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## STATISTICS IN CRIMINOLOGY

Florida State University  
CCJ 4746

**Course Instructor:** Dr. Sonja Siennick

**Contact Information:** 405 Criminology Building, 850-645-9265, ssiennick@fsu.edu

**Teaching Assistants:** Jackie Bradford, jb22bq@fsu.edu

Cole Ward, cward5@fsu.edu

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### **Course Description**

This course will introduce you to the fundamentals of statistics in criminology, criminal justice, and social science more generally. My overarching goal is to give you an introductory knowledge of common social science statistics that will help you in your career as a practitioner, researcher, or academic. My secondary goal is to expose you to a software program that will enable you to create figures and produce results like those you might encounter in your professional life. Connecting abstract statistical concepts with real data will reinforce the material and illustrate its real life applications.

Upon successfully completing this course, you will know and be able to do the following:

- Common measures of association in criminal justice research
- How to recognize variables' levels of measurement and choose appropriate measures of association
- How to judge the strength of associations
- The purpose of significance testing and how to interpret significance tests
- The basics of interpreting output from statistical software
- How to create charts and conduct basic statistical analyses in a statistical software program

### **Course Materials**

You will need internet access and access to a computer. You will also need a basic calculator.

All of the software that you will need is available on FSU's Virtual Lab ([myfsuvlab.its.fsu.edu](http://myfsuvlab.its.fsu.edu)).

There is one required textbook:

Cooper, Jonathon A., Peter A. Collins, and Anthony Walsh. 2015. *Understanding and Using Statistics for Criminology and Criminal Justice*. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780199364466

**Important:** This course participates in the Follett Access program. You are automatically enrolled to receive your textbook and will be charged through your FSU portal. If you would like to opt out or opt back in to receiving the discounted materials, visit the link below. For more

information, click [here](#) or contact the bookstore at [follettaccess@fsu.edu](mailto:follettaccess@fsu.edu). All student questions should be directed to [follettaccess@fsu.edu](mailto:follettaccess@fsu.edu).

Opt Out/In Portal: <https://ACCESSPortal.follett.com:443/0208>

## **Course Requirements**

Due dates and times are in Eastern Time.

**Quizzes.** You will complete seven multiple choice quizzes, one about this syllabus and six about the readings and slides. They will be evenly spaced throughout the course. They also (unless otherwise noted) will be only on that week's material, but please note that the material is somewhat cumulative (i.e., terms and concepts will repeat across chapters) so it may be difficult to understand later material without completing earlier material. The quizzes are not timed, but they must be completed and submitted by their due dates and times.

**Essays.** You will write three essays, each approximately 2 double-spaced pages in length unless otherwise noted. These essays are your chance to show off your understanding of the research methods behind the statistics we are learning. Don't just repeat the course material; instead, put it in your own words and elaborate on it to show us that you understand it. These essays should use scholarly language and should include references to specific pages in the readings or slides where that would be helpful. If you use outside sources, please also include a reference list.

Essay grades will be based on:

- **Evidence:** Does the essay incorporate the course material? Show us that you completed and understood the readings and slides. We should be able to tell that you've kept up with the course to date. This can be demonstrated by mentioning and defining/explaining relevant terms and concepts, by including in-text citations for information you got from the book and slides, and so on. We discourage lengthy quotations, but if you include quotes please also explain what they mean in your own words so that we can evaluate your understanding. 2.5 points.
- **Insight:** Is this a well-thought-out essay that demonstrates your understanding? Show us that you are using the readings and slides to deepen your understanding of quantitative methods. This can be demonstrated by paraphrasing, giving examples, relating a topic to some other topic from the course, and so on. 2.5 points.

**Discussion Board Post.** You will complete one graded discussion board assignment in this course. This will be a 200-300 word post on either (1) a question you have about any topic we've covered or (2) a tip you have about understanding some topic we've covered. In grading these, we will assess things such as your familiarity with the material and how much effort you appear to have put into understanding your chosen topic. You can complete this post at any time during the semester.

