

Vanderbilt University

Leadership, Policy and Organizations

Class Number 9951

Fall 2020

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 2:30-5 or by Appointment (use <http://wdoyle42.youcanbook.me>)

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Course Overview

The overview includes an introduction to the course, guidelines on grading, and required texts.

Introduction

This course is the first of a three semester series of courses designed to introduce you to the *practice* of research, particularly the applied side of quantitative research. The goal of this course to help you to prepare a paper that can be presented at a major research conference and, hopefully, submitted to a journal for publication.

To accomplish this goal, you will choose from among publicly available datasets. You will identify a research topic, then later a research question. You will create a dataset using the publicly available sources. By the end of the semester, you will have a properly formatted and cleaned dataset, with auxiliary information from other sources included. Next semester we will analyze this dataset. By the end of May, you will complete a paper based on this analysis.

Along the way, you will develop skills that will be helpful in future work using any kind of data. This class has a strong emphasis on using programming skills to aid in the replication of work and to simplify complex analyses.

Grading

Evaluation for the course will be based on the following factors:

Assignments: 50%

There will be weekly assignments, which will be graded pass/fail. Late assignments will not be accepted. These assignments will account for half of your grade. Collaboration on assignments is fine, however, many of the assignments will ask you to work with variables and datasets of your own choosing.

Summary Paper and Codebook: 50%

At the end of the semester, you will need to present the results of your data collection efforts, with a summary paper of no more than five pages of text, accompanied by properly formatted tables and graphics. The summary paper and codebook will be due on December 4. You will present your work to the rest of the class on December 4.

Texts

There are no required texts for this course. The course materials will live on the github repository, https://github.com/wdoyle42/lpo_prac. For each class session you'll need to grab the notes, do file and data for that session.

Software

You need to have access to a working version of Stata, (at least v 15.0).

If you do purchase Stata, you will need at least Stata IC (standard version). Vanderbilt has what's called a gradplan with Stata under which you can purchase the software at greatly reduced prices. Stata SE is a more-powerful version of Stata that is useful for the larger datasets many of you may be working with.

Honor Code

For this course, you are bound by the terms of the Peabody Honor System. Any breach of academic honesty, including cheating, plagiarism, or failing to report a known or suspected violation of the Code will be reported to the Honor Council. In particular, papers must assign credit to the sources you use. Material borrowed from another—quotations, paraphrases, key words, or ideas—must be credited following appropriate citation procedures (footnotes and bibliography). As mentioned above, collaboration *is* permitted on assignments but *is not* permitted on your summary paper and codebook.

If you have any doubts, please ask me for clarification. Uncertainty about the application of the Honor Code does not excuse a violation.

Schedule for Meetings

All course materials, including syllabi, and assignments are available at:

https://github.com/wdoyle42/lpo_prac

This site is updated frequently, please check it often.

The schedule for all class meetings is as follows:

August 26

Intro to Stata

September 2

Topics:

Getting Started with Research Questions, Introduction to literate programming in Stata

September 9

Topics:

STATA Basics

Assignments:

Assignment 1 due September 7, midnight

September 16

Topics:

Working with publicly available datasets

Assignments:

Assignment 2 due September 14, midnight

September 23

Topics:

Dataset manipulation: Collapsing, merging, bending the data to your will

Assignments: Assignment 3 due September 21, midnight

September 30

Topics:

More dataset manipulation: One to many merging, many to one merging, appending datasets

Assignments:

Assignment 4 due September 28, midnight

Summary research area due

October 7

Topics:

Sampling: Simple sampling designs

Assignments:

Assignment 5 due October 5, midnight

October 14

Topics:

Sampling: Complex sampling designs

Assignments:

Assignment 6 due October 12, midnight

October 21

Topics:

Data Cleaning

Assignments:

Assignment 7 due October 19, midnight

October 28

Topics:

Data Validation

Assignments:

Assignment 8 due October 26, midnight

Revised research questions due.

November 4

Topics:

Descriptive Statistics: Tabular and Graphical Approaches

Assignments:

Assignment 9 due November 2, midnight

November 11

Topics:

An Introduction to Programming: Using Macros

Assignments:

Assignment 10 due November 9, midnight

November 18

Topics:

Further graphical approaches to describing data

Assignments

Assignment 11 due November 16, midnight

November 25

No Class, Thanksgiving Break

December 2

Topics:

Class Presentations

Assignments:

Summary Papers, Do-File and Codebooks due before class, December 2.