

JOU 4930 Data Literacy

Fall 2016 / Section 047F / Period 9-10 Thursdays, FLG 275 / 1 credit



Associate Professor Norman P. Lewis, Ph.D.

Office: Weimer 3052

Office hours: Periods 5-6 (11:45a to 1:40p) on Wednesday and Friday

Phone: 352-392-5137 (I respond within 24 hours Monday through Friday)

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About me: See my [website](#) or follow me (@bikeprof) on [Twitter](#)

“Office hours” are times I dedicate to being in the office (unless called away) and are first-come, first-served. Or, make an appointment. Or, drop in if the door is open.

ABOUT THE COURSE

Course Purpose

To enable future media professionals to correctly interpret and communicate numbers.

Course Description

This course in numeracy applies math and statistics to common situations faced in advertising, broadcasting, journalism and public relations. It is open to any major and is especially appropriate for those who insist they’re “not good at math.” No pre-requisite.

Course Structure

This is a “flipped” course. In a traditional course, the classroom is for instruction and homework is for practice. This course flips that model: You receive instruction online (videos and readings) on your own and come to class to do “homework” problems.

Objectives

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Appraise the validity of common statements using numbers.
- Communicate numbers and statistics to a mass media audience.
- Describe the benefits and limitations of common statistical terms and methods.
- Dissect and summarize public opinion polls.
- Distinguish between random events and meaningful patterns.
- Evaluate assertions about causation, evidence, theory and risk.
- Interpret tables, charts and data visualizations.
- Simplify and contextualize large or complicated numbers.

Required Textbook

“Damned Lies and Statistics,” updated edition, by Joel Best. University of California Press, 2012. ISBN: 978-0520274709 (links to [Amazon](#) and [Barnes & Noble](#))

Simple Calculator Allowed

You may use a calculator in class for quizzes and tests. It must be a dedicated calculator (so no phones allowed) that cannot be programmed like that graphing calculator from calculus. Bottom line: If the calculator display shows only one row of numbers, it can be used for quizzes and tests.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Tentative Schedule

Class	Date	Subject	In Class Quiz or Assignment
1	August 25	Numerical Confidence	
2	September 1	Evaluating Data	Quiz 1
3	September 8	Average	Quiz 2
4	September 15	Percent	Quiz 3
5	September 22	Simplify	Quiz 4
6	September 29	(no class; professor at conference)	
7	October 6	Polling	Quiz 5
8	October 13	Number Biases	Quiz 6
9	October 20	Midterm	
10	October 27	Probability and Risk	Quiz 7
11	November 3	Interpreting Statistics	Quiz 8
12	November 10	Correlation and Causation	Quiz 9
13	November 17	Data Visualization	Quiz 10
	November 24	(no class; Thanksgiving)	
14	December 1	Discerning Math Abuse	Quiz 11
	December 12	Final Exam (5:30 to 7:30 p.m.)	

According to the schedule on the registrar’s website, UF has scheduled the final exam for 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Monday, December 12. Please plan your schedule accordingly.

Grade Allocation

Weekly quizzes or assignments (low 2 drop) 45%
 Midterm 25%
 Final (cumulative) on April 28 30%

Attendance

Attendance is expected. Course requirements for attendance, make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with UF [policy](#).

Rather than determine if an absence is the result of a genuine medical malady or an elongated happy hour, the course drops the two low quiz scores in lieu of offering make-ups. These two drops can be for any reason, whether covered by UF policy or not.

For an exam, a make-up can be accommodated if and only if (a) the absence is covered by UF policy, (b) you contact me (call preferred: 392-5137) at least 30 minutes before class begins, and (c) you promptly provide written documentation for the absence.

Final Exam

The final exam time was scheduled by the University of Florida. If you have more than two exams that day, UF policy determines which one has to be rescheduled. Please let me know early in the semester if that situation applies to you. Otherwise, the final exam cannot be rescheduled to accommodate personal schedules or family vacations.

Grading Scale

	Percent		Percent		Percent		Percent
		B+	89-87%	C+	79-77%	D+	69-67%
A	100-93%	B	86-83%	C	76-73%	D	66-63%
A-	92-90%	B-	82-80%	C-	72-70%	D-	62-60%

Scores are rounded to the nearest whole point: 89.4 rounds down to 89 (B+) while 89.5 rounds up to 90 (A-). The [UF grading policy](#) details how GPA is computed.

MORE IMPORTANT DETAILS

Academic Integrity

UF students pledge to abide by an [honor code](#) that prohibits academic dishonesty such as fabrication, plagiarism and cheating. You have an affirmative obligation to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. You also must report to appropriate personnel any condition that facilitates academic misconduct. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

When I discover cheating, my default policy is to fail all involved for the entire course and report the details to the Dean of Students Office.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online [evaluations](#). You will be notified by email when the evaluations are open, typically in the last two or three weeks of the semester. Summary [results](#) are available to you and the public.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the [Disability Resource Center](#) (352-392-8565) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to me when requesting accommodation. Such requests should be made in the first two weeks of the semester.

Health and Wellness

- The UF [Counseling and Wellness Center](#) is a terrific, free resource for any student who could use help managing stress or coping with life. The center, at 3190 Radio Road on campus, is open for appointments and emergency walk-ins from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. To make an appointment or receive after-hours assistance, call 352-392-1575.
- If you or a fellow student is in distress, contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a U Matter, We Care team member can assist.
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services is at the Student Health Care Center: 392-1161.
- The UF Police can be reached at 392-1111 or, in an emergency, by dialing 911.

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support: 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learningsupport@ufl.edu or reach the [website](#).
- For career advice and planning, or even help selecting a major or minor, contact the [Career Resource Center](#) in the Reitz Union, 392-1601.
- For help in finding resources, ask a UF librarian through [Library Support](#).
- General study skills and tutoring available from the [Teaching Center](#), Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420.
- Have a complaint? See the [UF Complaints Policy](#) for links and directions.