STATISTICS AND DATA SCIENCE

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(Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science)

With the growing abundance of data gathered in nearly every field, statistical methods have become invaluable for transforming data into useful information. As a subject, statistics is interdisciplinary, spanning the sciences (natural and social), the humanities, and even the arts. Examples of areas of applications include economics, biology, health, education, actuarial sciences, and law. An increasing number of majors and concentrations require or recommend a statistics course.

Overview of the Concentration

At St. Olaf, students can combine their interests in statistics with any major and acquire a background that leads to graduate study and abundant career opportunities. To find out more about the statistics concentration, visit the Statistics program (http://wp.stolaf.edu/statistics).

Intended Learning Outcomes for the Concentration (http://wp.stolaf.edu/curriculum-committee/statistics-concentration-ilos)

Requirements

The Statistics and Data Science Concentration consists of a minimum of four (4) courses, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STAT 270</td>
<td>Intermediate Statistics for Social Science Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAT 282</td>
<td>Topics in Statistics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>STAT 284</td>
<td>Biostatistics: Design and Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSCI 125</td>
<td>Computer Science for Scientists and Mathematicians</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOAN 371</td>
<td>Foundations of Social Science Research: Quantitative Methods</td>
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Any of the Level III courses listed above

Experiential Learning Component (optional, see below)

Total Credits 4

Experiential Learning Component (Optional)

Each concentrator is encouraged to participate in experientially based research or employment that takes statistical methods beyond the traditional classroom. This can occur on- or off-campus. Prior approval by the director of statistics program and a letter after the fact from a supervisor are required to earn credit. Excellent opportunities for experiential learning in statistics are available through STAT 294 Academic Internship, MSCS 390 Mathematics practicum, and MSCS 389 Research Methods (throughthe Center for Interdisciplinary Research (CIR)). As a CIR fellow, students can work during the academic year or summer with faculty on research from a variety of disciplines.

Note: For students considering graduate school in statistics or a closely related field, the following courses are recommended:

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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>MATH 126</td>
<td>Calculus II</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>or MATH 128</td>
<td>Honors Calculus II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH 220</td>
<td>Elementary Linear Algebra</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH 226</td>
<td>Multivariable Calculus</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH 230</td>
<td>Differential Equations I</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH 242</td>
<td>Modern Computational Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MATH 244 &amp; MATH 344</td>
<td>Real Analysis I and Real Analysis II</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSCI 251 &amp; CSCI 252</td>
<td>Software Design and Implementation and Software Design and Implementation Lab (0.25)</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STAT 110, STAT 212, and ECON 263 all provide an introduction to statistics, and students should not take more than one; they can all serve as a prerequisite for further courses, although ECON 263 is geared toward majors in economics. STAT 214 is also an introductory course that assumes no background in statistics, but it can also be taken by students coming from STAT 110, ECON 263 or AP Statistics who would like a transition into the statistics concentration.
Courses

STAT 110: Principles of Statistics
This is an introductory course for the liberal arts. Students learn study design principles and develop statistical literacy and reasoning. They learn to describe distributions, assess if known distributions fit their data, estimate population values with confidence intervals, and assess statistical significance with hypothesis tests (e.g., chi-square, z-, and t-tests, ANOVA, correlation, and regression). In addition to lectures, there is a weekly computer lab. Not recommended for students who have completed a term of calculus. STAT 110, STAT 212, and ECON 263 all provide an introduction to statistics, and students should not take more than one; they all can serve as a prerequisite for further courses. Offered each semester. Counts toward environment studies major (social science emphasis) and exercise science major.

STAT 212: Statistics for the Sciences
A first course in statistical methods for scientists, this course addresses issues for proposing/designing an experiment, as well as exploratory and inferential techniques for analyzing and modeling scientific data. Topics include probability models, exploratory graphics, descriptive techniques, statistical designs, hypothesis testing, confidence intervals, and simple/multiple regression. Offered each semester. Enrollment limited for seniors. STAT 110, STAT 212, and ECON 263 all provide an introduction to statistics and students should not take more than one; they all can serve as a prerequisite for further courses. Counts toward environmental studies major (natural science and social science emphases), exercise science major, management studies concentration, and mathematical biology concentration.

STAT 214: Honors Statistics for the Sciences
This course engages students with the material in STAT 212 in greater depth and breadth. Topics such as bootstrapping and multiple regression will be introduced in addition to core material from STAT 212. No previous experiences with statistics is assumed; this course provides an introduction to statistics, but it can also be taken by students coming from STAT 110, ECON 263, or AP Statistics who would like a transition into the statistics concentration. Not offered 2017-18. Counts toward environmental studies major (social science emphasis), exercise science major, and mathematical biology concentration.

