ECONOMICS 300-01
Quantitative Methods in Economics
Fall 2015
MW 8:30am-9:50am PAC 004

Professor: Karl Boulware
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Office hours: Tuesdays from 1:30pm to 3:30pm, walk-in, and by appointment.
TAs: Brandon Sousa (bsousa@wesleyan.edu), 203-592-6898 and Phoebe Keegan (pskeegan@wesleyan.edu), 845-653-1060.
TA session: Sundays 8pm to 10pm in PAC 421.

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Purpose: This course is designed to provide you with a foundation in probability and statistics, both to help you understand statistical phenomena in general and to serve you as a tool in the further study of economics. The emphasis is on learning techniques that are widely used by economists, including use of computers as research aids.

Coursework and Grades: There will be a continuum of problem sets, two in-class exams, a final exam, and a research project composed of: a proposal and paper. The weights for the different components that make up your final grade are:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem Sets</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>--Proposal</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>--Paper</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
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Unexcused absences from exams or non-delivery of the final paper will result in a failing grade for the course.

Readings: The required text is Wonnacott and Wonnacott, Introductory Statistics for Business and Economics, Fourth Edition. Chapter numbers in the course schedule refer to this text. Additional materials may be handed out in class and/or made available on the course moodle.
**Lectures:** Class attendance is expected, and you are expected to complete all assigned readings before class. You are responsible for all required reading on the course schedule whether or not the material is covered explicitly in class. In the lectures, I will focus on the most important topics as well as on those that are more difficult to comprehend. Please ask questions as they arise during lectures. I encourage you to comment on the level, pace, and content of the course as it progresses. In particular, feel free to contact me by e-mail. Lecture notes will be posted to the course schedule after each lecture.

**Class Participation:** I will give a B for class participation to a student who regularly gives answers to my questions. I will give an A for class participation to a student who regularly asks insightful questions as well as the correct answers to my questions thereby demonstrating that s/he has read and understood the required materials. I will give a C or lower for class participation to students who never participate in class. Students who are addressed multiple times for disruptive behavior will result in a C or lower for class participation.

*Without written notice, excessive absences, late arrivals or early departures will lead to a lower class participation grade.*

**Problem Sets:** Problem sets are assigned regularly (nearly every week). They have several purposes: to review and extend concepts from lecture or the notes, to introduce related topics not covered in the lecture, and to provide feedback on your comprehension of the material to date.

Your TAs are not allowed to ever answer any questions about the problem sets before they are submitted. Their weekly sessions will review the material by working with you to solve problems that have been assigned previously.

Problem sets will be posted to the course schedule on Wednesday after the close of business and will be due before the close of business on the next Friday. Problem sets should be submitted via the ECON 300-01 slot in the department locked box in the alcove next to the economics office (PAC123).

Grading will be on a -1, 0, 1 scale. The rough rubric for determining grades: all questions answered correctly or all questions answered using right strategies (but with possible computational errors) = 1; some questions skipped or many questions answered incorrectly = -1; and almost everything in between = 0. Late assignments = -1 irrespective of quality as solutions will be available online as the submission deadline passes.

**Computer work:** Some of the homework assignments, as well as the course project, will involve the cross-platform use of an electronic spreadsheet and/or a statistical package. The programs supported by the course are the spreadsheet EXCEL and the statistical package Stata, both of which are available on all of the public-access windows machines on campus such as the QAC and PAC computer labs. Four 90 minute instructional sessions will be provided during the semester (click here for signup sheets). You can also ask the QAC tutors in Allbritton 108 (click here for schedule) for help with both programs. If you prefer to use a different statistics package for your work, that is fine, so long as you feel comfortable operating without formal technical support. Wesleyan subscribes to an economics statistics database, DataInsight which we might also use for some purposes (click here for the web access page).
Exams: Exams and the registrar scheduled final will be held in class. Optional review sessions will be scheduled before the exams and final. You will need a calculator for the exams.

Research Paper: The research paper is intended for you to develop some “hands-on” experience with statistical techniques. A good paper will interest both you and me, utilize concepts learned in the course, and may lead to further work in other courses or an eventual thesis topic.

--Evaluation: Grading is based primarily on the quality of your analysis. However, I expect your papers to be well written and free of any grammatical, logical, or spelling errors. You are encouraged to take advantage of the writing workshop on campus.

--Late papers: Late proposals and papers are penalized at the rate of one letter grade per day late.

--Paper Stages:

- Topic: A 1-2 sentence email with your topic and proposed source of data (loosely identified). Attachments will not be accepted.
- Proposal: 2-3 page document uploaded to the appropriate folder in moodle.
- Draft (optional): a draft of the paper of any length uploaded to the appropriate folder in moodle.
- Paper: 10 page document (not including tables, charts, figures, and references) uploaded to the appropriate folder in moodle.

See the course schedule for due dates.

--Turnitin: In addition to submitting your papers directly to me, the final paper must also be submitted to turnitin.com through the course moodle by midnight on the appropriate due date.

For instructions on how to use turnitin.com, follow the instructions for students on the Wesleyan library website at.

Honor Code: All work handed in must be your own and must be performed for this course only. This does not mean that you must refrain from discussing problems with other students as an aid to understanding the material, but it does preclude copying another students' work. You are expected to discourage such behavior on the part of others. This distinction is generally clear enough to make in practice; when in doubt, discuss it with me.

Note, the research paper cannot be submitted in another course without express prior permission from both me and the instructed of the other course. If you propose a topic that is related to a topic that you wrote about in a prior semester, you must seek express prior permission from me.
Missed Assignments:  Should a personal emergency necessitate missing a scheduled exam or not delivering an assignment on time, contact me as soon as possible ahead of time to make alternative arrangements. Any such absence requires written certification from the Deans’ Office.

Students with Disabilities:  It is the policy of Wesleyan University to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students, however, are responsible for registering with Disabilities services, in addition to making requests known to me in a timely manner. If you require accommodations in this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, so that appropriate arrangements can be made. The procedures for registering with Disabilities Services can be found at.

Contact:  Email is my preferred way of being contacted. Normally I will respond within the day, excluding illness and travel; response times are likely to be faster on weekdays. Placing in the subject of your email the phrase “ECON 300” plus a description of your message will likely result in a faster reply than a blank or generic subject.