

MA 105: Introduction to Statistics — Spring 2023
Section B: Tuesday, Thursday 02:45p to 04:00p in Ho 101

Professor

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Office Hours: Tue 11a-12p, Thur 10a-11a and [by appointment](#).

Purpose: To give students an algebra-based introduction to modern statistical methods, including descriptive and inferential statistics. To show students that statistics is an important way of thinking that can be used to formulate and answer questions about the world. Students will summarize data to understand and evaluate statistical statements and make inferences using real data.

Course Objectives: After this course, students will be able to:

1. evaluate ethical issues associated with statistical practice
2. critically consume statistically-based results
3. choose and interpret appropriate graphical displays and numerical summaries of real data
4. recognize and explain the central role of variability and randomness in statistical analyses
5. demonstrate an understanding of, and ability to use, ideas of statistical inference in a variety of settings
6. interpret and draw conclusions based on standard output from statistical software

In 20 years, I want students to remember that the juice is worth the squeeze. If they struggle with a puzzle, they *can* solve it. We're working toward a holistic understanding and not mindless mimicking.

Productive Failure: I want to recast failure as a learning tool. Realizing mistakes in practice provides a rich time for learning if we complete the hard work of helping each other to the point of epiphany. This approach requires us to signal our need for help, which necessitates an environment where it is safe to take risks and connect. In-class discussion, we will celebrate curious risk-taking as much as the correct answer. An incorrect response provides the best place to grow – we will *learn* to engage with mathematics.

Rules of Engagement:

1. All humans are accepted members of our classroom.
2. Be aware of others' identities in the room.
3. Assume positive intent.
4. Share talking time.
5. Listen to understand.
6. Be present.
7. Critique ideas, not people.
8. Everyone has expertise. We can learn something from everyone.
9. Share a feeling of mutual responsibility for each other.
10. Encourage others to succeed.

Academic Honesty: I expect students to follow Colgate's academic honor code. If students feel stressed about exams or deadlines, they should see me as soon as possible to review their options to avoid academic honesty issues. See [Colgate's Academic Honor Code](#).

Prerequisites: None.

Calculator: Each student may use a graphing or scientific calculator on in-class assessments, but nothing with a computer algebra system.

Technology: Students will learn to be consumers of statistical software. That is, to select and use appropriate applications that complete complicated analysis. Students should expect to understand when and how to use each tool when answering a new question. If a student feels like they're spinning their wheels or that they need to be an expert statistician to complete an assignment, they should stop and see me.

Support for Technology: Devices like laptops are paramount to success in college. I recognize that these devices can be expensive and that students might not have the same access to the latest technology. Further, technology changes rapidly, and students might rely on older, more problem-prone devices that break down or become unreliable. These technology issues can become a significant source of stress for students. Given these challenges, students should contact me if they experience a technology-related problem that interferes with their learning in this course. Doing so will enable me to assist students in accessing the appropriate [resources on campus](#).

Attendance: I expect students to attend all classes and to arrive on time. When a student misses class due to illness, hangovers, interviews, personal crises, deaths in the family (I hope not!), and whatever else, they do not need to let me know. Students should talk to classmates and check the Moodle page for what they missed. All students are responsible for all assignments due or assigned in the class they miss. I want students to attend all classes. Every class they don't attend isn't just discussion and material they missed; it's also thinking they didn't do – thinking they will need for assignments and exams later on. In other words, every missed class is a disadvantage. The obligation is on the student to minimize that effect. That said, there is no penalty or benefit for attendance, as deflating or inflating grades with any percentage of a student's score coming from attendance would make a poor measure of an individual's competency in the course. Students seeking high grades will quickly learn that they need to attend class as often as possible.

Outside Class Discussion: Students should use the discussion board in Moodle and the Hypothes.is annotation platform as safe places to ask questions and be curious about the course material. I expect students to answer such questions and feed their peers' curiosity by furthering the discussion; I will monitor activity and chime in often. Through this design, I intend to foster students' creativity and curiosity, preparing them to think critically, ask questions, and gain lifelong value from their education.

Make-up Policy: I will consider make-ups and extensions on a case-by-case basis. Students who feel they are in an extreme circumstance must notify me at least two days **before** the regularly scheduled deadline or as soon as possible. Students should feel welcome to reach out to discuss any due dates or exam dates that conflict with their religious observations or other dates that the university does not acknowledge. We will schedule all make-up exams on the same day as the exam when possible, and **before** if not.