Prerequisite(s): MATH 119 or MATH 120 or equivalent, or CSCI 125, or some previous statistics (e.g., AP Statistics or STAT 110 or ECON 263).

STAT 270: Intermediate Statistics for Social Science Research
This course focuses on the use of statistics in a social science context. Students investigate three essential questions: How can one reliably measure something? How does one design valid research? How does one analyze research results? Topics include ANOVA designs (for example, one-way and two-way with interaction), data reduction methods, and principles of measurement. Interdisciplinary groups work together on case studies throughout the term. Offered alternate years.

Prerequisite(s): STAT 110, STAT 212, or STAT 214, or ECON 263, or equivalent preparation, or permission of the instructor.

STAT 272: Statistical Modeling
This course takes a case-study approach to the fitting and assessment of statistical models with application to real data. Specific topics include multiple regression, model diagnostics, and logistic regression. The approach focuses on problem-solving tools, interpretation, mathematical models underlying analysis methods, and written statistical reports. Offered each semester. Counts toward environmental studies major (natural science and social science emphases) and management studies, mathematical biology, and neuroscience concentrations.

Prerequisite(s): STAT 110, STAT 212, or STAT 214, or ECON 263, or equivalent preparation, or permission of instructor.

STAT 282: Topics in Statistics
Students explore special topics in statistics. Topics vary from year to year. May be repeated if topic is different. Offered periodically.

STAT 284: Biostatistics: Design and Analysis
The course investigates issues in health-related settings using a quantitative, research-oriented perspective. Course material focuses on global and public health issues, study design, methods for analyzing health data, and communication of research findings. Design topics include controlled trials, case-control, cohort and other observational studies. Methods include survival analysis and casual inference for observational studies. Communication emphasizes writing up findings and interpreting published research. Counts toward mathematical biology concentration. Offered alternate years.

Prerequisite(s): completion of STAT 272 or permission of the instructor.

STAT 294: Independent Study

STAT 298: Directed Undergraduate Research
This course provides a comprehensive research opportunity, including an introduction to relevant background material, technical instruction, identification of a meaningful project, and data collection. The topic is determined by the faculty member in charge of the course and may relate to his/her research interests. Offered based on department decision. May be offered as a 1.00 credit course or .50 credit course.

Prerequisite: determined by individual instructor.
Related Courses

CSCI 125: Computer Science for Scientists and Mathematicians
This course focuses on handling data: visualization, finding patterns, and communicating with data. The primary tools are Python (for transforming data) and R (for visualization and classification). Students work individually and in teams to apply basic principles and explore real-world datasets with a sustainability theme. Counts toward statistics and mathematical biology concentrations. One of CSCI 121, CSCI 125, or CSCI 251 counts toward linguistic studies concentration. Offered each semester.

Prerequisite: calculus or consent of the instructor.

ECON 263: Statistics for Economics
This course emphasizes skills necessary to understand and analyze economic data. Topics include descriptive statistics, probability and random variables, sampling theory, estimation and hypothesis testing, and practical and theoretical understanding of simple and multiple regression analysis. Applications to economic and business problems use real data, realistic applications, and econometric/statistical software. Offered each semester. ECON 263 is required for economics majors who do not take both STAT 272 and ECON 385. Credit towards the economics major will not be given for ECON 263 following completion of STAT 272. Counts toward environmental studies major (social science emphasis).

Prerequisite: MATH 119 or MATH 120 and one of Economics 110-121, or consent of the instructor.

ECON 385: Econometrics
Ideal for students interested in applying statistical models to economic problems, this course emphasizes theoretical foundations, mathematical structure and applications of major econometric techniques, including ordinary least squares, generalized least squares, dummy variables, non-linear transformations, instrumental variables, simultaneous equation modeling, and time series models. Students in the class complete a sophisticated economic research project of their choice. Offered annually.

Prerequisites: ECON 261 and either ECON 263 or STAT 272 or permission of instructor.

MATH 262: Probability Theory
This course introduces the mathematics of randomness. Topics include probabilities on discrete and continuous sample spaces, conditional probability and Bayes’ Theorem, random variables, expectation and variance, distributions (including binomial, Poisson, geometric, normal, exponential, and gamma) and the Central Limit Theorem. Students use computers to explore these topics. Offered each semester. Counts toward management studies concentration.

Prerequisite: MATH 126 or MATH 128.

