

**Department of Psychology  
REPORT ON OBSERVATION OF TEACHING**

SEMESTER: Fall 2018 OBSERVATION DATE: October 1, 2018  
 INSTRUCTOR NAME: Matthew Vanaman  
 COURSE NUMBER: 3400 SECTION: M9AB TIME: 11AM-12:50PM  
 COURSE TITLE: Statistical Methods Lab  
 OBSERVER NAME: Dr. Elisabeth Brauner

**I. PRESENTATION OF SUBJECT**

|   | STRONGLY<br>DISAGREE     | DISAGREE                 | NEITHER<br>AGREE OR<br>DISAGREE     | AGREE                               | STRONGLY<br>AGREE        |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) The presentation was organized.            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) The presentation was clear.                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) The presentation had a good pace and flow. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

*Describe whether the class materials were presented in an organized and clear fashion and describe the pace and flow of the presentation.*

The statistics lab is mostly organized around students doing their homework and the instructor responding to questions. Therefore, this was not a typical lecture as in a lecture class. The instructor mostly did a good job organizing the content and presenting the information students needed to understand and complete the homework. There was some confusion around the homework, quizzes, and feedback to students that the instructor clarified. The examples and data used by the instructor seemed to differ from what the students had in front of them, which added some confusion and can easily be avoided. Without more background information, it appeared that there is a need for more coordination with the lecture instructor. With more experience, the instructor will be very effective in the classroom.

**II. KNOWLEDGE**

|   | POOR                     | FAIR                                | GOOD                     | VERY GOOD                | OUTSTANDING              |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Instructor's expertise on class content. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Instructor's breadth on class content.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Instructor's depth on class content.     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

*Describe whether the instructor was knowledgeable of the subject matter and provided explanations and or examples to improve students understanding of the subject matter.*

There were multiple instances when the instructor explained statistical concepts very well. The use of SPSS was also very effective. However, there were too many other instances when the instructor was not sure about the concepts, formulas, or how to explain them. In some cases, there were misconceptions (e.g., predicting the grade for exam 1 from exam 2 in a regression analysis). With more preparation, better coordination with the lecture, and more experience, I am positive that the instructor will improve and become more effective. Slides would help with remembering the correct formulas.

**III. RESPONSE OF STUDENTS**

|                                     | NEVER                    | SELDOM                   | SOMETIMES                | OFTEN                               | ALMOST ALWAYS                       |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Students' desire to participate. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| b) Students' independent thinking.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Students' interest in content.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

*Describe whether the students were interested and engaged in the class material.*

Students were very engaged and even discussed content with each other, which is unusual in a statistics classroom. They were very engaged and participated a lot. The class seemed to be not well-attended (16) although attendance is mandatory according to the syllabus; two students left very early right after their question on the homework was answered.

**IV. PERSONALITY OF INSTRUCTOR**

|  | POOR                     | FAIR                                | GOOD                                | VERY GOOD                           | OUTSTANDING              |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) instructor's attitude toward students.        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Instructor's professionalism.                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Instructor's projection and tone.             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Instructor's language clarity and expression. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |

*Describe whether the instructor was professional, positive, and respectful; has an open attitude towards students; was able to effectively communicate, ensuring that students were following along.*

The instructor was very professional, respectful, and attentive towards students, he used humor to ease students' anxiety, which was very effective. It was clear that the relationship was very positive and students felt they were in a safe learning environment where they could ask all kinds of questions.

**V. GENERAL COMMENTS**

With more teaching experience and more preparation, Matthew Vanaman will become a very successful instructor. But it is necessary to dedicate more time to coordinating with the lecture course and also to spend more time with the material to feel more secure in the concepts and ideas presented.

OBSERVER SIGNATURE

Dr. Elisabeth Brauner

OBSERVER NAME (PRINT)

INSTRUCTOR (OBSERVEE) SIGNATURE

Oct 4, 2018

DATE OF CONFERENCE

**NOTE:** Attach syllabus along with any supplementary materials used during this lecture. Also attach additional comments on a separate page.

