

Participation and the Participation Grade

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This course has a participation element to the final grade, but we will assess this area a bit differently than you might be used to. The idea of the participation grade is to have you generate a plan of how you are going to engage in the course. There are three major pieces to this process:

- 1) You will document this plan in a short assignment you will hand in early in the semester.
- 2) Midway through the course you will check in with yourself, writing a self-assessment on how you are meeting your goals, and possibly changing them depending on how things are working out.
- 3) Finally, at the end of the semester you will do a final self-assessment. We will then use this self-assessment, along with completion of a few other tasks (e.g., posting an intro on Slack, answering some survey questions, some peer reviews), to determine your participation grade.

There are many ways of engaging with a course. My primary concern is that you approach the course with intentionality. We will read through your stated intentions to see if we, the teaching team, can potentially provide additional structures to serve you.

The Initial Assignment

A one-page document that delineates your primary goals for the course, your plan for participation, and a few bits of reflection as to why you made the choices you did. This document has three parts, as described below.

Part 1: The Goals

Write a short, bulleted list of your primary goals for the course. E.g., a few sample goals:

- 1) Move my dissertation research forward by conducting a preliminary analysis of my data.
- 2) Learn how to scrape data so I can use it for a personal project.
- 3) Get an A on an applied statistical course to increase my chances of getting into a PhD program.
- 4) Build lasting professional relationships with other students via the group work.

NOTE: You are more than welcome to take this class SAT/UNSAT. This gives you the flexibility to engage with the course in a manner of your choosing (e.g., if you have many competing time commitments). This course is challenging and for most people requires a major time investment to fully delve into the materials.

Part 2: The Modality

Write down whether you are taking the course in “in person” vs “virtual.” For in person, you will be required to go to in-person section.

Part 3: The Plan

Write a paragraph or bulleted list of what you plan to do in terms of engagement with the course, and how that will move you towards your goals. As part of this be sure to address the following

- 1) Specify what share of live lectures you will attend, and explain why not if you do not plan on attending the vast majority.
- 2) As above, for sections.

- 3) How are you going to ensure you are a good teammate for your group work? What does being an active team mate look like for you?
- 4) Is there some type of participation that you believe will be particularly useful for you?
- 5) Is there some type that is *not* so useful?
- 6) What evidence will demonstrate you have achieved your goals for participation?

We do expect some types of participation, unless you have a compelling reason otherwise. These are:

- 1) We expect you to be an engaged and supportive teammate for the group work.
- 2) We expect you to come to live lectures, unless there is a reason not to.
- 3) We expect you to at least try out office hours, at least once, in the semester.

Some areas of participation you might consider:

In Class Stuff

- asking questions in live sessions (quiet questions or out loud),
- attending lectures,
- attending sections,
- doing the pre-class work so you arrive prepared
- doing end of class check-ins

Out Of Class Stuff

- going to office hours
- talking with other students about the material
- read the reading
- support other students and/or help other students with their work
- offer feedback to the teaching team on improving the course
- go to extra meetings or discussions as they arise
- something else

Sample Plan

The following sample plan can serve as a template to get you started. You should be no means feel bound by its parameters. To help illustrate the range of this, also see a few possibly modifications that follow the sample plan.

Goals:

- 1) *Move my dissertation research forward by conducting a preliminary analysis of my data.*
- 2) *Get more comfortable with using R*

Modality:

I am in-person. I will attend sections and do group work in person.

Plan:

I plan on a fairly standard means of engagement. I will attend all lectures, and after the lectures do the reading (once I get a sense of what they are about). I will go to sections in person, and bring my computer so I can try out exercises as we work through things. I plan on scheduling a regular meeting time with my group for my group work. We will work on the assignments and also talk through the individual assignments before writing them up. I tend to not talk much in class, so my goal is push myself to ask a question in at least half the classes, and once in each

section. I plan on supporting my study group mainly, but will check Slack to see what is happening there sometimes.

A person with a lecture conflict might modify the above as follows:

I cannot make lectures due to a course conflict. I will watch the recorded lecture, writing down any questions I have, and then talk with my group mates about those questions when we next meet.

