
[STAT 201] INTRODUCTION TO STATISTICS AND DATA SCIENCE
FALL 2025

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| PROFESSOR: | Becky Tang (she/her) | TIME: | MWR 8:15-9:30AM |
| OFFICE: | Warner 214 | ROOM: | MW: MNR 311; R: Warner 105 |
| E-MAIL: | btang@middlebury.edu | OFFICE HOURS: | |
| PREREQS: | MATH 121 (or equiv.) | | Common room by Warner 214 M 2-3, F 11-12 |

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to statistical methods and the examination of data sets for students with a background in calculus. Topics include descriptive statistics, elementary distributions for data, hypothesis tests, confidence intervals, and regression. Students develop skills in data cleaning, wrangling, visualization, and model fitting using the Statistical Software R. Emphasis will be placed on reproducibility.


Note: this course is going to be a whirlwind! You will have to work hard, but you will learn so much!


KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

- ☐ Learn the basics of descriptive statistics, statistical theory, and common statistical inferential methods.
- ☐ Develop intuition for and implement appropriate statistical method(s) to answer a particular research question.
- ☐ Learn to explore, visualize, and analyze data in a reproducible and shareable manner.
- ☐ Gain experience in data wrangling, exploratory data analysis, predictive modeling, and data visualization.
- ☐ Practice effectively communicating statistical results through written assignments and oral presentations.
- ☐ Develop working proficiency in coding in R and the tidyverse syntax to create plots, summarise data, and perform basic statistical inference.

TEXTBOOKS AND COURSE MATERIALS

Note: there is nothing that you need to purchase to participate in this class. All materials are used in the class are free and open-source.

 **Course website:** Most of our course content and schedule will be housed on the course website: <https://midd-stat201a-fall25.github.io/>. Please bookmark this page for easy navigation.

 **TEXTBOOK:** We will mostly refer to *Intro to Modern Statistics* by Mine Cetinkaya-Rundel and Johanna Hardin and OpenIntro. There are several ways to access this book:

- View online here: <https://openintro-ims.netlify.app/>
- Download a PDF here: <https://leanpub.com/imstat>. If you want to skip the optional contribution, set the price to \$0.
- Purchase a hard-copy here: <https://www.amazon.com/Introduction-Modern-Statistics-Minor-C3%87etinkaya-Rundel/dp/1943450145/>

 **TEXTBOOK:** We will occasionally refer to *Modern Dive* by Chester Ismay and Albert Y. Kim. There are several ways to access this book:

- View online here: <https://moderndive.com/index.html>
- Purchase a hard-copy here: <https://www.amazon.com/Statistical-Inference-via-Data-Science/dp/0367409828/>








COURSE STRUCTURE

A typical class day involves the following:

1. Class session: our 75-minute meetings will typically consist of lecture interspersed with partnered discussion and live coding. Depending on the day, there will be time to begin working on coding practice problems (described below).
2. Homework problems: after every class, I will release a few problems that will be assigned to the weekly problem set. Depending on the topic, the homework problems may require the use of R.

A prepared student will attend the 75-minute class, and spend roughly one-two hours per day of class on work outside the classroom (doing homework and practice problems, attending office hours, studying, etc.). As this course meets three days a week, this represents a minimum 7-10 hour weekly commitment.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

-  **You are expected to physically show up to class and actively participate**, conditional on classes being in-person. You are an integral part of the class community! Exceptions include previously-communicated illness or planned absence.
-  **Please arrive on time.** I expect everyone, myself included, to arrive on time and dedicate full attention during the class. In turn, I will do my best to always end class at the designated time.
-  **Laptops.** The use of laptops will often be necessary. Plan to bring a laptop everyday and ensure that your laptop has sufficient battery for the duration of the class.
-  **Cell phones should be turned to silent.** I don't mind cell phones in class, but please silence them so as to not disrupt the class.
-  **Please ask questions!**
-  **I encourage discussion amongst yourselves**, especially for clarification or help! However, please be mindful of volume so that the conversations will not be disruptive to the class.
-  I expect all members of the class to make participation a harassment-free experience for everyone, regardless of race, creed, color, place of birth, ancestry, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, service in the armed forces of the United States, positive HIV-related blood test results, genetic information, or against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability and/or any other status or characteristic as defined and to the extent protected by applicable law. We will not tolerate the use of violence against any individual.

RESOURCES

- ❑ **Office hours.** This time is meant for you! Please come by to ask questions, chat with me, or work on homework. You should never worry about disturbing me during this time.
- ❑ **TA hours.** TAs will be available in the Q-Center in MBH 202 to support you on your assignments or chat about their experiences in the course. The days and times are Mondays, Thursdays, and Sundays from 7-9pm.
- ❑ **One-on-one meetings.** If you would like to meet with me one-on-one, please send me an e-mail or approach me after class so we can schedule a time.
- ❑ **Your peers.** Unless otherwise noted, I encourage students to work together and discuss material! However, unless the assignment explicitly states that it is to be completed as group work, the submitted material must be your own.

