DATA5207 Assessment Questions
Research Project

Forty per cent of your final grade for this unit comes from the completion of the major research project. This consists of a research plan, which requires you to outline how you intend to complete the project, and a final paper due at the beginning of the exam period. These assessments are designed to track your competence in the core skills developed in this unit, and provide you with the opportunity to apply them on practical research tasks.

The unit is divided into two parts. First, you will be required to develop a research plan. This is designed to allow you to gain early feedback on your approach to this assessment to increase your chances of passing as much as possible.

For this first part of the assessment, you will need to outline your hypothesis and the working theory you plan to test, the literature that informs it (only five sources are required for your plan) and then outline the methodology you intend to use to answer it.

You should read forward in the unit guide to make sure you include what you believe will be relevant methods dealt with later in the semester, and discuss your ideas with your tutor and the lecturer. No analysis will need to be conducted for this assessment. You just need to show you have thought about the question, the data you are using, and how you will examine it. Additionally, you are not locked in to this plan for your final research project. This provides an opportunity for you to think about and receive feedback on your research design before you complete your final assessment.

There are four options for the topics to examine for this assessment. Once you have selected your topic, you are expected to write and test your own theory answering the question, and examine the data using your chosen methods, providing you with flexibility in how you can approach the question.

The final assessment is a 2000-word research report. You must provide a (brief) literature review (10 pieces of literature only are required to be used; and this is not limited to academic papers, it can include government and media reports), outline your data and methodology and specify why you have chosen the methods used, and present your results.

For assessment purposes this item is considered your final exam. Failure to achieve at least a combined 40% on the plan and project will result in a fail grade for the unit.

All your analysis, including recoding of data, must be conducted in an R Markdown (RMD) file with your literature review and analysis.

You can (and are encouraged) to look for additional data sources and other information. Creativity and effort will be rewarded. Grades will be given for quality of analysis and presentation, and how well you use the methods and material covered in this class.

Questions

1. What predicts voting at the 2016 Australian election? Use the survey data provided, and any other relevant data you obtain, to establish a theory of vote choice and an explanatory model.

   Data provided: 2016 Australian Election Study survey data (folder contains .sav file, code book and questionnaire).

Suggested additional data: Census data, electoral returns, other surveys.

2. What factors explain support for gun control in the United States? Use the provided survey data, as well as other sources of information you can obtain, to establish a theory of support or opposition to gun control and an explanatory model.

   Data provided: The General Social Surveys, 1972-2016, survey data file.
   Additional data: You can look at other survey data available (Pew Research has an excellent collection, much of which can be easily accessed). Additionally, you could also look at relationship between attitudes and rates of gun crime other homicides, by state (or other geographical patterns). These data are available from a number of sources.

3. What are the predictors for better health outcomes at the county level in the United States? Use a combination of the data provided and data from other sources to establish a theory of ecological health outcomes and an explanatory model. Explanatory variables can be found from the US Census Bureau: https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml and also the Centers for Disease for Disease control https://www.cdc.gov/DataStatistics/

   Data provided: Data file of different health outcomes at the level of US countie.
   Suggested additional data: You may want to examine data from the US Census Bureau and Centers for Disease Control data.

4. What explains domestic violence rates in NSW local government areas? Use a combination of the data sources provided, to establish a theory of ecological crime rates and an explanatory model. **Note: these data can be difficult to work with.**

   Data provided: Data file of reported incidents of domestic violence by local government area, with matching census data.
   Suggested additional data: You may want to examine other census data, and perhaps surveys that cover domestic violence.