A person who doesn't like the live online format might modify as follows:

I really prefer to watch classes, since I have a hard time processing in real time. I will try attending the lectures, but may instead watch the recorded lectures so I can pause and think things through as needed. To participate more, I will post questions on Slack, and try to answer other people's questions on Slack. I will also go to any in-person extra meetings to try and get to know my classmates a bit better, since I will be missing break-out rooms.

Many other plans are possible here! See the following pages for two real-life examples from a different course (S043, the multilevel modeling course).

A final note on assessment

You don't have to think about this now, but there is a robust literature that women and minorities can under-evaluate their performance in a self-assessment. There is also literature that women can be penalized when they self promote, which makes for a pernicious catch-22. First, naming this and reflecting on this will hopefully reduce its impact. We also hope that generating a specific plan that one can compare oneself to will alleviate these sorts of disparities. The teaching team will make themselves available to talk through any self assessment (e.g., if you are unsure, we can provide a third party perspective). And finally, the teaching team will review all student assessments and potentially adjust them based on what we know about you and your participation.

Demo Plan 1

The Goals

1. Continue building my statistical knowledge and R toolbox, learning how to communicate such knowledge and analysis methods and results to a general and academic audience, as well as further being able to implement these concepts in R.
2. Learn to better “see” nested and clustered data, and ask questions that I can answer using multilevel modelling
3. Get a taste of what applied quantitative research could look like, as I think about (quite seriously this time around!) applying for PHD programs.

The Plan

1. I will attend the Tuesday and Thursday sessions live. Helps keep me accountable and engaged, allowing myself to ask questions, reflect on some things, and then use class recordings as an added resource
2. I will also attend sections live, for reasons listed above.
3. I am aiming to bring at least one question in mind to each class (no matter how big or how small), to keep me thinking intentionally about the material at a consistent rate. I may not ask the question in class since 1) it may be answered during the session, 2) I don't want to take up too much space all the time, and 3) I could ask it in the post-class survey, but having them at the ready for my own tracking and learning will be helpful. I will do this by adding it to my list of pre-class to-do's -- in addition to what is listed on each Canvas page – and writing in my note-taking app for documentation and archival purposes.
4. I will aim to do at least half of the pre-class to-dos (videos, readings, etc.) before the actual day of class! This will help me not rush things before class time and give me time and space to reflect and absorb. I am sure things will get busy over the course of the semester and my time management skills will be challenged, which is why I am hoping for half (at least either the Tuesday or Thursday class).

Demo Plan 2

Goals

Get comfortable using R (I have never used R before) Understand how to analyze clustered data
Develop skills around applying my understanding of clustered data to real datasets and research questions Refresh my knowledge on econometrics Work hard, show up prepared, have a growth mindset, do well, and get some confidence in my quantitative analysis skills
Learn from my peers about their research, careers, projects, and goals.

Plan

Attend around 90 percent of live lectures. I might need to drop off at 1 pm EST a few times, and will make sure to watch the recording after. If the link is in the slides, I will make sure to fill out the end of class check in.

Attend all live sections and actively engage with them. The first two were super helpful, and I am more inclined to ask questions and be conversational in a small, in person, group. Considering one of my main goals is to learn R and apply what we are learning about multilevel modeling to real data, I think the sections are going to be really important and fun!

I prefer not to ask or answer questions in front of the large group in the live sessions because, historically, I spend so long trying to formulate my exact question and making sure I don't sound foolish that I lose track of what is going on. Thus far, the questions I have had have either been asked by my other, braver, peers or I have asked members of the teaching team. Pushing myself to ask questions in front of the larger group for the sake of asking questions when it doesn't necessarily improve my learning doesn't seem productive, but I hope to speak to the larger group at least three times before the midpoint reflection.

For me, the most important part is going to be active listening, engagement, and preparation. My intention is to come prepared, avoid multi-tasking, and really zone in on the content. I want to learn for understanding and I hope that translates to getting a good mark for the course. However, I was obsessed with grades in undergrad and I don't think that always served my learning, so I want to put the emphasis on learning for understanding not learning for a grade. I want to help and be helped by other students on slack and by meet ups where we talk through questions and assignments. I hope to have answered and asked one question to my peers for every assignment.

I want to have a growth mindset with this course. I get nervous that I am not clever enough to do well in this course, and I want to adapt the mindset that says "it is okay if I can't do something right away, it just means I have not learned it yet". Andrew Ho emphasizes this in S061 and I think it will serve me well in this class too!