

Statistics – Econ 206

Spring 2011 (web course)

Dr. Alex Lebedinsky

E-mail: alex.lebedinsky@wku.edu

Grice Hall 417

Phone: 5-3150

Office hours: e-mail me to set an appointment

Learning Objectives (they make me put this stuff on the syllabus)

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to strategically employ information technology.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to solve problems through critical, reflective, and integrative thinking.
3. Students will demonstrate knowledge in various business disciplines including Business Statistics and Quantitative Methods, Economics, Finance and Information Systems.

Course Description

My goal is to teach you the basics of statistics and how to do statistics in Excel. For most of the topics covered in the course, you will have to learn how to perform calculations in Excel and how to interpret what you have calculated. The course is not intended to be an Excel exercise – instead, Excel is just a tool that speeds up the calculations (i.e. think of Excel as a super-powerful replacement for your calculator). The main focus will be on what the numbers mean, not just on how to calculate them.

No prior knowledge with Excel is required, although it would certainly be helpful. If you have not used Excel before, I will post a short primer that will help you learn most of the calculations necessary for this class. The course will be subdivided into units, with each unit covering a set of subjects. Material will be presented in the form of slideshows, how-to instructions, videos and Excel examples.

What the course will be like

The course will be delivered through Blackboard.

The class will be subdivided into several units. For a typical unit you will have to listen to a slideshow from <http://onlinestatbook.com>, watch a 25-minute *Against All Odds* video, read a chapter of a book, go over a practice Excel exercise and do a practice quiz. After you complete all of the above, you will have to either turn in an assignment or take a quiz or (most likely) both. You will have an opportunity to ask questions about the class material on the discussion board.

While all assignments and quizzes given throughout the semester will be given online, THE FINAL EXAM WILL BE FACE-TO-FACE. You will have to come to campus to take it. If you cannot make it to campus, I can arrange the exam to be taken at the testing center. I prefer, however, that you take the exam with me. The final exam will be given during the finals week.

Textbook and other study materials.

I am going to be rather flexible with the book for the class. You will have an option to buy a book or download individual chapters in PDF format.

IF YOU WANT TO BUY A BOOK, in the bookstore, there are **two different editions** of a stats book by **Anderson, Sweeney and Williams**:

1. **Modern Business Statistics (with Student CD-ROM) 3rd Edition, ISBN10: 0-324-59827-0, ISBN13: 978-0-324-59827-8, © 2009**
2. **Statistics for Business and Economics (with Printed Access Card) 11th Edition, ISBN10: 0-324-78324-8, ISBN13: 978-0-324-78324-7, © 2011**

You can buy either one of them. They are not exactly the same, but very close. Either one will work. As a matter of fact, you can buy older editions of one these books, they will probably work OK too.

Alternatively, instead of buying the whole book, (one of them is \$141+tax and another one is \$145 +tax at the bookstore) you can buy chapters of the book in PDF format from Cengage (the publisher of the text). Each chapter is \$9.49. Chapter 1 is free. We will need no more than 10 chapters. I will post a link to the chapters on BB. I might also be able to substitute some chapters with free on-line readings (hopefully) so you might not even need to purchase chapters for each of the topics we will cover.

We will also use a free on-line text available at <http://onlinestatbook.com/>. The material in this book can be read online in a text format or it can be viewed in a form of a slideshow with a voice-over. I will assign readings from this source as well. You have to have a high-speed internet connection to be able to view and listen to the slideshows. To enjoy full functionality of this site you have to have Java and Quicktime installed on your computer (you probably already have them on your computer. If not, go to *Instructions* link on <http://onlinestatbook.com/>.)

If you don't have a good internet connection you can make one trip to campus (or any other place with fast internet) and download entire site onto a flash drive. On the main page of the textbook there is a link for downloading compressed folder with all files.

In our course we also will be using episodes of on-line statistics course ***Against All Odds*** videos from available at <http://www.learner.org/resources/series65.html>. The videos are available for free as well. I will include links to all of the videos on Blackboard. Each video is about 25 minutes long and they are excellent.

