Time & Place  Mondays 3:30–4:20 pm, 143 Schaeffer Hall
Prerequisite  None
Required Text  None
Class web page  Some materials, and grades, will be posted on ICON: [icon.uiowa.edu](http://icon.uiowa.edu)
Instructor  Russell Lenth — 271 Schaeffer Hall — 335-0814 — russell-lenth@stat.uiowa.edu
Office Hours  Mon & Wed 11:30–12:30 am, Thu 2:00–3:00 pm; and by appointment
Statistics office  Chair: Professor Dale Zimmerman — 241 Schaeffer Hall — 335-0712

Course Description
Numbers may be used in many different ways: to provide objective information, to guide decision-making, to make an argument, to dramatize a point. We live in a world where data come to us from all directions, more each day.

- How do we decide which numbers to believe?
- Which ones do we use in conversation with others?
- Do people just make-up data?
- If so, how often; and how can we detect false data?
- If we have ten times as much data, do we have ten times as much information?

These questions, and many others like them, will be explored in an open-ended way, using assigned readings and data sources identified by students as part of their weekly assignments. The goal is to develop statistical-thinking skills (but not to learn statistical methods). Our goal is that, through experience, you learn what might be considered reliable information, and what might go wrong in collecting and reporting data.

Course work
Class time will be devoted mostly to discussions of reading assignments, as well as news articles, web sites, overheard conversations, etc. that students will gather. Outside-of-class work will involve finding and recording such data-laden gems, and writing brief critiques of such materials. These will be submitted and refined via a Wiki site, leading to a collaboratively authored encyclopedia of data-related articles. Accordingly, there will be an assignment every week—to observe or do something, to locate and read a particular article or book, etc.—and to prepare to discuss that experience in the next week’s class. And in some cases, to write about it. At mid-semester or so, I want each student to identify a different data-related book to read and review. Your written review and the in-class discussion you lead will be a major part of your grade.

Another goal of first-year seminars is more general—get acquainted with University life and learn to survive (and thrive) in this setting. As is seen fit and agreed on, we can also discuss such matters during classes.

Grading
Half of your grade will be based on participation; this includes attendance (roll will be taken at the beginning of each class) and active engagement in class discussions. The other half will be based on your written work.

Since this course is about data, it seems like we should as a class try to develop what are good ways of scoring these things. Thus, some of the class discussion will involve developing rubrics for determining participation and writing grades.

Politics
We all have political views, and some of the material we will be reading will be politically related. Please try very hard to keep the focus of your in-class comments to how data are used (or misused), and away from advocating for a particular political view. It is quite possible that an article will make points that you are very sympathetic to, but that misuse data and statistics terribly; and others where the data reporting is sensible, but the views expressed are repugnant to you. Being able to sort through things in that way is exactly what this seminar is about.
College Policies

The following are standard statements of information and policy common to most courses in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. While they are standard, they are also important; please read them carefully.

Administrative Home of the Course

The administrative home of this course is the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, which governs academic matters relating to the course such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, issues concerning academic fraud or academic probation, and how credits are applied for various graduation requirements. Different colleges might have different policies. If you have questions about these or other CLAS policies, visit your academic advisor or 120 Schaeffer Hall and speak with the staff. The CLAS Academic Handbook also contains important CLAS academic policies: www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/index.shtml

Academic Fraud

Plagiarism and any other activities that result in a student presenting work that is not his or her own are academic fraud. Academic fraud is reported to the departmental DEO and then to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Services in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences who deals with academic fraud according to these guidelines: www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint

Students have the right to make suggestions or complaints and should first visit with the instructor, then with the course supervisor if appropriate, and next with the departmental DEO. All complaints must be made within six months of the incident. www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml#5

Accommodations for Disabilities

A student seeking academic accommodations first must register with Student Disability Services and then meet with an SDS counselor who determines eligibility for services. A student approved for accommodations should meet privately with the course instructor to arrange particular accommodations. www.uiowa.edu/~sds/

Understanding Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Visit www.sexualharassment.uiowa.edu/ for definitions, assistance, and the full policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather

The University of Iowa Operations Manual section 16.14 outlines appropriate responses to a tornado (i) or to a similar crisis. If a tornado or other severe weather is indicated by the UI outdoor warning system, members of the class should seek shelter in rooms and corridors in the innermost part of a building at the lowest level, staying clear of windows, corridors with windows, or large free-standing expanses such as auditoriums and cafeterias. The class will resume, if possible, after the UI outdoor warning system announces that the severe weather threat has ended.

Student Classroom Behavior

The ability to learn is lessened when students engage in inappropriate classroom behavior, distracting others; such behaviors are a violation of the Code of Student Life. When disruptive activity occurs, a University instructor has the authority to determine classroom seating patterns and to request that a student exit the classroom, laboratory, or other area used for instruction immediately for the remainder of the period. One-day suspensions are reported to appropriate departmental, collegiate, and Student Services personnel (Office of the Vice President for Student Services and Dean of Students).

Missed Exam Policy

University policy requires that students be permitted to make up examinations missed because of illness, mandatory religious obligations, certain University activities, or unavoidable circumstances. Excused absence forms are required and are available on the Registrar web site. www.registrar.uiowa.edu/forms/absence.pdf

Final Examinations

An undergraduate student who has two final examinations scheduled for the same period or more than three examinations scheduled for the same day may file a request for a change of schedule before the published deadline at the Registrar’s Service Center, 17 Calvin Hall, 8-4 M-F, (384-4300).