SOC 363 Research Methods Lab  
Semester: Fall 2014 (1 credit hour)

Office: 2285E Candaleria Hall  
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Office Hours: W/F 12:30—2pm  
Phone: 351-2307

Concurrent/Co-requisite: SOC 361

COURSE DESCRIPTION
The course is designed to familiarize students in the use of a statistical package for the social sciences. The lab complements course work in SOC 361. Students will learn to analyze data using a variety of descriptive statistical techniques. A series of research reports will be created using the skills acquired in the course. During the labs we will hold a discussion on the current assignment, the next lab assignment, and the computer analyses for each. The Lab sessions are a chance for you to get your hands dirty. Over the course of the semester, students will learn to use the SPSS computer package. This program is a powerful data analysis software package found at many terminals around campus (CAND 2170, CAND 2295, CAND 1170, Ross 2261, Michener Library, McKee computer lab). Even if you are already fluent in some other statistical software, for consistency sake, please utilize the SPSS program for all of the assigned lab reports.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Most of the content you need to know will be covered in SOC 361 lectures. In lab, students will be able to:
- define and apply major concepts and practice solving problems.
- use SPSS to analyze data.
- write research reports.
- obtain skills that transfer to the employment market. Knowing how to create, analyze and interpret statistical analyses is a highly marketable skill.
- collaborate with your others in application-oriented mini-projects.

CLASS RESOURCES


Note: Weekly textbook readings can be found in the course schedule for SOC 361.

Software:

Option 1: Students could purchase a 12-month license for the statistical software, IBM SPSS Base 21 stat. Students will use the software for two semesters and two (SOC 363 and SOC 264). The software costs approximately $68.99 plus shipping and handling.

Please go to the following website to purchase the SPSS student license: [http://studentdiscounts.com/ibmspssstatisticsgradpack210base-instocknowwindowsormac-12monthlicense-caninstallonupto2computers.aspx](http://studentdiscounts.com/ibmspssstatisticsgradpack210base-instocknowwindowsormac-12monthlicense-caninstallonupto2computers.aspx).

*Please note: There are cheaper software licenses, but many of those licenses limit students to analyzing small sample sizes. In order to complete the assignments in this course, you need the SPSS software.
package that can handle unlimited cases. Therefore, please purchase the license from the website listed above.

Option 2: Students also have access to a UNCO RemotePC Lab. It is free to students and the instructor provides instructions for how to use the RemotePC. However, in previous semesters, students had a difficult time using the RemotePC lab. Students, who did not follow the provided instructions or had poor internet connections, often lost their homework and exam files permanently.

CLASS POLICIES

Lab Participation Policy: Participation is important for your success in lab and will be recorded throughout the semester for lab and lecture.

Lab Exam Policy: I do not except late exams unless you have a documented University Approved Excused Absence. You have a 24 hour window to complete lab exams (due dates are listed on course schedule). Please plan accordingly. There are 3 lab exams (1 in Week 5, 1 in Week 11, and one during finals week)

Lab Assignments and Research Reports Policy: Lab assignments and Research reports are due at the START of the lab one week after it is assigned on Blackboard. These Assignments should be uploaded to Blackboard prior to the deadline in the “SPSS Comprehension Assignment Journal”. Even if you miss the deadline and your work is late, please do turn in the assignment. Each homework assignment is worth maximum 15 points. Homework turned in after the due date will be accepted for half credit. Lab assignments will not be accepted after one week of the due date. You are encouraged to work with your fellow students on lab assignments and in studying. Note, however, that copying course work from someone is STRICTLY prohibited. If I receive two identical lab assignments, each will receive a grade of 0.

Grading Policy: Students will receive a separate grade for lecture and lab. Your final lab grade is based upon 3 lab exams, 9 SPSS Comprehension Assignments, and participation. While lecture grades are based on total points, lab grades are comprised of weighted scores of the above assignments (See below).

Lab Midterm Exams –Units 1 and 2  (50 points each- No final Exam) 50%
SPSS Comprehension Assignments-8 (Points Vary per assignment) 45%
Participation 5%
Total 100%

Letter grades are given based upon a 10% scale: A=90% and above; B= 89-80%; C= 79-70%; D= 69-60%; F= 59% and below.

Description of Lab Exams and Assignments

Lab Exams: Students will complete two lab exams, one following the completion of unit 1 & 2. The exams will apply what you learn in your lab assignments and research reports, including using SPSS, some calculations, and applying concepts from the course. Completed Lab exams are uploaded in the private “My Exam Journal” link in Blackboard.

SPSS Comprehension Assignments: Lab includes several SPSS comprehension assignments, which cover learning how to use SPSS and conducting data analysis. Some of the comprehension assignments
are short, but others include complete research reports. Students will complete lab assignments and upload their entries in the private journal, “SPSS Comprehension Assignments.” SPSS Comprehension Assignments must be complete, legible, professionally presented, and include all supporting work/graphs. Please attach all supporting components to your assignment before uploading to the “SPSS Comprehension Assignments” journal. Complete Instructions will be given on how to write up the findings of your assignments. Guidelines and Examples for SPSS comprehension assignments are available online.

Communicating with your instructor: Email is the best way to get in touch with me when we are not in lab session for any questions you may have. Please include “SOC 363” in your subject, and allow one business day for a response.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Any student requesting disability accommodation for this class must inform the instructor by giving appropriate notice. Students are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services at (970) 351-2289 to certify documentation of disability and to ensure appropriate accommodations are implemented in a timely manner.

Helpful Hints for the semester:

- **Know that you can succeed.** This class works for those who work.
- **Practice, practice, practice.** Do as many problems as you can throughout the semester.
- There are a lot of homework problems given to help with this. While you don’t have to turn all of them in, it is a critical to do them all. There are also old exams in the back of your modules that you can do for practice.
- **Don’t wait until the last minute** (this one is really important for your mental sanity). I am here to help – but I don’t like being asked how to do the homework the day before it’s due or how many chapters are on the test the night before the exam. If you wait until the last minute to do your work, you will be swamped, confused, sleep-deprived and you will hate statistics.
- **Ask for help as soon as you are having problems.** The material builds on itself. Any instructor would be happy to help clarify problems early on rather than trying to help clarify everything right before the final exam.
- **Communication is very important in statistics.** After all, what good is having the answer if you cannot tell others (in plain English) what it is? Interpretations and proper data summary are very important.
- **Statistics IS useful in everyday life!** Statistics is all around you. Newspapers and magazines are always talking about the results of some new study and advertisements say that research shows their product is superior. Take a look around – I’m sure you’ll find some claim that’s based on statistics.
- What this course teaches you should help you understand these claims and sometimes even evaluate their validity.

All other class and University policies are listed on Blackboard. You are responsible for knowing the policies, and if you need any clarification or further explanation on the policies, please contact the instructor at Sandra.harmon@unco.edu