GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION:

1. **How is the course organized this semester?**
   There are currently three sections of Stat 311, two of which I am teaching. (For lecture times and rooms, see [START HERE](http://pages.stat.wisc.edu/~ifischer/Intro_Stat/Lecture_Notes/).) As the course material is identical, you have the option of attending either one at any time. In an effort to maintain consistency, the instructor of the third section and I will be closely collaborating throughout the semester, and assignments will be similar, if not identical. ([Note: For now, if you are registered for one of my two lectures, you may NOT attend the other instructor’s lecture instead!]) However, for the first time, there are NO discussion sections this semester due to budget constraints. But there is a graduate student, Ning Fan ([nfan@wisc.edu](mailto:nfan@wisc.edu)), whose responsibilities include grading and office hours for all three sections.

2. **Besides the textbook, where do I find the remaining course material?**
   ALL course material is posted online on my webpage through the Department of Statistics, at [http://pages.stat.wisc.edu/~ifischer/Intro_Stat/stat311/](http://pages.stat.wisc.edu/~ifischer/Intro_Stat/stat311/). I encourage you to start there, even though I will briefly discuss the structure of the course in class anyway. Note that unless specified otherwise, Learn@UW will only be used to record your grades.

3. **Are there any additional sources?**
   A separate set of Lecture Notes exists in .pdf format, posted at the link [http://pages.stat.wisc.edu/~ifischer/Intro_Stat/Lecture_Notes/](http://pages.stat.wisc.edu/~ifischer/Intro_Stat/Lecture_Notes/), which I have used in lower level courses (e.g., Stat 301). I chose not to have hardbound copies made, because Stat 311 only covers the first half of those notes, albeit in much greater depth (Stat 312 covers the second half), and the required textbook is expensive enough. However, these notes will be used to assign homework problems, and possibly as a source of future 311 exam problems.

4. **How will lectures be presented?**
   Via PowerPoint slides that are arranged by textbook chapters.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:

5. **Where do I find them?**
   The ASSIGNMENTS page, along with their due dates, plus exam dates. Consequently, this page also serves as an informal syllabus for the course. (There is no “formal” one.)

6. **How are they structured, and how will they be graded?**
   HW problems come from TWO sources: the textbook and Lecture Notes described in 3. The TA will grade a subset of problems (method and answer), so skip problems at your own risk!

7. **How many assignments are there, and how much will they count? What if I miss one?**
   There are SIX, but I will drop the lowest HW score at the end of the semester; the remaining five will be scaled to 30% of your final grade. Immediately after each HW is submitted, I will post the solutions to the Lecture Notes problems [here](http://example.com), so late submissions cannot be accepted!

8. **How should we submit and retrieve them?**
   An area in the room will be designated for drop-off (I will collect them) and pick-up, at the end of the lecture. If this is not possible for some reason, email the TA with an attached scanned copy of your homework. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CONFIRMING ITS RECEIPT!!**
EXAMS:

9. **How many exams are there, and how much will they count? What if I miss one?**
   There are two midterm exams, at Week 6 and Week 12; each is worth 20%. The Final Exam is worth 30%. If you miss a midterm exam for a legitimate reason – e.g., illness, emergency, etc. (but you better be able to prove it) – that exam score will be dropped, and the others evenly reweighted to take up the slack. **NO MAKEUP EXAMS! NO EXCEPTIONS!**

10. **How are they formatted, and how will they be scored?**
    Each exam is NON-cumulative and in-class, and consists of between 4 and 6 problems that are divided into parts (a), (b), (c), etc. Often, later parts might make use of earlier ones. However, if a “minor” mathematical error is committed in an early part of a problem, and propagates through the rest of it, usually only the initial “minor” error will be penalized, **provided the method of solution is sound.** But there are several exceptions to this:
    - No work is shown, whether the final answer is correct or not (e.g., incorrectly entering a complicated expression into a calculator).
    - The final answer is incorrect, and differs greatly from the correct answer.
    - The final answer is impossible or nonsensical (e.g., body temp = \(-\sqrt{157.8}\) °F).
    - The initial error causes the rest of the problem to be so extremely complex, that it is effectively rendered unsolvable.
    - At the opposite extreme, the initial error effectively trivializes the problem.

11. **Will exams be “curved” in any way? How will final course grades be determined?**
    **I do not curve individual exams!** This is because I do not use them when determining final grades, so it won’t matter if your exam scores are “above average” or “below average,” etc. At the end of the semester, each student will have received a total course score out of 500 points, which includes everything. **This overall class distribution is what I will curve, starting (but not ending) with the customary grade cutoffs A = 90-100%, B = 80-89%, etc.** I will then “tweak” the results depending on a number of factors, such as exam difficulty, etc. If a student falls just short of a letter grade, I will take the overall trend in his/her exam performance into consideration. If there is evidence of significant improvement, then at my discretion, I will consider “bumping up” (never down) to the next highest grade level. **Hence it is possible for student A to “leapfrog” over student B, even if they both have the same numerical course score, and even if all of B’s exam scores were “above average.”** While this method is a bit subjective, I believe that it is much more forgiving than sticking to rigid numerical cutoffs. Though sorry, I CAN’T FACTOR IN “HOW HARD YOU WORKED.”

12. **What is the best way to study for the exams?**
    Work on problems from previous Stat 301 and Stat 311 exams, and from the Lecture Notes (including some of the Exercises that are peppered through them), using the following strategy: **KEEP REWORKING THE SAME PROBLEM UNTIL YOU CAN COMPLETE IT FROM BEGINNING TO END IN ~ 15 MINS, WITHOUT PEEKING AT THE SOLUTION!**

13. **Are we allowed to bring anything to the exams?**
    Besides a dedicated calculator, a 3” × 5” index card (both sides, handwritten or typed) with notes, etc. The drawback… A general formula with no values plugged into it will NOT receive any credit!

14. **If you are a McBurney student, or otherwise require special accommodations, TELL ME ASAP!**