SEMESTER: Fall 2018  
INSTRUCTOR NAME: Matthew Vanaman

OBSERVATION DATE: Oct 1, 2018

COURSE NUMBER: 3400                      SECTION: M9AB                      TIME: 11AM-12:50PM  
COURSE TITLE: Statistics Lab  
OBSERVER NAME: Dr. Elisabeth Brauner

### Post-observation conference

During the post-observation conference, we discussed different ways in which to improve the organization and presentation of class materials, how to avoid misunderstandings and confusion about the calculations, and how to generally improve the teaching experience. The instructor was insightful and expressed some new ideas about how to improve the course.

During the conference, it was also clarified that attendance was particularly low because of the Jewish Holidays.



Elisabeth Brauner



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Fall 2018

M9AB: 4607 James Hall | M: 11:00am – 12:50pm

M9CB: 4607 James Hall | M: 1:00pm – 2:50pm

Instructor: Matthew Vanaman

E-Mail: [mvanaman@gradcenter.cuny.edu](mailto:mvanaman@gradcenter.cuny.edu)

Office: 4606A James Hall

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:00pm – 4:00pm

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# PSYC 3400

## Labs M9AB & M9CB

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### Overview

This course is designed, in conjunction with the lecture, to help students approach issues in psychology in a scientific manner. By the end of this course, students will understand empirical research questions, as well as the theory and mathematical computation behind them. Lab will provide practical experience through problem solving with both “by-hand” calculations and statistical software with SPSS and Excel.

### Goals

By the end of this course, students will be able to...

- understand how scientific questions in psychology are posed and answered through statistical data analysis.
- compute statistical analyses to answer empirical questions.
- enter, organize, and analyze data using statistical software (i.e., IBM SPSS and Microsoft Excel).

### Requirements

Students are responsible for...

1. Submitting material on time, as late homeworks will not be accepted.
2. Regularly checking their blackboard. The lab instructor will often make announcements regarding course topics, homework distribution, and materials for extra assistance.
3. Attending lab courses in order to have access to IBM SPSS (note: SPSS can also be accessed on library computers throughout the campus). Many homework assignments will require use of SPSS.

### Evaluation

Your lab grade will be computed based on your homework assignments, which will make up 24% of your overall grade.

### Tentative Homework Schedule\*

\*schedule subject to change

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#### HW 1

Distributed 8/27; Due 10/7 by 5:00pm

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#### HW 2

Distributed 9/12; Due 9/21

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#### HW 3

Distributed 9/24; Due 10/5

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#### HW 4

Distributed 10/22; Due 11/2

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#### HW 5

Distributed 10/29; Due 11/9

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#### HW 6

Distributed 11/5; Due 11/16

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#### HW 7

Distributed 11/26; Due 12/7

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#### HW 8

Distributed 12/3; Due 12/14

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

| Week*  | Topic(s)  | Chapter(s) | Homework (Passed Out) |
|--------|---|------------|-----------------------|
| 8.27   | Introduction. Scientific thinking, notation, measurement. | 1, 2       | #1                    |
| 9.5*   | Distributions.  | 3          |                       |
| 9.12*  | Statistical graphics, descriptive statistics.             | 3, 4       | #2                    |
| 9.17*  | Standard scores, the normal curve, areas under the curve. | 5          |                       |
| 9.24   | Area under the curve, correlation.                        | 6          | #3                    |
| 10.1   | Correlation, linear regression.                           | 6, 7       |                       |
| 10.10* | Linear and multiple regression.                           | 7          |                       |
| 10.15  | Review for Exam 1.  |            |                       |

