Specifically COMMUNICATION 508
Quantitative Research Methods in Communication

Spring Term, 2015

Tentative Initial Syllabus

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Office Hours: 9:00-10:00TuTh, and 3:00-4:00 TH, or maybe after class, preferably by appointment

Room: Coor L1-38
Tu and Th, 1:30-2:45PM
Schedule Line: 14433 for 408, 10250 for 508
Final Exam: TH 5/7, 12:10-2:00PM

Course Text: As for 408, the official text is Privitera, G. J. (Latest Ed.; 2012 is probably OK). *Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. THIS TEXT IS TENTATIVELY SUGGESTED, BUT THE MATERIAL FOR TESTS, ASSIGNMENTS, ETC., WILL BE COVERED, ALWAYS, IN POWERPOINTS, HANDOUTS, AND ALTERNATE SITES. The text's explanations and examples are usually good—BUT IT DOES HAVE SOME RATHER SERIOUS ERRORS, and also describes things in ways that are different from the material I will present and test over. It does works through calculations and examples very well, though. Its coverage of the computer program SPSS [used in our class] is good. However, it is quite expensive, Also required will be some course documents and voiceover powerpoint explanations that I will place on Blackboard;

SPSS will be used for computer analyses, but need not be bought. It is available from all campus computers, and with luck can be downloaded or run as an ASU App through the My Apps on MYASU.

Nature of Course: As in 408, this course is intended to increase your knowledge of and skill using mainly quantitative methods and especially univariate behavioral statistics. The course covers in passing some set-up and design issues, but its main focus by far is on the use and meaning of statistical procedures used once you "have the data". However, the course will include some topics addressing quantitative research generally.

This course is skills and understanding oriented. My hope is that 508 students will have deeper understanding, and a slightly wider skill array, than undergrads.

Grading:

Like for 408, your grade will be based on basic skill and understanding demonstration, plus extra performance on tests, earned in four main ways:

1. **Tests—400 points total**: There will be 3 tests, each including a variety of question types, including short-answer essay, multiple choice, interpretation of statistical findings, and simple calculations. Worth 100, 150, and 150 points [plus extra calculation points].
   Calculations questions, optional for 408 students, are required for 508 students

2. **Laboratories—mostly 40 points each, 260 points total**: These will consist of assigned data analysis projects using SPSS, working on the data-sets supplied in the CD accompanying the text. To complete most laboratory assignments successfully, you will need to turn in computer output plus a verbal report. There will be voluntary sessions for group 'pre-performance' of some labs.
   I usually assign an extra lab, and perhaps extra report segments, for 508 students.

3. **Class Participation—About 220 points?:** The class participation grade will be partly based on objective factors such as attendance and scheduled presentations at the board for in-class

exercises. But another part of the participation grade is unavoidably subjective, dependent on my perception of outstanding (or in rare cases, outstandingly bad) involvement during lecture and especially discussion. This includes mainly answering questions, or asking good ones, in class; letting me know when something is unclear or in error; and general class citizenship. I will try to make the class as participative as possible—learning by doing seems especially valuable as an approach to statistics.

508 students are expected to do above-average class participation/citizenship/ leadership. This is an anomalous role, since **I do want you to 'model' active participate**, and especially to ask questions that stretch or uncover hidden facets of the material**; but I don't want you to squeeze out participation by undergrads**. I somewhat explicitly try to manage this process by calling on high participators last, etc.; please do not be discouraged by my style.

4. **Take-Home Exercises—5 to 15 points each, about 130? points total**: Each of these will consist of a few problems in a problem sheet on Blackboard, to be worked out by hand, due on many days other than test days. They are assigned mainly for practice, to get feedback about your understanding and skill related to course concepts, and to fulfill calculation requirements for students with concerns about math.

508 students should do the 'extra' questions whenever they are available in the exercise assignment sheet

Obviously, there is no 'C route'[or the like] available for 508 students.

There may also be some extra credit available.

Grade Point Distribution:

First Midterm Test	[2/19]	100
Second Midterm Test	[3/26]	150
Final Exam	[5/12]	150
Laboratories		260?
Participation		220?
Exercises		130?
Total:		1010