

ENV 210 - App Data Analy. for Environmental Science

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ENV 210 (Stats)

Course Stats

Instructor(s): Dr. Song S. Qian
Units: 3
Semester Offered: Fall

Description

<http://www.nicholas.duke.edu/programs/courses/environ210.html>

This is the primary statistics course in the Nicholas School.

Skills and Career Applications

The course typically reinforces the basic concepts of statistical analysis: t-tests, power, dummy variables, basic regression. Software practiced is primarily R, but STATA is also used. STATA is used by analysts and economists worldwide, and knowledge of R is equally if not more powerful due to it being a free software.

Registration Advice

(Insert comments here on how prospective students should approach registration for this class (hard to get into; sign up early; permission numbers; don't take if you already have heavy load; etc.)

- The class also requires a great deal of time for sufficient self-practice. Those unfamiliar with code-based statistical packages like R and STATA will do well to take allot a lot of time for homework assignments. The labs can be hard to follow, but unfortunately learning code just involves a lot of practice of trial and error.

Student Opinions

- As a former TA of the class, I have several recommendations for incoming students. The key to success in this course is to come prepared. Allow me to repeat - before the first class meeting ever takes place, you need to have a solid foundation of the subject matter. Spend the summer studying or reviewing the fundamentals of statistics. I promise you, it will pay off for the rest of your life. I do not recommend using the course's textbook for preparation. Instead, find a book that delves into the theory in a simple to understand language and without all the statistical notations and jargon which plague and complicate most textbooks.

For my summer prep, I used and [highly](#) recommend *Statistics* by David Freedman, Robert Pisani, and Roger Purves ([link](#)). I religiously read through every chapter and solved all the problem sets throughout the text. I had very little knowledge of statistics at the beginning of my summer prior to starting Duke. The following summer, well after ENV 210 ended, I was asked to TA for the course. I attribute the delta to the time I dedicated to this book. On top of the fact that the book is easy to read and understand, it is also a lot of fun. I use it as reference to this day.

Good luck and happy prepping!

- 210 is not the stereotypical stats course. In addition to practical techniques, the instructor strives to also engage students on the reasoning behind statistical theory, through readings of more "philosophical" journal articles. Reading these supplements can be helpful in following the concepts in class.
- Do not fear this class. I did absolutely horrible on the placement stats test that first years must take upon arriving to the NSOE, however i was able to do really well in the class. This is because I regularly met with the instructor to discuss what i did not understand and referred to the instructors book to reinforce what was discussed in class. The instructor is very helpful and welcoming, and if you have questions he is always willing to help you out.
- Lab time is a bit like show and tell where students follow along as the professor (perhaps different in TA-led labs) speeds through a script with packages that may or may not be loaded on the computer you are working on. It is helpful to watch the process unfold but for people who learn by doing, this lab may frustrate you. I recommend looking over the labs beforehand and if possible getting to lab a few minutes early to see if the extras are loaded onto your computer- if not, you'll be lost and only able to watch along through quick pointing and clicking for the lab.

I didn't enjoy the class. I would recommend trying to take it somewhere else. I feel like I left the course more confused than before the semester began.

The Instructor's Take...

(This space is exclusively for the instructor to broadly comment on his or her course, and respond to commonly received feedback, explain methods and approaches, and encourage student registration. Instructors: Please limit to 300 words, or link to a wiki page of your own creation to explain in detail.)

Documents and Links

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