### EXAM 1: Wednesday October 17, on Chapters 1 – 7.

|        |  |          |    |
|--------|--|----------|----|
| 10.22  | Sampling, probability, binomial distribution.    | 8, 9, 10 | #4 |
| 10.29  | Null hypothesis testing, the sign test, power.   | 10, 11   | #5 |
| 11.5   | Sampling distributions, the z test, t tests.     | 12, 13   | #6 |
| 11.12  | The three kinds of t tests, extra t test topics. | 13, 14   |    |
| 11.19* | Review for Exam 2.                               |          |    |

### EXAM 2: Wednesday November 21, on Chapters 8 – 14.

|       |  |        |    |
|-------|--|--------|----|
| 11.26 | One-way ANOVA, multiple comparisons.               | 15     | #7 |
| 12.3  | Two-way ANOVA.                                     | 16     | #8 |
| 12.10 | Non-parametric tests, when to use different tests. | 17, 18 |    |

### FINAL EXAM: Monday December 17, 8:00am – 16:00am, 148 Ingersoll Hall Extension.

Final exam is cumulative but emphasizes Chapters 15 – 18.

\*Exceptions to our regular weekly schedule: Monday September 3: COLLEGE CLOSED (Labor Day), Wednesday September 5: CONVERSION DAY to Monday schedule, Monday September 10: NO CLASSES, Wednesday September 19: NO CLASSES, Monday October 8: COLLEGE CLOSED (Columbus Day), Friday November 23: COLLEGE CLOSED (Thanksgiving Recess).

**Extra Help:** The Learning Center is located in 1300 Boylan Hall (right when you walk in to Boylan Hall's main entrance) offers students free tutoring, supplemental instruction and technological support for courses across the curriculum. Peer tutors work with students on general course information. Help is offered on a walk-in basis.

**Other Information:** In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations, students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disability Services, Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell at (718) 951-5538. If you have already registered with the Center for Student Disability Services, please provide your professor with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with him/her. Note also information about the state law regarding non-attendance because of religious beliefs (see p. 72 in the Undergraduate Bulletin).

**Official Brooklyn College Statement on Cheating and Plagiarism:** The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for policy implementation can be found at [www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies](http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies). If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation.

**Please see the main course syllabus (available on Blackboard) for additional information.**

Matthew Vanaman  
Psych 3400  
11:00am Lab  
James Hall, Rm. 4607

For Psych 3400 Lab, October 1, 11:00am:

The role of the lab section is to reinforce students' understanding of the material by reviewing conceptual content covered in the lecture and to clarify how to answer (or more importantly, how to *think about*) the questions on the homeworks. I usually begin the course with an informal pop quiz of sorts concerning the meaning of an independent (predictor) and dependent (outcome) variable and the levels of measurement (definitions and examples of categorical, ordinal, interval, and ratio data, and the key differences among them). I have found in previous experience (TA and otherwise) that students and even fellow scientists (!) have a hard time distinguishing among these concepts which are of the highest-most importance for choosing the appropriate statistical test.

Following this, I field questions specifically about conceptual content covered in the lecture that is still not clear to them. At some point, the questions start transitioning to the homework. Students will have questions about what is being asked by a certain homework question, or how to go about answering the question. I try to identify what exactly about the question is confusing them, then work through a similar example to illustrate the concept underlying the question. Occasionally, I will review SPSS steps for getting the relevant statistics.

I answer all questions in front of the class so that everyone can hear the explanation, but they are allowed to work quietly on their own or with each other if they prefer to go at their own pace. Sometimes, during an example problem, students will figure out the answer themselves and explain why the answer is what it is the other students - this is the outcome I'm striving for during these exercises. Sometimes, students continue asking questions through to the end of the lab hours; other times, they seem to run out of questions and will work quietly on their own, raising their hand when they get stuck.

Overall, I approach the class by letting the students identify for themselves what their needs are. I try to help them meet those needs in a way that forces them to think clearly and precisely about the material while encouraging others with the same question (or who might just be interested) to participate in the discussion.