TIPS ON HOW TO SUCCEED

- Come to every class and attend office hours.
- Attempt some problems individually before working with others.
- Do not try to find answers on the internet or ChatGPT. Struggling through problems is how you learn!

COLLEGE POLICIES AND RESOURCES

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As an academic community devoted to the life of the mind, Middlebury requires every student to reflect complete intellectual honesty in the preparation and submission of all academic work. Details of our Academic Honesty, Honor Code, and Related Disciplinary Policies are available in Middlebury's handbook.

Using AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Bard) is highly discouraged in this class. You should not use them to assist in any part of your homework or other assignments. When you have questions, please attend TA hours or my office hours. This is particularly important as you learn how to program in R. Using AI tools will only impede your ability to independently produce code, an ability that will be assessed in the first midterm.

The use of AI tools for midterm examinations and to create any content for the Final Project or the Statistics or Data Science Experience will be treated as a violation of Middlebury's Honor Code.

HONOR CODE PLEDGE

The Honor Code pledge reads as follows: "I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment." It is the responsibility of the student to write out in full, adhere to, and sign the Honor Code pledge on all examinations, research papers, and laboratory reports. Faculty members reserve the right to require the signed Honor Code pledge on other kinds of academic work.

DISABILITY ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATION

Students who have Letters of Accommodation in this class are encouraged to contact me as early in the semester as possible to ensure that such accommodations are

implemented in a timely fashion. For those without Letters of Accommodation, assistance is available to eligible students through the Disability Resource Center (DRC). <https://www.middlebury.edu/office/disability-resource-center>. The DRC provides support for students with disabilities and facilitates the accommodations process by helping students understand the resources and options available and by helping faculty understand how to increase access and full participation in courses. DRC services are free to all students. Please contact ADA Coordinators Jodi Litchfield and Peter Ploegman of the DRC at ada@middlebury.edu for more information. All discussions will remain confidential.

CENTER FOR TEACHING, LEARNING, AND RESEARCH (CTLR)

The CTLR provides academic support for students in many specific content areas and in writing across the curriculum through both professional and peer tutors. The Center is also the place where students can find assistance in time management and study skills. These services are free to all students. go.middlebury.edu/connect

TYPES OF ASSIGNMENTS

- * **Coding practice problems.** Assigned roughly 1-2 times per week (mostly during first 75% of the semester) and to be turned in individually on Gradescope. These *brief* assignments are intended to give you an opportunity to practice coding in R and receive feedback in a timely manner. I will review your solutions prior to the following class period. These assignments are graded on good-faith effort so you can receive feedback quickly. **Coding practice problems are due to Gradescope by midnight on the day they are assigned. For example, your solutions to coding practice problem assigned during class on Monday 9/08 would be due by 11:59pm on that same Monday 9/08.** While this seems like a quick turnaround, I will always leave time to begin and oftentimes complete the coding practice during class.
 - No extensions on coding practice problems will be given, but one coding assignment may be missed without penalty.
- * **Problem sets.** Assigned weekly and turned in individually unless otherwise specified (though you will be working with your peers on some problems). In the problem sets, you will apply what you have learned during lecture to dive deeper into the material and explore more interesting or nuanced problems. Most weeks, the problem sets will require R. **Problems will be assigned after every class, but each week's problem set is due to Gradescope the following Monday at 11:59pm.**
 - For some assignments, you will be asked to submit the R portion of the problem set separate from the non-coding portion of the problem set. This will be clearly denoted on the problem set. Please be sure to submit both files to their corresponding assignments on Gradescope.
- * **Midterm exams.** Two midterm exams are designed as an opportunity to assess the knowledge you've learned. More details about each midterm will be announced at least 1.5 weeks prior to the midterm. The *tentative* dates for the midterms are as follows. These dates will be finalized at least two weeks in advance of each assessment.
 - **Midterm 1: Wednesday 10/08 in class + oral component.** If you observe Sukkot, please let me know as soon as possible so we can arrange proper

accommodations!

- **Midterm 2: Thursday 11/20 in class.** Do not plan to leave for Thanksgiving break before!

Except in the cases of extreme illness or family emergency, students must take the midterms on the scheduled date and time.