Inclusion: My goal and responsibility are to make this course and our classroom as accessible and inclusive as possible. I understand that students have different styles and paces of learning and accessing information and that each student comes with their own, and sometimes difficult, experiences with learning. I acknowledge the persistence of discrimination and exclusion in mathematics based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, and other factors. I take responsibility for lowering barriers so that access is practical and equitable. We must work to make the classroom environment as comfortable and respectful as possible. As a class, we will resolve to listen, learn and act to make this classroom proactively welcoming to all students. I encourage all students to reach out to me to discuss their learning process, experience, or needs and point out any blind spots.

Specific Learning Accommodations and Support: I hope students will feel comfortable notifying me at the start of the course if they require specific learning accommodations or support. I am here to help! This information will remain confidential. In many cases, students requesting accommodations must also contact the [Office of Academic Support and Disability Services](#) to receive help determining and coordinating a specific accommodation based on disability/medical documentation. Contact Evelyn Lester: elester@colgate.edu, (315) 228-6955.

Academic Honesty: I expect students to follow Colgate's academic honor code. If a student feels stressed about exams or deadlines, they should come to see me as soon as possible so we can review their options to avoid any academic honesty issues. See [Colgate's Academic Honor Code](#).

Support: College life can sometimes get bumpy; if you are experiencing emotional or personal difficulties, seek help right away. Colgate offers wholly confidential and highly professional counseling and psychological services. You can reach the [Counseling Center](#) at 315-228-7385. If this seems like a difficult step, find me – we can talk and call or walk to the Counseling Center together.

Grading:

Homework (15%): The purpose of homework is to practice concepts introduced in the lecture. Students can expect ten homework assignments. These ten assignments will consist of eight multiple choice assignments, a written statistical analysis, and (combined) weekly diagnostics.

- **Completing Homework:** Students will submit final answers on Moodle by class time the day it is due. I will grade these assignments for correctness and will not accept late submissions unless previously agreed upon due to the automatic release of solutions on Moodle. I encourage students to discuss the homework opportunities with each other and me. This can be done in various ways – on the Moodle discussion board or during office hours. Students should judiciously review posted solutions to homework and extra problems in preparation for exams.
- **Weekly Diagnostic Check-points:** Weekly, I will ask students to reflect on what we've discussed by seeing what they thought was important and if there are any unanswered questions. Each diagnostic will also have some questions aimed to help guide homework completion. Diagnostics will open Thursday after class, and students must complete them before 5:00p on Sunday.

Standards (50%): We will cover roughly 13 *standards*, which include statistical concepts such as finding the mean of a dataset. Students can expect three cumulative exam periods where they will be evaluated on any of the 13 standards recently covered and, perhaps, be re-assessed on previous standards. These exams do not have a percentage score. Instead, questions are graded and tracked individually.

- **Why?:** This is to provide an iterative process of learning. Initial grades are meant to serve students by providing clear, specific, and actionable feedback on what they are doing well and what may need to be revisited.
- **How?:** Exams will be returned quickly and accompanied by detailed feedback on the progress made on each assessed standard, which provides a blueprint for future success.
- **Using Feedback:** Make attempts productive. Take a struggle with a particular topic as an invitation to try again – revisit the notes and past solutions, and ask for help so that the second time is a success. Take successes as a chance to hone that knowledge on the subject by providing a highly formal solution the second time.
- **What's the Benefit?:** This allows for the opportunity to *improve* understanding after receiving feedback. The aim is to measure learning more accurately, modeling the process more closely by allowing students to be evaluated after receiving feedback and revisiting the material. Additionally, the course topics are implicitly cumulative, and repeated retrieval leads to deeper learning and easier access to new material.
- **Weighting:** The first and second attempts account for 25% and 75%, respectively, unless equal weighting benefits a student.
- **When?:** The expected dates for the exam periods can be found in the schedule below, though they may slightly change as our course progresses. **02/06, 03/08, 04/19.**

Final Exam (35%) A comprehensive final exam will be given according to the University's exam schedule. The exam will cover all information covered in the course.