**Projects.** I will post five project assignments in this course, and you must complete three of them. You will complete these projects using a statistical software program called Stata. These projects are your chance to generate tables and graphs like those you might encounter in a criminal justice-related position. You are probably unfamiliar with Stata, and there will be a

learning curve. We will provide tutorials, but please account for the time it will take to work with the software when you plan your schedule.

Project grades will be based on:

- Execution: Take care when using the software and completing the analyses. Were the data uploaded properly? Were the correct commands used? We will be able to tell by examining your results, writeup and output. 9 points.
- Interpretation: Does your write-up demonstrate that you understand what you did and what the results mean? This can be demonstrated through correct explanations of the analyses and results and by the inclusion of information from the book and slides. 6 points.

### **Course Grades**

Quizzes: 7 @ 5 points each.....	35
Essays: 3 @ 5 points each.....	15
Discussion board: 1 @ 5 points.....	5
Projects: 3 @ 15 points each.....	45

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Total	100 points (%)
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### **Grading scale**

94%-100%	A	80%-83%	B-	70%-73%	C-
90%-93%	A-	77%-79%	C+	60%-69%	D
87%-89%	B+	74%-76%	C	Below 60%	F
84%-86%	B				

I round according to conventional mathematical rules. To protect your privacy we cannot discuss specific course grades over email; please make arrangements to call or Zoom with us.

### **Course Communication**

#### **How We Will Contact You**

Please check Canvas regularly for course announcements and changes.

#### **How You Should Contact Us**

Please email us with any questions about the course material, requirements, or policies. Monday through Friday, we will respond to your email within 24 hours. We will try to respond promptly to emails sent on weekends, but may not be able to respond until Monday.

### **Course Policies**

**Missing and late work.** With one exception (noted below), missing or late items will receive 0s unless you are unable to complete or submit the item due to an excused absence (per the University attendance policy below). When you email me about your excused absence, please include documentation (e.g., a doctor's note, a jury duty summons). Forgetting about the

assignment, needing to work late, being unable to get to a computer, and having an undocumented illness will not qualify as excused absences, so please plan accordingly and do not procrastinate.

The University attendance policy is as follows: Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

You are allowed ONE undocumented absence in this course. This equates to a free extension on a single course requirement. Please contact the TA to receive up to an additional week on the requirement. Note that we cannot grant extensions during the last week of classes, so please plan accordingly.

**TurnItIn.** This course will use Canvas's TurnItIn anti-plagiarism tool. Assignments receiving high similarity scores will be investigated according to College procedures.

**Technology.** When you submit an assignment, it is your responsibility to ensure that the submission was successful (try the tips at <https://support.canvas.fsu.edu/kb/article/962-students-tips-for-a-better-canvas-experience/#VerifySubmission>). If you experience internet or Canvas problems while you are submitting something, please email us immediately. If the trouble relates to a written assignment, please attach your assignment. It is important that you contact us before the due date and time so that we know you did the work on time. You have a one-hour grace period to contact us about technology-related problems. If you do not successfully submit an assignment or quiz by the due date and time and we do not hear from you within an hour of that date and time, that assignment or exam will receive a 0.

**Academic Honor Policy.** The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy>)

**Academic Success.** Your academic success is a top priority for Florida State University. University resources to help you succeed include tutoring centers, computer labs, counseling and health services, and services for designated groups, such as veterans and students with disabilities. The following information is not exhaustive, so please check with your advisor or the Dean of Students office to learn more.

**Americans with Disabilities Act.** Florida State University (FSU) values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. FSU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities in a manner that is

consistent with academic standards of the course while empowering the student to meet integral requirements of the course.

*To receive academic accommodations, a student:*

- (1) must register with and provide documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS);
- (2) must provide a letter from OAS to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type; and,
- (3) should communicate with the instructor, as needed, to discuss recommended accommodations. A request for a meeting may be initiated by the student or the instructor.

Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from the Office of Accessibility Services has been provided.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Office of Accessibility Services  
874 Traditions Way  
108 Student Services Building  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167  
(850) 644-9566 (voice)  
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)  
[oas@fsu.edu](mailto:oas@fsu.edu)  
<https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas/>

**Confidential Campus Resources.** Various centers and programs are available to assist students with navigating stressors that might impact academic success. These include the following:

Victim Advocate Program  
University Center A  
Rm. 4100  
(850) 644-7161  
Available 24/7/365  
Office Hours: M-F 8-5  
<https://dsst.fsu.edu/vap>

University Counseling  
Center  
Askew Student Life  
Center, 2nd floor  
942 Learning Way  
(850) 644-8255  
<https://counseling.fsu.edu/>

University Health Services  
Health and Wellness  
Center  
(850) 644-6230  
<https://uhs.fsu.edu/>

**Syllabus Change Policy.** Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**My assignment is shorter/longer than the length requirements. Is that okay?** We are fine with assignments that are a little too short or long (with normal spacing and margins). But, for the sake of your graders, please don't write an assignment that is double the requested length! Also, please don't submit assignments that are noticeably too short. This last guideline is to protect you; if your assignment is markedly too short, you are probably missing key content.

**Will you review a draft of my assignment before I submit it?** Yes! Please email your assignment to the TA by the Tuesday before it is due. Although they will not “pre-grade” your paper, they will tell you whether you have included enough course material and whether you are missing anything major.

**Why did I lose points on my assignment?** If you’d like more detailed feedback on your grade, please contact your grader.

**I got stuck at work/my car broke down/my loved one is ill and I missed the assignment deadline. What do I do?** You get one free extension in the course. To use it, simply email the TA to let them know that you will be turning your assignment in late. You will be given a one week extension on that assignment (exceptions are assignments due during the last week of classes or finals week). After you use this freebie, to gain extensions on additional assignments, you will need documentation that those absences were excused under the policy described above.

**I am having trouble with Canvas and can’t submit my assignment! Or, I swear I submitted it but it is not showing up! Help!** If it’s before the deadline or within the grace period, please email it to us! If you believe that you submitted it but we have no record of that, send us a version of your assignment that was last saved before the assignment deadline, along with any screenshots or other evidence that you have.

**What is my current grade? Can I still earn a \_\_ in this class?** To calculate your current percentage grade, add up the total number of points you have earned so far, and divide that by the total number of points you have attempted so far. To determine how many more points you must earn to achieve a target final grade, look at the grading scale to see how many points you must earn to make that grade, and then subtract your total points earned from that number. If the result is less than the number of points remaining, then yes, you can still earn that grade!

**If I complete more than three projects, will you keep my highest grades?** Please complete only three of the five project options. We will grade only the first three assignments that you submit.

**Can I complete an extra credit assignment to boost my grade?** Sorry, but there is no extra credit in this course. Your best bets for maximizing your grade are having the book and your notes open while you take the quizzes, ensuring that you have fully and thoroughly answered the assignment questions, contacting us early to ask any questions that you have about the assignments, and sending us drafts of your essays and projects by the deadline mentioned above.

## Course Calendar

Week	Chapter	Assignments
1	1	Attendance post; syllabus quiz
2	2, Appendix B	Quiz (Ch. 1 and 2)
3	2	*Stata project
4	3	Quiz
5	5	Essay
6	6	Quiz
7	6	*Stata project
8	8	Quiz
9	8	*Stata project
10	10	Essay
11	11	Quiz
12	11	*Stata project
13	12	Quiz
14	12	*Stata project (due next week)
15	Appendix A	Essay; ^discussion board post; week 14 Stata project if needed

\*You must complete three of the five project options

^The graded discussion board post can be submitted at any point during weeks 1-15