Math 141 – Introductory Statistics – Course Policies

Professor:	Tommy Ratliff, Science Center 1309, x3968
email:	ratliff_thomas@wheatoncollege.edu
Home Page:	http://tratliff.webspace.wheatoncollege.edu
Office Hours:	Posted on webpage And other times by appointment (Really!)
Text:	*Intro Stats, 4th Edition*, by De Veaux, Velleman, and Bock

Overview

We are bombarded every day with an increasing number of statistics, from polls in the Presidential election, to the efficacy of medical treatments, to the national unemployment rate. One of the major goals of this course is to help you become a knowledgeable and skeptical consumer of statistics so that you determine whether the claims based off the statistics are accurate and compelling, unintentionally misleading, or perhaps eve intentionally misleading.

You will gain experience with, and understanding of, some techniques of data analysis and statistical inference, as well as an understanding of some of the issues with data production. Since this is an introductory course, we will not be able to cover every statistical technique that you might use in the future, but the goal is for you to develop the solid background so that you can more easily learn the advanced methods that are used in other disciplines.

This is going to be a fun semester.

Course Goals and Expectations

Two of the goals of this course are that you learn to read a math text and that you learn to communicate mathematics with other students. Mathematics is a very personal discipline that is best learned by *doing* rather than by observing. Therefore, the class will be structured with some lectures to emphasize particular topics, but much of the time will be spent on in-class work.

You will have a reading assignment for nearly every class meeting, and it is **extremely** important that you complete the reading before class.

One of the features that makes your Wheaton education so special is that we have face-to-face time in small classes to explore material together. The purpose of the pre-class assignments is to shift some of the delivery of content outside the class meetings so that you can build your understanding more deeply during the interactions in class. The class meetings are not intended to be a complete encapsulation of the course material, but instead will focus on the major concepts from the reading and clarifying the more subtle ideas in the course.

You should expect to put in at least 2–3 hours outside of class for each hour in class. In other words, expect to spend about 9 hours per week on Intro Stats outside of class. There will be some weeks where you spend more time (e.g. preparing for exams), and there may be some weeks where you spend slightly less.

The Honor Code

We operate under the Wheaton Honor Code for all of your academic work at Wheaton. This carries certain freedoms and responsibilities for both you as a student and me as a professor. I take this quite seriously.

Most likely, no Honor Code issues will arise this semester. If you are uncertain about whether a particular situation falls under the Honor Code, then please consult with me. However, if an Honor Code issue does come up, I will assume that you are prepared for the full consequences. Remember that you should write out, and sign, the following statement on all course work:

> "I have abided by the Wheaton College Honor Code in this work."

Evaluation

The assignments for the semester fall into two broad groups: Exams and Daily/Weekly Homework Assignments. Your final grade will be determined by

Two In-Class Exams	50%
Comprehensive Final Exam	30%
Reading Assignments	5%
Problem Sets	15%

In-Class Exams

The purpose of the exams is for you to demonstrate your understanding of the course material and, just as importantly, to give you feedback on where your understanding is strong and where you may need more work. The exams will be based on the Problem Sets, Reading Assignments, and in-class exercises.

I will give you a set of sample problems before each exam, and we will have a question and answer session before each exam. For each exam, you will be allowed to bring an 8.5"×11" piece of paper, handwritten on one side, which you will turn in with the exam.

See the schedule on the course webpage for the specific dates.

Final Exam

The purpose of the Final Exam is for you to review the entire semester's content and reinforce the connections among the topics from throughout the semester. The Final Exam will be comprehensive and will be based on the two In-Class Exams and the material covered at the end of the semester after the second In-Class Exam.

Reading Assignments

The purpose of reading the text *before* class is that if you are familiar with the basic concepts and definitions, then the class meetings can be devoted to the major ideas and subtleties of the material. Mathematical understanding is built in stages, and you will absorb the material more quickly if the class meetings are your *second* exposure to the fundamental ideas.

The reading assignments are posted on the course webpage and include several basic questions that you should be able to answer after you have read the section. You will submit your responses through Wheaton onCourse. See the *Suggestions for Reading a Math Book* on the course web page for more information.

Weekly Problem Sets

You will also have a Problem Set due most weeks that consists of exercises from the textbook that are more conceptual and require more explanation. The Problem Sets will be the most beneficial to you if you work on them throughout the week, not just on the few days before they are due.

I strongly encourage you to work with other students outside of class because I believe mathematics is best learned through collaboration. However, under no circumstances should you turn in work that is identical to another student's. The paper you turn in *must* represent your own thinking about the solutions. If you do work with someone else on an assignment, you should indicate that in a note on the top of your paper.

Your problem sets should be well-written and well-justified and will be graded by an advanced math student. See the *Guidelines for Solutions to Problem Sets* on the course web page for specific details about the presentation of your problem sets. An advanced math student will grade approximately three problems from each problem set.

Homework is normally due at my office no later than 3:00 pm on Thursday, although you may certainly turn it in earlier. You will be allowed to drop one homework assignment during the semester.

There may also be several short quizzes during the semester, and these will be counted into the Problem Set grade. The quizzes would be announced at least one class meeting in advance.

Class Attendance

Although class attendance is not a specified percentage of your grade, I will keep a class roll to help me determine borderline grades at the end of the semester. If you do miss class, you are responsible for the material that was covered.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

In compliance with the Wheaton College policy and equal access laws, Disability Services is available to discuss appropriate accommodations that may be recommended for students with disabilities. Requests for accommodations should be made at the start of every semester so that timely and appropriate arrangements can be made. Students are required to register with Disability Services. The office is located in Kollett Hall, first floor at the Filene Center for Academic Advising and Career Services. Contact ext. 8215 to schedule an appointment, or email advising@wheatoncollege.edu.

Getting Help

Please come see me during my office hours! If you have a conflict and cannot make my office hours, please email me and we can set up an appointment for another time. You should also take advantage of the tutoring hours in the Kollett Center.