

STAT 8910 — Statistical Seminar Course Syllabus

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Course Description: This course is a one credit course designed to introduce second year students to statistical research in general, and the research interests of our faculty in particular.

By now, you know that the Department presents a weekly colloquium series during the academic year. With a few exceptions, these talks are research talks that take place every Thursday from 3:30–4:20PM in room 306 in the statistics building. Rarely, there will be an off-week in which no colloquium is scheduled, or we may schedule the colloquium at an unusual time, or we may even have two colloquia in a given week. A few of the talks may be non-research orientated; but this, too, is an exception to the rule. The vast majority of colloquia are presentations of the current and recent research endeavors of the speakers. Colloquium speakers are drawn from a variety of sources, but they typically include many of our own Department's faculty and students, in addition to well-known academics from around the United States and, occasionally, abroad.

The presentation of the Colloquium Series is one of the most important activities of the Department. Colloquia provide an infusion of new people and new ideas, an opportunity to become more familiar with the research activities and interests of departmental colleagues, and an academic and social forum in which all students and faculty can take part. For these reasons, attendance at departmental colloquia is, and always has been, expected of all faculty and graduate students (see section 2.4 of the Department's Graduate Handbook at, e.g., <http://www.stat.uga.edu/handbook/book00/2000/welcome.html>).

However, research colloquia are typically presented at an advanced and sometimes quite technical level. For this reason, it is often a challenge for students, particularly first and second-year students, to follow these talks. In some cases you may find that you learned next-to-nothing from a talk because of its advanced nature and/or poor presentation. You are not alone in this. All junior graduate students struggle to follow colloquia. Have faith, it will get better. By your third and fourth years you'll understand much of most colloquia, although it will probably never be true that you can follow all of every colloquium. Statistics is just too broad and technical of a field for that to happen. Faculty typically don't understand all the details of a colloquium, and we all get lost fairly early on in a few colloquia (don't let anyone bluff you that they don't).

So, to some extent, the Colloquium Series provides an inadequate introduction to

statistical research for our junior graduate students — you guys. To fill the gap, this course was created. Students in STAT 8910 are required to attend Thursday colloquia just like everybody else, but in addition, students are required to attend Tuesday talks at 3:30PM in room 306, Statistics Building. The Tuesday talks will be given mostly by Statistics Department faculty members, with a few outside speakers possible. Like the Thursday colloquia, these talks will be research-orientated. However, the Tuesday talks are aimed at you; they will be much less technical, and will serve as an introduction to the research interests of individual faculty members in the department. Some talks will focus on a particular research project of the presenter; others are likely to be overviews of the various areas in which the presenter works. Our faculty have interests scattered throughout the fields of statistics and probability. By the end of the term you should have a pretty good overview of these fields, as well as a closer familiarity with the particular interests of professors in this department.

A goal of the course is to get you jump-started on research. Many students wait until all of their courses have been taken and exams passed before starting on their thesis or dissertation research. You can go this route; but its not the best way to minimize the amount of time you spend in graduate school nor is it the best way to get the most out of the time that you're here. We encourage you to start thinking about your research projects early and to identify faculty members with whom you might like to work and whose research interests match your own. It is not the goal of this course to match you to an advisor or a dissertation topic; however, it is a course goal that you make progress toward these decisions.

Course Schedule (Tuesday Sessions):

| Date | Instructor | Speaker |
|----------|------------|------------------------------|
| Aug. 22 | Hall | Introduction |
| Aug. 29 | Seymour | Dr. Robert (Bob) Taylor |
| Sept. 5 | Hall | Dr. Daniel (Dan) Hall |
| Sept. 12 | No Class | No Class |
| Sept. 19 | Seymour | T.b.a. |
| Sept. 26 | Hall | Dr. William (Bill) McCormick |
| Oct. 3 | Seymour | T.b.a. |
| Oct. 10 | No Class | No Class |
| Oct. 17 | Hall | Dr. Hubert Chen |
| Oct. 24 | Seymour | T.b.a. |
| Oct. 31 | Hall | Dr. Ishwar Basawa |
| Nov. 7 | No Class | No Class |
| Nov. 14 | Seymour | Dr. Gauri Datta |
| Nov. 21 | Hall | T.b.a. |
| Nov. 28 | Seymour | Dr. T.N. Sriram |
| Dec. 5 | Hall | Dr. Mary Meyer |

In addition you will be responsible for keeping up with the departmental colloquium schedule. Announcements are sent out by e-mail and in flyers in your mailboxes for every colloquium. These announcements typically appear a week or more in advance. Pay

attention!

Evaluation:

The grading for the course is S/U (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory). The requirements of the course are very mild. Meet them and you'll get an 'S'. Fail to meet them and you'll get a 'U' — simple as that.

1. You are required to miss (not attend) no more than 3 colloquia (preferably none).
2. You are required to miss (not attend) no more than 3 Tuesday research talks (preferably none).
3. You may not miss two or more colloquia in a row and you may not miss two or more Tuesday research talks in a row. Exceptions may be made under extraordinary circumstances, but you must get approval from Dr. Seymour or Dr. Hall first.
4. By the end of the term you must hand in written summaries of three talks (colloquia or Tuesday research talks) that you attended during the term. These summaries should be typed (single-spaced), and each summary must be a minimum of one-half of a page in length. These summaries are due on Dec. 8, but you are welcome and encouraged to keep up with them throughout the term, and you may turn any or all of them in early.

Web Site:

I will maintain a web site for the course at

<http://www.stat.uga.edu/dhall/STAT8910.html>.

There, I will post this syllabus and a continually updated schedule of colloquia and Tuesday talks. If you ever wonder whether we have a colloquium or other talk on a given date, check this web page or ask Dr. Seymour or Dr. Hall.