

PSYC*1010 (Section 01), Course Outline: Winter 2024

General Information

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic some courses are being offered virtually and some face to face. **Psychology 1010 (section 01) will be presented in the Face-to-Face format.** The course has a set day, time and location of class.

That means that for this class, lectures, exams, and in-class exercises are going to take place face-to-face in the assigned classroom at the designated time. (Students will be at a disadvantage compared to the other students if they do not attend lectures: 10% of the course grade is based on in-class exercises that must be carried out in the classroom during the scheduled lecture time.)

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, your classroom has been equipped with improved ventilation equipment. University of Guelph **strongly recommends** that you wear a protective mask in class to reduce the risk of catching or spreading COVID-19 and it also **strongly recommends** that all students, faculty, and staff receive updated vaccinations against COVID-19. (These were the guidelines as of July 1st, 2022.) However, please see the website listed below for the most recent information on COVID-19 requirements at University of Guelph and what to do if you become ill.

If you develop a cough or any respiratory illness symptoms, according to university guidelines you must wear a properly fitted (medical) mask in all public settings (including in class) for 10 days after the start of your symptoms.

<https://news.uoguelph.ca/covid-19/safety-practices/>

Course Title: Making Sense of Data in Psychological Research

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to statistical methods in research, with an emphasis on the methods used in psychology.

There are two goals: 1) to make you a more knowledgeable audience for statistical information so that you will not be fooled by bad research or bad reporting of findings; 2) to provide you with the statistical base you need to carry out your own empirical research.

The course begins with descriptive statistics (techniques of summarizing or describing research findings) and progresses to inferential statistics (techniques for making predictions about populations based on findings from study samples). Psych 1010 is a course that requires regular attendance at lectures and consistent (daily) work outside of class. You will need to attend lectures and keep up with the readings to understand the material well, but it is also very important that you get lots of practice working with the different analysis techniques if you want to do well on the exams, quizzes, and in-class questions in this course.

During class there are in-class exercises to help you practice. There are also timed quizzes designed to give you more opportunities to practice and an opportunity to boost your grade (only your top 4 out of 6 quiz grades will be kept). Keeping up with your readings and exercises will help make sure you don't find yourself overwhelmed when studying for exams. By doing an hour or two of work every day of the week and contacting your professor and GTAs to get help when you are struggling, you will have a more pleasant experience overall.

This course is taught from a research methods perspective. Although you will need to use a stand-alone calculator (not the one in your phone) for some course components, a critical element of this course is for you to gain the ability to be able to describe and explain what it is you are doing when you conduct an analysis. That means that one of the things you will be required to do is explain what the statistics you will learn about do and why you might choose on statistical method over another, given the underlying research question. In every exam there will be "big picture" questions where you will need to explain what you are doing and why, in your own words, using simple (jargon-free) language and concrete examples of your own creation. Don't worry, there will be sample exercises to help you prepare for these "big picture" questions. The idea behind these questions is to ensure you can understand the research process as a whole, and the role that statistics plays – so you not only understand what you are doing but why you are doing it.

The statistical methods you will learn in this course are important tools that researchers use to guide their conclusions and answer their research questions. Consequently, there is more to this course than "number crunching"; you will also be developing important critical thinking skills (including the ability to analyze and evaluate an argument), and communication skills, including both writing skills and listening and note-taking skills.

Credit Weight: 0.5

Academic Department (or campus): Psychology

Semester Offering: Winter 2024

Class Schedule: Tues, Thurs: 2:30PM - 3:50PM

Location: RICH 2520

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Dr. Shayna Skakoon-Sparling, Ph.D.