- **When?:** The final exam is scheduled by the registrar as **May 8th 3p-5p.**

Standards Scoring

– List of Standards:

ID	Standard/Objective	Sections	First Attempt	Most Recent Attempt
1	Check-In I		Exam 1	–
2	Sampling Designs		Exam 1	Exam 2
3	Experimental Designs		Exam 1	Exam 2
4	Summarizing Data I (Categorical Data)		Exam 1	Exam 2
5	Summarizing Data II (Quantitative Data)		Exam 1	Exam 2
6	Check-In I		Exam 2	–
7	Probability Distributions (Discrete)		Exam 2	Exam 3
8	Probability Distributions (Continuous)		Exam 2	Exam 3
9	Check-In III		Exam 1	–
10	Law of Large Numbers		Exam 3	–
11	Resampling		Exam 3	–
12	Hypothesis Testing		Exam 3	–
13	Confidence Intervals		Exam 3	–

– Rubric: Each question asked in an exam period is scored on the following rubric:

Designation	Required Objectives	Points
A (Mastery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Perfect for the standard being assessed ● Achieves a correct solution ● Justifies decision(s) toward solution ● Effectively communicates solution and support ● Notation used is appropriate and clearly shows all steps 	0.95
B (Sufficient)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Essentially contains the correct answer but contains a slight error ● Makes correct decision(s) toward solution ● Justifies decision(s) toward solution ● Effectively communicates solution and support ● A slight error, confused reasoning, or notation mistake 	0.85
C (Progressing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does not contain the correct answer but does show work in the correct direction ● Makes some correct decision(s) toward solution ● Some justification of decision(s) toward solution ● Attempts to communicate solution and support ● A wrong decision, confused reasoning, and/or notational mistakes 	0.75
D (Developing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does not contain the correct answer but shows some correct work ● Incorrect decision(s) toward solution ● Insufficient or incorrect justification for decision(s) toward solution ● Little or no communication of solution and support ● Several wrong decisions, confused reasoning, and/or notation mistake 	0.65
F (Needs Attention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does not contain the correct answer or work in the correct direction ● Missing or incorrect decision(s) toward solution ● Little or no justification for decision(s) toward solution ● Little or no communication of solution and support ● Several wrong decisions, confused reasoning, and/or notation mistake 	0.25
Z (Not assessable)	No Response, there is no reasonable attempt to provide the correct solution.	0.00

The standards-based grading scheme allows for meaningful feedback about learning and scores for students that fully address understanding. Typical testing and grading techniques focus on evaluative work at the end of the semester, when such feedback is too late to make meaningful changes. This leads to a situation where students feel over-tested but are left under-assessed – at least when such assessment can be corrective.

The rubric above aims to provide nuanced feedback after every assessment by using a rubric that considers evidence indicating an understanding of a concept. Simple mistakes that lead to incorrect answers still receive a "B" range grade, and solutions that show progress, but don't get to the correct answer, still receive a grade in the "C" range. This emphasizes understanding by recognizing a student's ability to show they know what needs to be done by better rewarding students that show they know what resources they would need to solve a new problem and truly requiring mastery for a grade in the "A" range.

Students should not feel stressed to review all of their notes the night before the exam but incentivized to *learn* the material over the semester. If a student feels stressed, they should visit during office hours to discuss their studying techniques and how they might make changes toward learning and away from memorization. Students, almost without exception, end up with far better scores at the end of the semester as current performances are used as a diagnostic tool to show students what topics they might have more questions about. In other words, initial scores are *not permanent*, and students can change them by taking current performance as an *incentive to learn more*.

– *Grading* – Since the scoring of standards is in terms of achievement, which might be new for some students, calculating this part of the grade may not seem obvious. At the end of the semester, the number of points students earn on standards will be based on the distribution of scores on their first and most recent attempts, likely with more weight on the most recent score. After each exam period, I will post solutions to Moodle, and students will receive nuanced feedback in an email that lists their progress for each standard and an updated percentage score.

Plus or minus grades will be decided for solutions between categorizations. For example, a solution with a trivial error that isn't critical to the understanding or the correct completion of the exercise would be an A- whereas a B+ would be, for example, an easily correctable issue that may show a small, tangential misunderstanding – a solution that shows a clear understanding of the material but some area for growth in a pre-requisite or a small part of the concept being assessed.

– *Conversion to Percentage* – A student's final percentage score considers their average first and second attempts. A percentage score is calculated for the first and second attempts as follows:

1. Add points for each standard for the first and most recent attempts.
2. Divide by the number of standards tested for the first and most recent attempts.
3. The standards grade percentage is calculated the following ways, and the highest grade is taken:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Standards Percentage} &= 0.25(\text{1st attempt percentage}) + 0.75(\text{most recent attempt percentage}) \\ \text{Standards Percentage} &= 0.50(\text{1st attempt percentage}) + 0.50(\text{most recent attempt percentage})\end{aligned}$$

By the nature of this retesting scheme, the weight on the first attempt is low, thus putting more emphasis on the most recent attempt. This allows students to use previous attempts as *learning experiences* and to incentivize them to *revisit* materials they need to after receiving nuanced feedback. Students who do well on the first attempts are further incentivized to retain and revisit the material, which is important as this course is *very cumulative*.

