

Class 3: Topic and Course Org Files

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1 Topic Org Files

A topic Org file contains course content (e.g., lecture slides and notes, exam questions, assignment guidelines) for a given topic. Its general structure is shown below, using an example of Regression as a teaching topic. The top section (where lines start with #+) has metadata for the Org file. Including meta data is optional.

```
#+TITLE:      Topics: Regression
#+AUTHOR:     Your Name
#+EMAIL:      Your Email
#+DESCRIPTION: Topic Org file for Regression
#+CATEGORY:   TOPIC
#+STARTUP:    overview
#+STARTUP:    hidestars

* Lectures
* Assignments
* Exercises
* Questions
```

1.1 Organizing Content in Topic Org Files

- In most cases, course content would be created in a topic Org file (e.g., a topic Org file that covers Regression), each consisting of multiple sub-topics (e.g., subtopics of Regression such as, Estimation, Interpretation, R-squared). Sub-topics are organized in the form of a subtree as shown in the example below.

```
* Lectures
** Estimation
:PROPERTIES:
:CUSTOM_ID: Lectures/Estimation
:END:
** Interpretation
:PROPERTIES:
** R-Squared
:PROPERTIES:
```

- Each sub-topic should have a `:CUSTOM_ID:` property, as shown in the example above, so it can be included in another file, such as a semester Org file.

On a related note, an important consideration when creating a topic Org file is the fact that the content in it has the potential to be included in multiple different semester Org files. Hence, an instructor who, for instance, plans to teach the same topic (e.g., Regression) or sub-topic (e.g., R-squared) in different courses (e.g., Statistics 101 and Marketing Research) would benefit from not making references to a specific course in the topic Org file.

- The Org-Coursepacket includes multiple topic Org files located in the `Topics` folder.
- A topic org file can contain relevant assignments, exercises, and exam questions under corresponding subtrees.

2 Course Org Files

A course Org file contains permanent information for the corresponding course, that is, information about the course that remains consistent across semesters (e.g., learning objectives, grading schemes).

We will now review the structure and contents of the course Org file. The example below shows the highest-level headings of the course Org file for Org-Coursepack – i.e., Courses and Syllabus.

```
#+TITLE:      Course: Org-Coursepack
#+AUTHOR:     Your Name
#+EMAIL:      Your Email
#+DESCRIPTION: org file for Org-Coursepack
#+CATEGORY:   COURSE
#+STARTUP:    overview
#+STARTUP:    hidestars

* Courses
* Syllabus
```

The `Courses` tree can have a subtree for each semester teaching this course. See example below. Note that, in the actual course Org file, semester subtrees are links to their respective semester Org files.

```
* Courses
** 2020 Spring
```

The `Syllabus` subtree contains partial content for the syllabus, specifically, information about the course that remains consistent across semesters (e.g., `Course Description`, `Learning Objectives`, `grading scheme`). See an example of the `Syllabus` tree with only the `Course Description` subtree expanded.

```
* Syllabus
** Course Description
:PROPERTIES:
:CUSTOM_ID: Syllabus/Course Description
:END:
Course description here
** Student Learning Objectives
** Course Material
** Grading
** Specific Course Policies
```