MSCS 124: A Four-Dimensional Excursion
This elementary introduction to the geometry of four-dimensional Euclidean space begins with an examination of lower-dimensional spaces and their relationships to one another. Generic objects are examined with the goal of understanding how a four-dimensional counterpart might be generated. Students explore what it means to “see” four-dimensional objects and in alternative ways. The term ends with group projects realized as a short research paper, a virtual reality show/object, and a class presentation. Offered periodically during Interim. No prerequisite.

MSCS 150: Statistical and Data Investigations
Students learn basic techniques to analyze, manage, visualize, and model data. Instruction focuses on the analysis of “real,” salient datasets in a computer-equipped classroom. In small groups students discuss, analyze, and solve case study-based problems. Class sessions include the Inquiry-Based Learning technique, which engages students in frequent presentations of their solutions to the class. Students use the R statistical software to perform statistical computing and data visualizations. Offered annually.

MSCS 264: Introduction to Data Science
Data is the currency of the modern world, and data science is a field that sits at the intersection between statistics and computer science. At its heart, data science is about gleaning information and making decisions from data; this course provides a solid foundation to the most important data science tools. Students develop a common language for creating visualizations, wrangling with data, programming in a literate manner, producing reproducible research, and communicating results. Counts toward statistics concentration. Offered each semester.

MSCS 341: Algorithms for Decision Making
This course introduces students to the subject of machine learning. The primary focus is the development and application of powerful machine learning algorithms applied to complex, real-world data. Topics covered include linear regression, nearest neighbor models, k-means clustering, shrinkage methods, decision trees and forests, boosting, bagging, support vector machines, and hierarchical clustering. Applications are taken from a wide variety of disciplines, including biology, economics, public policy, public health, and sports. Offered on a regular basis. Familiarity with a programming language such as R or Python is highly recommended.

Prerequisite: MATH 220, CSCI 251, or STAT 272 or permission of the instructor.

MSCS 389: Math, Statistics, and Computer Science Research Methods (0.50)
Students focus on writing scientific papers, preparing scientific posters, and giving presentations in the context of a specific, year-long, interdisciplinary research project. In addition, this weekly seminar series builds collaborative research skills such as working in teams, performing reviews of math, statistics, and computer science literature, consulting effectively, and communicating proficiently. Exposure to post-graduate opportunities in math, statistics, and computer science disciplines is also provided. Open to students accepted into the Center for Interdisciplinary Research.

MSCS 390: Mathematics Practicum
Students work in groups on substantial problems posed by, and of current interest to, area businesses and government agencies. The student groups decide on promising approaches to their problem and carry out the necessary investigations with minimal faculty involvement. Each group reports the results of its investigations with a paper and an hour-long presentation to the sponsoring organization. Offered annually during Interim.

Prerequisite: Permission of instructor.
**PSYCH 230: Research Methods in Psychology**
This course prepares the student with tools for understanding how research studies in psychology are conceptualized, designed, carried out, interpreted, and disseminated to the public. Use of library and Internet resources, ethical guidelines in the conduct of research and the skills of good scientific writing are emphasized. Students work independently and in small groups to design and conduct their own research projects. The course includes lecture and laboratory work. Offered each semester. Counts toward environmental studies major (social science emphasis), exercise science major, and statistics concentration.

**Prerequisites:** PSYCH 125, and STAT 110 or STAT 212 or STAT 214 or ECON 263.

**SOAN 371: Foundations of Social Science Research: Quantitative Methods**
Students gain the skills necessary to conduct and critically evaluate quantitative research. Students learn the underlying theoretical assumptions and orientations of quantitative research, including research design, sampling techniques, strategies for data collection, and approaches to analysis. Students gain practice in data analysis by conducting a research project and using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a standard in sociology. Open to sociology/anthropology majors only. Offered annually in the fall semester. Counts toward environmental studies major (social science emphasis) and management studies concentration.

**Prerequisite:** STAT 110 or STAT 212.

**Faculty**

**Director, 2018-2019**

**Kathryn Ziegler Graham**
Associate Professor of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science
biostatistics

**Anthony Becker**
Professor of Economics
econometrics; forecasting; economic damages; microeconomic theory;
public policy

**Robert D. Eisinger**
Visiting Assistant Professor of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science

**Sharon J. Lane-Getaz**
Associate Professor of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science
statistics; statistics education

**Julie M. Legler**
Professor of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science
biostatistics

**Matthew P. Richey**
Professor of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science
applied and computational mathematics

**Paul J. Roback**
Professor of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science
statistics