraded by 10% for being more than a few minutes late, plus an extra 10% off if it is not handed in by the end of class. It will then be marked down 30% more for each weekday late. Weekdays end at 5pm, so homework due Wednesday but handed in at 5:01pm Wednesday counts as being received Thursday, making it a day late and marked down 50%. The **lowest** score will be dropped.

In the computer labs, you will work through an activity that supplements the lecture/reading. You are encouraged to work *with* group members. Time in labs can be used on the project, though additional time outside the lab may be required.

Group Project

Near the end of the semester, the last lab meetings in the course will also be used for group project work which is designed to give you a better understanding of the statistical processes you learn about in class. You should expect to commit sufficient time outside of the lab meetings to completing the project. *For the project, you will work in groups of 3-4 and each group will submit ONE written report on the due date. All group members will receive the same grade.* More details will be provided right after the spring break.

Exams

Three midterm exams and one final exam will be administered. All exams will have both written and multiple choice sections. The final exam will be comprehensive. Calculators and writing utensils are permitted for all exams. You are also allowed to bring a single *one-sided* page of notes for the midterms, and a single *two-sided* page of notes for the final.

There are NO excuses for missing an exam apart from serious illness, religious conflict or the like. If you have such a conflict, let me know as soon as possible. Otherwise, a missing exam is graded a zero. You will not be able to negotiate any missed exams at the end of the semester.

Readings, Attendance & Participation

Reading the material BEFORE & AFTER class is very important. If this is your first stats course, I strongly encourage you to read the sections *before* class and do the corresponding homework problems as soon as we cover them. Don't wait until the last minute! Weekly agendas, including assigned homework, will be provided in advance. Occasionally I may (or may not) give some extra-credit questions in or after class to "reward" students who complete reading assignments. Take advantage of them!

I have no plan to take formal attendance (unless it proves necessary), but the truth is that I know who comes and who doesn't. Being consistently late or absent would never be beneficial for your learning and final grade. In addition, I encourage you to participate in class: answer my questions or ask me questions. If you are naturally shy and have never spoken up in any class, don't worry! Show me you are listening and you care about this course. Believe me; I know who are serious!

Intellectual Responsibility: You are encouraged to discuss the homework and lab assignments with others. However, what you turn in must be your own work! **If you work together with other students, I require that you write a note of it on the front of your homework.** If anyone turns in an assignment without such a note and it appears to have been copied from someone else, *both* students will receive a grade of zero for that hw. As for exams: no talking, no passing signals, no outside help, etc. All cell phones, PDAs, iPods, laptops, etc. should be turned off and put out of sight. Plagiarism on an exam may require further disciplinary actions.

Again, let me help: Please let me know ASAP if you would like to discuss any special needs/concerns such as severe academic difficulties, religious observances on certain days, or family emergencies, etc. I'm here to help!