

Economics 58H
Researching the Tools for Success in College

CONTACT INFORMATION

Office: 200A Gardner Hall
Email: jane_fruehwirth@unc.edu
Office Hours: Monday, 1:30-2:30pm by zoom
or by appointment (zoom or in-person)
Zoom office hour: <https://unc.zoom.us/j/91284538261>
Meeting ID: 912 8453 8261
Course website: <https://sakai.unc.edu/welcome/>.
Class times: TR 2-3:15pm, Gardner 106

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Samuel Barker (Graduate Research Consultant)

Tasks: Will administer the survey and share partially cleaned data
Weekly office hours TBD, beginning mid-October to assist with data analysis
Email: sbarker@unc.edu

Gabby Goodman (Undergraduate Learning Assistant)

Tasks: Will assist in in-class work sessions and host weekly help sessions
EconAid Center at time TBD and by appointment
Email: gabby01@live.unc.edu

COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The focus this semester will be the growing mental health crisis on college campuses and particularly the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Students will analyze new survey data collected from the Transitions study, which focuses on determinants (including stressors and supports) of mental health in college. The survey started with a sample of first-year students at UNC-Chapel Hill in 2019/20; students will analyze data from a follow-up survey of these students in Fall 2021. Students will identify a research question, synthesize existing evidence in the related literature and brainstorm potential solutions with classmates. Students will analyze the Transitions data and create their own evidence on the topic through graphs and figures.

Along with answering questions related to success that they may apply to their own college experiences and share with their peers, students will also learn the following skills:

- 1) Data-storytelling to effect policy change,
- 2) The danger of mistaking correlation for causation,
- 3) The rewards and challenges of doing research,
- 4) How to synthesize findings in the primary literature without becoming overwhelmed,
- 5) The power of economics to inform a range of questions.

Our discussions about causality will be grounded in economic theory and economic models will be taught as relevant to the research questions the class develops.

As part of the General Education curriculum, this course will enable students to:

- 1) Connect with a faculty member early in the educational process.
- 2) Learn intensively among a small cohort of students.
- 3) Analyze and communicate issues associated with a specific, advanced topic, covering a wide range of knowledge.
- 4) Produce knowledge through self-directed inquiry and active learning

This course meets the **Research and Discovery** objective of the IDEAs in action curriculum. Students immerse themselves in a research project and experience the reflection and revision involved in producing and disseminating original scholarship or creative works.

Questions for Students

1. How do I establish my point of view, take intellectual risks, and begin producing original scholarship or creative works?
2. How do I narrow my topic, critique current scholarship, and gather evidence in systematic and responsible ways?
3. How do I evaluate my findings and communicate my conclusions?

Learning Outcomes

1. Frame a topic, develop an original research question or creative goal, and establish a point of view, creative approach, or hypothesis.
2. Obtain a procedural understanding of how conclusions can be reached in a field and gather appropriate evidence.
3. Evaluate the quality of the arguments and/or evidence in support of the emerging product.
4. Communicate findings in a clear and compelling ways.
5. Critique and identify the limits of the conclusions of the project and generate ideas for future work.

Prerequisites

This class is targeted to students in their first year of college, and as such has no prerequisites.

READINGS

Wheelan, C. (2013). *Naked Statistics. Stripping the Dread from the Data*. W.W. Norton Company, Inc, New York, NY.

All other readings can be downloaded on-line or from Sakai.

COURSE COMPONENTS

Grading

Homework	15%
Quizzes	10%
Midterm	20%
Draft research report	10%
Final research report	30%
Leading research spotlight	5%
Group presentation	10%

Homework

Homework deadlines are set through the semester to work toward the goal of writing the report. This includes completing IRB training, annotated bibliography, proposal, draft figures/discussion, and peer review of draft research reports. These will be graded on Pass/Fail.

Quizzes

There will be 16 3-question multiple-choice quizzes associated with research articles we read for class. The lowest 4 grades will be dropped.

Leading research spotlight discussion

Students will work in groups of 2 to lead a research spotlight discussion on a scientific article related to their research question. Key parts of this will be preparing a 3-question multiple choice quiz. These must be sent to Gabby (gabby01@live.unc.edu) **24 hours in advance of the class session** where we will discuss the paper, and she will post the questions on PollEverywhere for the class. You will also come up with several discussion questions to lead the class through a deeper understanding of the article, its contributions and limitations. Research spotlights should be designed to last no more than 20 minutes.

Midterm

This will be an opportunity to synthesize skills we have introduced in class. The exam will focus on the statistical methods and the theoretical models (stress-process and human capital production) we discuss in class.

Research report

Students will work in teams of four to develop a research question, review literature, clean data, produce graphs and write a report. The report will include the following elements:

- (1) Introduction motivating question and situating in literature
- (2) Literature review
- (3) Data

Grading Scale	
At least 93%	A
At least 90% but less than 93%	A-
At least 87% but less than 90%	B+
At least 83% but less than 87%	B
At least 77% but less than 80%	B-
At least 73% but less than 77%	C+
At least 70% but less than 73%	C
At least 67% but less than 70%	C-
At least 63% but less than 67%	D+
At least 60% but less than 63%	D
Less than 60%	F

- (4) Figures/tables describing key findings (at least 3)
 - (5) Conclusion with implications for policy and limitations/future research
- The feedback and final grade will be based on the rubrics posted on the website.

The reports should be no more than 2500 words (approx. 10 pages), double-spaced, not including figures and references. A first draft of the report is due on 11/9. A final draft is due 12/7.

Presentation

Students will work in their groups to prepare a presentation based on their research findings to share with classmates. These will be approximately 20 minutes.

