

Teaching Innovations
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Student Contact:

- Students are allowed (even encouraged) to call me at home, anytime between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m., on any day, but not during the 24 hours before an exam or assignment is due.
- Students are required to provide a phone number, and receive a call from me if they miss several consecutive classes or are behind on several assignments.
- Students are required to provide email addresses, which I use to send emails weekly, or so.
- Emailed inquiries are responded to within hours (sometimes within minutes), around the clock, all week long, through any breaks or holidays, and years beyond the semester.

Online Components:

- All courses have an online component, including use of the web, email, and online quizzes.
- Web pages for all courses include a complete schedule with links to all handouts, assignments, and lecture outlines, all of which are offered at the beginning and throughout the semester.
- Lecture outlines and notes are provided in both Microsoft PowerPoint and Adobe PDF format, for comfort and convenience.
- All grades are posted online, using student-selected “codenames”, and including presentation of means, medians, standard deviations, and overall accumulated grades throughout the term.

Grading Strategies:

- Grades are standardized using a composite formula that takes into account means, medians, standard deviations, and ranges. This formula balances competing anticipations for grade distributions that are roughly bell-shaped but that reflect actual variation in performance, while providing students a fair, objective, and transparent means of assessing their work. In statistics courses, grades themselves become a teaching tool.
- Extra credit opportunities are given for applying course material to everyday life. For example, statistics students may earn an extra point on their final grade for finding and reporting a misuse of statistics in a newspaper or magazine.
- Like many faculty, I penalize late work -5% (a half letter grade) for each class day that work is late. But I also reward early work +2% for each class day that work is submitted early.

Paperwork Distinctions:

- All syllabi are a single page, covering only material pertinent to the particular course: purpose, objectives, requirements, texts, and related comments. A one-page schedule is available as a web page, typically printed and distributed with the one-page syllabus.
- The website includes a separate document for generalized matters – such as policies about attendance, tardiness, and late work; suggestions for campus resources; and lab hours – that apply to all my courses.
- Students acknowledge having read and agree to abide by these general guidelines through a signed document submitted early in the term, such as a first day intake form or class survey.