Though students may want their best attempt to count, the most recent score often *is* the best score as initial attempts are taken as an invitation to revisit a topic more thoroughly. The most recent score is used to encourage this long-lasting learning and discourage simple memorization of a particular topic for an exam.

I understand that this might differ from most students' previous experiences, so please reach out with additional questions.

Overall Grade: A student's overall grade will be a weighted average of their **percentage** scores on homework, standards assessment, and final exam. The overall grade earned by each student will be decided as follows.

$$\text{Overall Grade} = 0.15(\text{HW}) + 0.5(\text{Standards}) + 0.35(\text{Final})$$

Letter	Final Grade
A	93-100%
A-	90-92.9%
B+	87-89.9%
B	84-86.9%
B-	80-82.9%
C+	77-79.9%
C	73-76.9%
C-	70-72.9%
D+	67-69.9%
D	63-66.9%
D-	60-62.9%
F	< 60%

- **A** range represents above and beyond expectations, excellence with distinction. These are not impossible to achieve but are difficult to come by. While there is merit to hard work and long hours, it does not always guarantee success. Excellence refers to the combined results, not just the effort.
- **B** range signifies that a student is meeting the expectations of the course in most or all aspects. Good is more common than excellent and should be celebrated as a success.
- **C** range signifies adequate and at the level of expectation for several aspects of the course. Average is not usually an appealing categorization for those who strive for extraordinary. A grade of C, however, is a respectable point. If students don't want to be categorized as adequate, they must recognize what more is needed, make a plan to achieve that, and execute it; I can help with a plan!
- **D** range represents less than adequately equipped to perform many of the essential functions of the course; just passable. I recognize that a D may also mean that a student truly does not understand what is expected. Students, in this case, should make an appointment with me to discuss how they might make a plan and take action. I will submit course warnings to the appropriate Administrative Dean for students earning a D in this course at any point during the semester.
- **F** range represents a clear failure to meet the expectations of the class. F represents a lack of effort and interest in the course. This is a cause for deep concern; I will submit course warnings to the appropriate Administrative Dean for students earning an F in this course at any point during the semester.

Remark: I do not curve or round grades at the end of the semester. No matter what policy is followed, some could miss a grade boundary by a very small amount. I prefer to keep it straightforward by announcing the sharp grade boundary and strictly following it. I find it helps keep the process more objective and does not allow room for subjective grade adjustments, which are almost always unfair. I expect students to use the nature of retesting to "curve" their grades and work with me to *earn* the grade that they want.

Schedule:

Date	Event
01/23/23	First Day of Classes (Half-Day Schedule)
01/24/23	An Introduction to Statistics
01/26/23	Sampling Designs
01/31/23	Experimental Designs
02/02/23	Measurement, Bias and Data Ethics
02/07/23	Summarizing Categorical Data
02/09/23	Summarizing Continuous Data
02/14/23	Flex Day
02/16/23	Exam Period 1 * (In Class)
02/21/23	Random Variables and Probability Distributions
02/23/23	Discrete Probability Distributions
02/28/23	Continuous Probability Distributions
03/02/23	Wrap up Probability Distributions
03/07/23	Flex Day
03/08/23	Exam Period 2 * (3-5p)
03/09/23	Law of Large Numbers and Where it's Going
03/11/23 - 03/19/23	Mid-Term Recess
03/21/23	Statistics as Random Variables and Resampling
03/23/23	Inference about the Population Mean: Sampling Distribution
03/28/23	Inference about the Population Mean: Hypothesis Test
03/29/23	Full-Term Courses: Course Withdrawal and S/U Grade Option Deadline
03/30/23	Inference about the Population Mean: Confidence Interval
04/04/23	Inference about the Population Proportion: Sampling Distribution
04/06/23	Inference about the Population Proportion: Hypothesis Test
04/11/23	Inference about the Population Proportion: Confidence Interval
04/13/23	Comparing Population Means: ANOVA
04/18/23	Flex Day
04/19/23	Exam Period 3 * (3-5p)
04/20/23	Comparing Population Proportions: Chi-squared Test
04/25/23	Association: Cramer's V
04/27/23	Association: Pearson, Spearman, and Kendall's τ
05/02/23	Regression Analysis
05/04/23	Regression Analysis
05/08/23	Final Exam 3p-5p

* I will provide more details about these exam periods as we approach the dates.

Remark: Dates will likely change as I largely let the class dictate the speed of the course by asking questions and completing extra problems in class.