For those requiring additional help with Excel, I recommend two books:

- 1) Excel 2007 for Dummies (ISBN 0470037377)
- 2) Statistical Analysis with Excel For Dummies (ISBN 0764575945). The first book might be available at Barnes and Noble in Bowling Green, the second one might have to be ordered on-line. Buy these two books only if you feel like you need additional help – most of the examples posted on-line should provide sufficient information on how to do your assignments.

Computer Requirements

I highly recommend using Firefox as your browser (download from www.mozilla.com). It is less prone to crashing when you take quizzes online.

You have to have the following software installed on your computer:

- 1) Microsoft Excel (2003 or 2007. 2010 will work too but be sure to save your work in 2007 format)
- 2) Adobe Acrobat Reader
- 3) Java (see the previous section)
- 4) Quicktime (see the previous section).
- 5) Word (not imperative but helpful).

If you don't have Excel, you can either get a discounted copy at a bookstore (you can also purchase it online from our bookstore) or you can try to use Google Documents. Google has a free on-line clone of Microsoft Excel. You can find it under Google Docs. Most of the Excel commands used in class will work in Google as well without modification. However, if you decide to use Google, I will not be able (due to time constraints) to provide you with any technical assistance. Open Office is also a viable free alternative. If you use Open Office, be sure to submit your assignments in Excel format.

Grading Topics covered in class will be subdivided into 14 weekly units. At the end of each unit you will have to turn in an assignment or take a quiz or both.

If a unit has only a quiz, it will be worth 50 points. If the unit has only an assignment, it will also be worth 50 points. If there is a quiz and assignment, it will be split 25/25.

For a typical assignment you will have to perform some calculations in Excel and write up a few paragraphs explaining what you did. Quizzes will be timed (typically around 2 minutes per question).

You can earn up to 50 points for each unit (i.e. the maximum is 700 points).

Final will be worth 300 points. Final will be comprehensive. Final exam will be the only we will have to meet face-to-face. I will reserve several two-hour blocks in one of the computer labs – you will be able to take the exam during any of those times.

Between the final and the quizzes and assignments, you can get up to 1000 points in the class. Your grade will be assigned according to the following scale. Let X be your total number of points accumulated during the course. Then,

- If $X \geq 900$, Your Grade = A;
- If $900 > X \geq 800$, Your Grade = B;
- If $800 > X \geq 700$, Your Grade = C;
- If $700 > X \geq 600$, Your Grade = D;
- If $X < 600$, Your Grade = F.

FAQ

Anticipating your questions about the format of the course, here is a short description in Q-and-A format. I will create a discussion thread on the BB if you have any other general questions.

1) ***“Will we have to meet face-to-face during this course?”***

This course is an asynchronous web course – you don’t have to be on-line at a certain time to be able to receive/submit course information (as opposed to a synchronous course during which lectures are delivered live over the internet). We will **not be meeting face-to-face** during the course **except** for the final Exam.

2) ***“What should I do to study for the class?”***

The course will be subdivided into units. Each unit covers a set of topics. For each of the units, there will be a separate section on BB. So, open BB site for course, find the first Unit. When you click on that Unit, the first thing you will see is a to-do list. Follow the instructions on that list.

3) ***“I know that some courses use discussion boards and sometimes the grades are assigned based on participation in discussions. Do I have to participate in class discussion to receive credit in this course?”***

For each unit of the course I will set up a separate discussion thread. Even though it’s there, you don’t have to take part in it. As a matter of fact, you don’t have to communicate with me in any direct form (e-mail, discussion board posts etc.) other than submitting your assignments and quizzes to be able to receive full credit for the course. I do, however, encourage you to participate in the on-line discussion whenever you have either clarification questions or a good example that would help explain class material. I will use course participation to decide your grade in borderline cases.

4) ***“Will I be notified of upcoming deadlines for quizzes and assignments?”***

Although I will try to send out notifications through e-mail and post announcements on Blackboard to remind about upcoming deadlines and instructions on what to do next, ultimately IT IS **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** TO BE AWARE OF AND ADHERE TO DEADLINES.