Class Participation

Attendance and participation are critical for your success in this class. This course is built around developing a research community where students can feel free to express ideas and learn from each other. Please communicate with me early about potential absences. Please be aware that you are bound by the Honor Code when making a request for a University approved absence. You will not receive an explicit grade for participation, but it will make a difference for your grade in borderline cases.

COURSE SOFTWARE

Sakai

Used for uploading assignments.

Trello

Will be used to manage group work, assignment deadlines, and class readings. Trello can be downloaded for free: <https://trello.com>.

Tableau

Used to analyze and clean data and produce graphs.

Downloading tableau: <https://unc-libraries-data.github.io/Tableau/>

Need name and email address to match what is available at UNC. Lorin Bruckner (UNC librarian) will visit class to teach us how to use Tableau.

Excel

Will be used for some initial statistical analysis prior to Tableau.

PollEverywhere

We will be using this for beginning of class quizzes/polls. Please register for a student account at <https://edtech.unc.edu/service/poll-everywhere/#instructor>

POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Submitting Assignments

Assignments should be submitted through Sakai and will generally be due by the beginning of class on the due date.

Late Work Policy

Late work that is submitted within a week of the assignment due date will be given half credit. An exception will only be made for University-approved absences (see <http://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/attendance-grading-examination/>), which must be documented in writing.

Computers and Cell Phones

Students are expected to bring laptops to class. They should only be used for instructor-designated activities. Please turn off all email and social media notification and silence iPhones during class in order to minimize distractions.

Community Standards and Mask Use

This semester, while we are in the midst of a global pandemic, all enrolled students are required to wear a mask covering your mouth and nose at all times in our classroom. This requirement is to protect our educational community — your classmates and me — as we learn together. If you choose not to wear a mask, or wear it improperly, I will ask you to leave immediately, and I will submit a report to the Office of Student Conduct. At that point you will be disenrolled from this course for the protection of our educational community. Students who have an authorized accommodation from Accessibility Resources and Service have an exception. For additional information, see Carolina Together.

Syllabus Changes

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to be honest and honorable in your fulfillment of course conduct, course assignments, and course exams. Adherence to the honor code is required (<http://www.catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/honor-code/>)

UNC's Attendance Policy

No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by [Accessibility Resources and Service](#) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC)

3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the [Office of the Dean of Students](#), [Gender Violence Service Coordinators](#), and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC).

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

Library Resources

Our Entrepreneurship and Business librarian, Nancy Lovas, nancy64@email.unc.edu, will guide us through library resources that will be useful for your research.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is in the Student and Academic Services Building and offers personalized writing consultations as well as a variety of other resources. This could be a wonderful resource to help with your writing assignments in this course (and any assignments in your other courses). You do not need a complete draft of your assignment to visit; they can help you at any stage! You can chat with someone in the writing center or set up an appointment on their website (<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/>).

University Testing Center

The College of Arts and Sciences provides a secure, proctored environment in which exams can be taken. The center works with instructors to proctor exams for their undergraduate students who are not registered with ARS and who do not need testing accommodations as provided by ARS. In other words, the Center provides a proctored testing environment for students who are unable to take an exam at the normally scheduled time (with pre-arrangement by your instructor). For more information, visit <http://testingcenter.web.unc.edu/>.

Counseling and Psychological Services

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

Accessibility Resources

UNC-Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations for students with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health struggles, chronic medical conditions, temporary disability, or pregnancy complications, all of which can impair student success. Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS website for contact and registration information: <https://ars.unc.edu/about-ars/contact-us>

Title IX Resources

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Please contact the Director of Title IX Compliance (Adrienne Allison – Adrienne.allison@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT DUE
8/19	Introductions	
8/24	College student mental health crisis	University Task Force memo Suicide prevention resource center (2004)
8/26	Effects of Covid-19 on college students Intro to Transitions Survey Data security	Fruehwirth, et al (2021)
8/31	Effective literature reviews (Lovas)	IRB human subjects training
9/2	How to read a scholarly article and create an annotated bibliography (Lovas)	
9/7	Stats spotlight: Descriptive statistics What makes a good research question?	NS chp 2
9/9	Critiquing literature Discuss literature with classmates	Annotated bibliography
9/14	Stats spotlight: deceptive statistics Discuss research questions Identify groups Research spotlight: TBD	NS chp 3 Upload graphic to google doc Propose research question
9/16	Stress process model Work in groups to refine question Research spotlight: TBD	Pearlin and Bierman (2013)
9/21	Intro to data visualization (Lorin Bruckner)	Watch data visualization video
9/23	Stats spotlight: Causation vs correlation Research spotlight: TBD	NS chp 4
9/28	Intro to Tableau (Lorin Bruckner)	Make sure Tableau is installed on computer
9/30	Stats spotlight: importance of data Research spotlight: TBD	NS chp 7
10/5	Health production Research spotlight: TBD	The Economics of Health and Health Care, Chp 5
10/7	Data cleaning Research spotlight: TBD	Proposal due
10/12	University Day/No class	
10/14	Stats spotlight: Inference Research spotlight: TBD	NS chp 9
10/19	Work session: data visualization Research spotlight: TBD	Outline of figures/rationale
10/21	Fall break—no class	
10/26	Stats spotlight: polling	NS chp 10

	Research spotlight: TBD	
10/28	Research spotlight: TBD Midterm review	Draft figures and associated discussion
11/2	Midterm	
11/4	Effective scientific writing Research spotlight: TBD	Reading TBD
11/9	Work session Research spotlight: TBD	Draft report
11/11	Peer review Research spotlight: TBD	read assigned report for peer review
11/16	Presentation prep work session Research spotlight: TBD	
11/18	Presentations	
11/23	Presentations	
11/25	Thanksgiving break—no class	
11/30	Wrap up	
12/7		Final report due