

STA490Y1Y: Statistical Consultation, Communication, and Collaboration
2016–17

Instructor: Prof. Alison Gibbs

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Office: SS 5016A

Office hours: Mondays 10:00–12:00
Thursdays 12:00–13:00 (priority to STA490 students)
Please make appointments for other times by e-mail.

Course
web page: Available through <https://portal.utoronto.ca>

Graduate student
mentors: Wei Deng, Tadeu Ferreira, Zhenhua Lin, Victor Veitch

Course content

The purpose of the course is to develop skills in the collaborative practice of statistics. This will be done through class discussion, readings, case studies, and a collaborative project with a student working on a research project in another discipline. Many course activities will focus on developing oral and written communication skills.

Project

Much of the course will be structured around the collaborative project. Two or three students will be assigned to one project and you will be guided in the work on the project by a graduate student mentor who is a senior PhD student in statistics. Discussion about your project with the classmate(s) assigned to the same project is encouraged, however you are expected to hand in independent work. Your graduate student mentor will be monitoring each student's contribution to the project.

Class meetings

Class meetings are typically on Thursdays 10:10–noon in SS 621. Attendance at all meetings is mandatory as there is no substitution for participating in the discussion that will take place. For most meetings, there will be assigned reading or work which must be done in preparation.

Project team meetings

Project team meetings with your graduate student mentor will take place on Tuesdays on the dates indicated on the attached schedule. You will meet either at 9:00 or 10:00, depending on your project assignment. Your collaborator is scheduled to be at the meetings on some of these dates. Rooms, times, and your graduate student mentor will be distributed in class before your first project team meeting.

Project teams

Note that you will be working with two other students on your project. Sometimes you might

share the work, sometimes you might each take on a different aspect of the project, sometimes you might work together, and sometimes you might duplicate each other's work. All written work is to be done individually and you will be evaluated on an individual basis.

Readings and references

Required readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Anytime you need a reference on a statistics topic (software or methodology) see what you can find on your own. Then ask your graduate student mentor or me.

Communication

Email is best if you are unable to come to campus because of illness or if it is necessary to make an appointment outside of office hours. I may contact the entire class by email, at your address that is on your student account. Please make sure you read the email that goes to that account.

Evaluation (dates are tentative, but unlikely to change)

	Weight	Date
Attendance, participation, and preparation for class meetings	10%	Thursdays
Attendance, participation, and preparation for project team meetings	10%	Tuesdays
First term data assignment		
Analysis (interim and final)	10%	various
Report	10%	December 1
BMJ presentations	5%	March 2, 9
Project		
Three project presentations to class	10%	various
Project log	5%	end of each month from Nov. on
Draft of final report for collaborator	5%	March 14
Draft technical summary	5%	
Results presentation to collaborator	5%	March 14
Final report for collaborator:		March 30
Statistical work	10%	
Writing	10%	
Final technical summary	5%	

No late assignments will be accepted without documentation of a valid reason.

Accessibility needs

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom, or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible:

accessibility.services@utoronto.ca or <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca>.

Academic integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the University of Toronto degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters available at <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca>.

Computing

Computing for your project can be done using software of your choice. This will be something you decide with your graduate student mentor.

For the first term data assignment we will use RStudio. You need to install R first, and then RStudio. R can be downloaded for free from <http://cran.r-project.org>. RStudio can be downloaded for free from <http://www.rstudio.com/products/rstudio/download/>.

Student research days

Your collaborator will be presenting his/her project at his or her department's Undergraduate Research Fair in late March or early April. Plan to drop by to offer support to your collaborator and see what other work is being done.

How to do well in the course

- Be prepared and on time for all classes and meetings.
- Ask good questions.
- Do all of the assigned work on time.
- Demonstrate that you are trying.
- Work on your project every week, even before you get the data.

Course Mantra

*It's OK not to know.
Expressing ignorance is encouraged.
It's not OK to not have a willingness to learn.*