~ STAT 312 FAQ ~

**GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION:**

1. **How is the course organized this semester?**
   There is currently more than one section of Stat 312, one of which I am teaching. Please attend this section ONLY.

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/stat312/](http://pages.stat.wisc.edu/~ifischer/Intro_Stat/stat312/). 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, Canvas 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 312 only covers the second half of those notes, albeit in much greater depth (Stat 311 covers the first 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 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 SYLLABUS contains your HW assignments, and other course information as well.

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 grader will grade a subset of problems (method and answer), so skip problems at your own risk! Be sure to speak with me if you need help!!! Don’t wait till after an exam!!!

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, so late submissions cannot be accepted!

8. **How should we submit and retrieve them?**
   Please submit them to the grader. You may email the grader with a scanned copy of your homework attached, or use a Dropbox if one has been set up. More details later... **but under NO circumstances should you ever simply leave it on his/her desk and walk away, or slip it under his/her door.** If you place it in his/her department mailbox, I **strongly** advise that you make a hard backup copy first, as they often “disappear.” If that happens, don’t say I didn’t warn you.

**YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CONFIRMING THE RECEIPT OF YOUR HW!!**
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%. Makeup exams will only be given for a legitimate reason – e.g., illness, emergency, etc. (but you better be able to prove it).

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 = \(-\sqrt{157.8} \text{ °F}\)).
    - 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. **IMPORTANT!!! What is the best way to study for the exams?**
    Work on problems from previous Stat 312 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?**
    Yes, a **dedicated** calculator, and a page of notes (8½ in by 11 in, both sides, handwritten or typed). The drawback… A general formula with no values plugged into it will NOT receive any credit!