

Course: HS237B, Winter 2007  
Instructor: Ponce

Grading:

5% Class participation (including submission of paper proposals)  
45% Homework assignments  
50% Final paper

Attendance:

While class attendance is strongly encouraged, it is not required. However, students cannot expect to miss class on a regular basis and then have the TA or instructor give one-on-one instruction during office hours to make up for what was missed. Also, homework assignments need to be turned in class when they are due.

Homework:

Five homework assignments will be given, focusing on the empirical application of the models learned in class. You will be expected to conduct data analyses using the data we give you, and then interpret the results. You are encouraged to work together to run the analyses and discuss the problems, but you are expected to do the write-ups separately. ***Evidence that the write-ups were not done independently will be grounds for a reduction in the grade.*** Homework assignments will be graded  $\checkmark^+$ ,  $\checkmark$ , and  $\checkmark^-$ . Each homework assignment will carry the same weight in determining the final grade.

**Paper proposal & Descriptive Statistics:**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> session beginning of week 9, you will be asked to turn in a **proposal** summarizing your plans for the final paper and **descriptive statistics**. The proposal should be approximately two pages (double-spaced) and contain sufficient information for us to evaluate the appropriateness of the methods, including the following:

- research question and specific hypotheses to be tested
- brief description of study design and data and the rationale of choosing this specific data
- description of statistical methods, including specification of the regression equation and any methodological limitations

*Note:* We strongly discourage hypotheses and analyses involving the testing of interaction terms, since substantial experience suggests that even the best students calculate the estimates incorrectly when looking at interaction terms in the context of nonlinear models. If you insist on examining interaction terms, we encourage you to work closely with the TA and the instructor to make sure that you are doing this correctly.

Descriptive statistics:

In addition to the paper proposal, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations for continuous variables, frequencies for categorical variables, minima and maxima where relevant) for the dataset you will use for your paper. If you do not have a clean analysis file created by this time, you are unlikely to be able to complete a class paper of acceptable quality by the deadline. These descriptive stats will go into the second Table in your paper.

## Paper:

Two hard copies of the paper and supporting materials (see below) should be submitted to the instructor by the due date. **Late papers are not acceptable and will be excused only in the most dire emergencies, so please do not count on being able to get an extension.**

The paper should be approximately 10-15 pages long (double-spaced) and should be equivalent to the methods, results and discussion sections of a publishable research article. The paper needs only the briefest of introductions and does not need a background section, literature review, or references (except for any statistical references that may be needed). Use of methods beyond OLS or simple logit/probit models for the paper is strongly encouraged, because this provides an opportunity to properly apply new statistical models and to interpret results. Papers with OLS- and/or logit/probit- based analyses only will be accepted and will be evaluated based on the appropriateness and thoughtfulness of the specification.

A detailed explanation of what is expected for this paper is included in the grading section below.

### *Grading of Paper:*

Points for the paper will be assigned according to the objectives outlined below. Please remember that your paper must be clearly written (with proper use of grammar and punctuation), and be sure to proofread and use spell check. If we do not understand your writing, you will lose points for each objective that is not clearly written.

<b>Your research should meet the following objectives:</b>	<b>Possible Points:</b>
Clearly define the research question and hypotheses (make sure that they are testable, given your study design and data). Include a discussion of the hypothesized direction of the relationship being examined.	5
Explain how the regression model and hypotheses are justified with a theoretical model.	5
Describe the data, variables and the statistical methods used in the analyses. A clear explanation of why they are appropriate for the problem is required. Include the specification of your regression models and how it corresponds to the theoretical model.	10
Provide a clear, user-friendly presentation of the results in both text and tables. The appropriateness of results presented (i.e., are the numbers presented interpretable by themselves) will also be considered.	15
Present the correct interpretation of results.	10
Adequately describe the methodological limitations of the research. Include limitations that cannot be addressed within the scope of the study and the likely nature of the bias.	5
Total possible points	50