- * **Final project.** A final project presents the opportunity to demonstrate your learning from the entire semester as well as practice exploring a new topic on your own. You will be asked to 1) write a brief report about a topic and 2) present your findings to the rest of the class. More details will be given after the first midterm. The final project is group-optional. Assignments associated with the Final project will be submitted via Canvas, not Gradescope. **Presentations will take place on the college-assigned final exam date for this course, 12/11.**
- * **Statistics or Data Science Experience.** The world of statistics and data science is enormous, and we will only scrape the surface in this course! The goal of this Experience assignment is to help you engage with the statistics and data science communities outside of the classroom. This assignment consists of two parts:
 1. Have a Statistics or Data Science Experience outside of the classroom.
 2. Write a reflection on your experience.

The course website will provide examples and opportunities for #1, along with instructions for #2. The assignment should be completed individually, though you will see that some Experiences may be attended in groups. You may submit this assignment anytime between now and the deadline. This assignment is due on the **Monday of the final week of classes, 12/01** to Canvas.

- * **Participation.** All classes involve group discussion which are intended to help you build your statistical intuition and practice conveying statistical results to an audience. Because of the collaborative nature of this course, it is essential that you strive to attend class every day. Frequent absences, as well as non-constructive in-class participation, will be reflected in your final course grade. If you are unable to attend class for any reason, please notify me *before* the start of class. Typically, you may miss up to two classes without penalty. However, prolonged or recurring illness, as well as other emergencies, may require individual adjustment, in which case you should contact me to make appropriate arrangements.

GRADING

- * Late work on problem sets/weekly assignments will always be considered within one week of the original due date. Unless otherwise stated, the late policy is as follows: for every 24-hour period the assignment is late, 10% from the maximum possible grade will be deducted. For example, if submit an assignments 18 hours after the original due date and it would have originally earned a 90%, it will now earn an 80%.
- * I will do my best to return assignments within one week of submission.
- * Regrade requests: I do allow regrade requests, which must be submitted to be in-person within one week of when the assignment is returned. Keep in mind that regrade requests do not guarantee points back.
- * **You must take both midterms and present the project in order to pass the course.**
- * Letter grades will be assigned based on the following course percentages, with the upper 3% and lower 3% of each category corresponding to + and -, respectively:

| Component | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Coding practice problems | 4% |
| Problem sets | 15% |
| Midterm 1 | 20% |
| Midterm 2 | 30% |
| Final Project | 25% |
| Stats/Data Science experience | 3% |
| Participation | 3% |

- A: 90-100%
- B: 80-89%
- C: 70-79%
- D: 60-69%
- F: <60%

These percentages reflect lower bound guarantees. For example, if you earn a 90% in the course, you are guaranteed an A-. Grades will typically not be rounded up in the case of decimal points, although I can adjust upwards if I have reason based on my assessment of student learning.

TENTATIVE COURSE CONTENT

(Last updated: 09/01/25)

NOTE: The following dates and content may be modified due to the requirements of the class may be moved backward or forward depending on class progress and my conference travel. **Midterm dates are tentative.**

| Week | Date | Topic |
|------|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | 9/08 | M - Welcome! Course logistics and introduction W - Sampling schemes and study design R - Intro to R and RStudio |
| 2 | 9/15 | M - Numerical data - Problem Set 01 due W - Numerical data (cont.) R - Visualizations with ggplot |
| 3 | 9/22 | M - Categorical data - Problem Set 02 due W - Data wrangling R - Data wrangling (cont.) |
| 4 | 9/29 | M - Joining data - Problem Set 03 due W - Pivoting data R - Prettier tables, practice sampling schemes |
| 5 | 10/06 | M - Baby probability + Variability of statistic - Problem Set 04 due W - Midterm 1 R - Data ethics |
| 6 | 10/13 | M - Introduction to bootstrap W - Confidence intervals (CIs) via bootstrap R - Introduction to hypothesis tests (HTs) + project groups |
| 7 | 10/20 | M - HTs with randomization - Problem Set 05 due W - HTs with randomization (cont.) R - Normal distribution + Introduce project |
| 8 | 10/27 | M - CLT + CIs via mathematical models - Problem Set 06 due W - CIs via mathematical models (cont.) R - Project work day |

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| | | F - Last day to drop classes |
| 9 | 11/03 | M - HTs via mathematical models - Project proposals due W - HTs via mathematical models (cont.) R - Chi squared |
| 10 | 11/10 | M - Introduction to simple linear regression (SLR) - Problem set 07 due W - SLR (cont.) R - Inference in SLR |
| 11 | 11/17 | M - Project work day - Problem set 08 due (shorter assignment) W - MLR R - Midterm 2 |
| | | Thanksgiving Break |
| 12 | 12/01 | M - MLR (cont.) + CRFs - Stats or Data Science Experience due at 11:59pm W - Project work day R - Project work day |
| | 12/11 | Final project presentations |