“I did not know this was due” is not an excuse. **DEADLINES WILL BE POSTED AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH UNIT.**

5) ***“Where can I find class materials?”***

All class materials (practice assignments, practice quizzes, lectures, links etc.) will be posted on Blackboard under “STUDY MATERIALS”. I will set it as a starting page – it will be hard to miss. Quizzes will be posted under QUIZZES section. Assignments will be posted under ASSIGNMENTS section.

6) ***“How should I submit the assignments?”***

Assignments will have to be done in Excel and submitted using Blackboard. When submitting an assignment, save a copy for your records. Before you submit a graded assignment, we will have a “dry run” so that you can practice submitting assignments. For more help, see http://www.wku.edu/infotech/atech/videotutorials/assignment_student.htm

7) ***“What if I have a question? How do I ask questions in an online class?”***

If you have questions regarding class material (like the questions you would normally ask during

class such as “Could you clarify this formula...”), ASK THEM ON THE DISCUSSION BOARD in Blackboard so that others could see the answers (just like everyone would hear your question and my answer in class.) Consequently, if you want to ask a question, you MUST make sure that it has not already been answered on the discussion board. IF YOU CONSISTENTLY IGNORE THIS RULE, I WILL TAKE OFF POINTS OFF YOUR GRADE. If you have personal questions (the things you would normally ask after class in a face-to face setting), ask them over e-mail.

8) “I am having problems with my computer. Can you help me?”

If you are taking an on-line class, a certain level of computer expertise is expected of you. I will provide minimal amount of help with issues related to the course but do not expect me to troubleshoot all your problems.

9) “I was working on my assignment/taking a quiz and my computer crashed. Can I turn it in late?”

No. That is the risk you take by signing up for an on-line class. Do the assignments early enough so that you can have a “plan B” – if you wait till the last moment to do your work – that is your fault.

10) “I have already taken statistics once, but did not do well. Is it a good idea to take this class on-line to improve my grade?” I don’t know. It all depends on you and what the reasons were for your poor performance. If your main problem was lack of motivation, this class is not for you. In this class you will have to work independently. If you were not able to motivate yourself in a regular class setting, I doubt you will be able to do it in a web class. It might be possible, though, that if you work at your own pace, you might be able to do better in an on-line class.

Make up policy

You will be offered an opportunity to make up missed quizzes/assignments only in two cases:

1) When there is an unforeseen event that caused extreme hardship (e.g. death in the immediate family, hospitalization). In this case **you will have to document** the reason for your inability to study for the course.

2) Planned absence. You have to let me know at the beginning of the course if you have prior engagements coinciding with one of the deadlines. Because this is an on-line class and you have an opportunity to do work at your own pace, make up work will be offered in very unusual circumstances.

Withdrawals and Incompletes

Check the official WKU calendar for the last day to drop a full semester course with a "W".

The calendar can be found at

http://www.wku.edu/Dept/Support/AcadAffairs/Registrar/acad_calendar.htm

No “Incomplete” grade will be given solely due to poor performance – you will have to demonstrate (and document, if applicable) that there were unforeseeable circumstances that hindered your performance in the class. See Undergraduate Catalogue for rules and regulations.

Cheating/Plagiarism

This will be REALLY important in our class. Although, I can detect cheating pretty easily, ultimately it is your honesty that matters. You are expected to work independently. Students cheating on assignments, quizzes or tests will earn "0" and could be subject to a disciplinary action. Repeat offenders will receive an "F" in the class.

See Undergraduate Catalogue for rights and regulations on these issues.

The following acts will be considered cheating:

- Providing a classmate with answers during an exam or a quiz;
- Receiving assistance from anyone other than your professor during the exam or quiz;
- Helping another student cheat;
- Working with another student on homework assignment without instruction's permission. This includes sharing ANY information regarding assignments for which you receive grades.
- Any other action that will yield unfair advantage over other students in the class.

Students with Disabilities

"Students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services, Room 445, Potter Hall. The OFSDS telephone number is (270) 745-5004 V/TDD. Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services."