Instructor Email: s.sparling@uoguelph.ca

*(please include **PSYC 1010 S01** in subject of all emails). I will attempt to respond to emails within 48 hours, Monday through Friday.*

Office location: MacKinnon Extension, room 4016

Office hours: by appointment (virtual or face to face)

GTA Information

Name: Eirini Boutakis

Email: eboutaki@uoguelph.ca

Office Hours: By appointment

Name: Ralitza Dimova

Email: rdimova@uoguelph.ca

Office Hours: By appointment

Name: Linda-Paola Sosa Hernandez

Email: lsosaher@uoguelph.ca

Office Hours: By appointment

Name: Katherine Churey

Email: kchurey@uoguelph.ca

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Content

Specific Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, a successful student will be able to:

A. Critical and Creative Thinking

1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge

- Describe core concepts of the scientific method, research methods, and statistics, and indicate how these ideas work together in research.
- Understand and apply key concepts in research methods and statistics as it relates to the scientific method.

2. Inquiry and Analysis

- Formulate questions relevant to the field of psychology. Know how to find relevant evidence to explore research questions.
- Evaluate hypotheses based on data.
- Recognize the importance of supporting statements with evidence.

3. Problem Solving

- Identify issues and create a plan to address problems using knowledge of research methods and statistics.

B. Literacy

1. Methodological Literacy: *The ability to understand, evaluate, and apply the appropriate methodology for rigorous psychological science*

- Recognize and describe basic research methodologies (e.g., random assignment, random sampling) and how they can be used together.

2. Quantitative Literacy

- Understand the use of numerical data.
- Demonstrate the ability to interpret data (including formulas).
- Demonstrate the ability to analyze data (perform calculations) and interpret data to test a claim.
- Correctly use quantitative data as evidence for a claim.

3. Visual Literacy:

- Interpret graphs and tables.
- Evaluate images (e.g., graphs and diagrams) and their source (e.g., discerning when a graph is misleading).

C. **Communication**

1. Reading Comprehension (e.g., reading the text materials)

- Read at a university level, acquiring psychological information.
- Understand sophisticated theoretical and empirical writing in psychology.
- Glean and apply useful instructions from your readings, for example, if you've made it this far in reading the syllabus, please email your professor a cute picture of your favourite sea creature, then keep going – there's more useful information ahead.

2. Listening Skills (a component of Oral communication).

- Determine the key points in a live auditory presentation by listening to the speaker.
- Summarize information in a clear and concise way in your notes so that you can later access and use the information.
- Ask relevant questions of the speaker when you need clarification.

3. Written Communication.

- Explain complex abstract processes (i.e., research methods and statistics) using simple, clear, and jargon-free language; presenting ideas in a logical order, using concrete examples as well as diagrams and graphs when needed (see visual literacy).
- Write clearly and demonstrate general psychological knowledge when presenting ideas.
- Use the appropriate vocabulary and presenting statistical results in APA format (American Psychological Association, considered the standard format for psychology research:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html).

D. Personal and Ethical Behaviour

1. Ethical Issues in Research

- Describe ethical principles in conducting research as it relates to the accurate (non-misleading) presentation of research results.

2. Personal Organization/ Time Management

- Recognize the importance of advance planning for the completion of tasks.
- Deal with time pressures by prioritizing and completing important or urgent tasks to the posted schedule and by starting tasks early rather than causing oneself undue stress by waiting until the deadline is imminent.

- Cope with time pressures without panicking, by being strategic, and by determining how you can get the best results in a limited amount of time.

- Demonstrate personal accountability and responsibility.

On successful completion of this course, you will be able to accomplish the following:

- A. Identify and describe key concepts in quantitative psychology, including those relating to the scientific method, research design, and inferential and descriptive statistics. Apply these concepts when solving problems. (Learning outcomes: A1-3; B1-3; C1-2; D2)
- B. Describe the stages involved in scientific reasoning and specify the role and importance of quantification in the scientific method. Use an example, of your own creation, to help you explain how this process works. (Learning outcomes: A1-3; B1-3; C1-3; D2)
- C. Identify the weak points within scientific arguments (places where error can enter), and the places where an individual could lie or mislead using statistics or graphical presentation. (Learning outcomes: A1-3; B1-3; C1-3; D1-2)
- D. Analyze a research question, identifying the relevant measured and manipulated variables and the scale of measurement for variables. Indicate whether the study is a true experiment, a quasi-experiment, or a correlational design and describe the relative strengths and weaknesses of each type of design. (Learning outcomes: A1-3; B1-2; D2)
- E. Identify the independent and dependent variables in an experimental or quasi-experimental study and identify the relevant variables in a correlational study. Provide operational definitions of variables, including how they were measured. (Learning outcomes: A1-3; B1-2)

- F. Describe the differences between descriptive and inferential statistics, indicating when each is appropriate to use. Determine the appropriate statistical analysis for simple experiments. (Learning outcomes: A1-3; B1-2)
- G. Calculate measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode) and variability (e.g., range, standard deviation, variance). Create and graph frequency information. Explain the meanings and importance of these measures. (Learning outcomes: A1; B1-2; D2)
- H. Create and interpret information presented in graphical format (graphs) for frequency distributions, experiments, and correctional studies. (Learning outcomes: B3)
- I. Explain what hypothesis testing is, indicating its purposes, the processes involved, and the places where error can enter into the process. Indicate the role of probability in hypothesis testing and inferential statistics. This will involve knowing how to communicate this information in your own words, without jargon. (Learning outcomes: A1-3; B1-2; C1-3)
- J. Carry out hypothesis testing using z-tests, t-tests, correlation and simple linear regression. (This involves calculating the appropriate statistic, using that statistic to make a statistical decision, and reporting the result in writing in APA format). Calculate measures of effect size (e.g., Cohen's d, r²). Indicate how effect size and statistical power relate to statistical significance. (Learning outcomes: A1-3; B1-3; C1-3; D2).

These outcomes will be measured via exams, in-class exercises, quizzes, and a research participation component.

Lecture Content:

The table below lists the content of the lectures, but lecture dates are tentative. In this class, as in all others, sometimes it takes more time to cover material than expected.

*Text readings should be done in advance of the associated lecture to ensure you are prepared for the in-class exercises that occur during the lectures. For your convenience, a detailed Course Planner will be provided. It suggests a study schedule that will ensure that you keep up.

Please note that an **outline** for each lecture will be posted on Courselink 24 hours in advance of the lecture.

Date	Topic & Readings	Activities
Week 1 <i>Jan 9 and 11</i>	- Orientation to the course - The scientific method, the goals of science, and the role of descriptive and inferential statistics and theory in psychology research. - Order of operations	See Course Planner

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Random Assignment vs. Random Sampling - Identifying different types of variables - Testing a theory <p style="text-align: center;">Readings: Appendix A and Chapter 1</p>	
<p>Week 2 Jan 16 and 18</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Line graphs, bar graphs, scatterplots - Frequency Distributions - Central tendency <p style="text-align: center;">Readings: Chapters 2-3 <i>(Note: You do NOT need to know the section on percentiles and interpolation [section 2.4] or the section on interpolating the median in Chapter 3 [section 3.3]).</i></p>	Quiz on Wednesday , Jan 17
<p>Week 3 Jan 23 and 25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Measures of variability - Degrees of freedom <p style="text-align: center;">Readings: Chapter 3-4 <i>(Note: You do <u>not</u> need to know p. 109, section 4.2, and page 113-114, section 4.6)</i></p>	Quiz on Friday , Jan 26
<p>Week 4 Jan 30 and Feb 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exam Prep - Z scores <p style="text-align: center;">Readings: Chapter 5</p>	Exam 1 – in Class on Feb 1 (Covering Chapters 1 to 4 and all lectures up to Jan 30)
<p>Week 5 Feb 6 and 8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Z Scores - Probability: Predicting individual scores using a normal distribution. <p style="text-align: center;">Readings: Chapters 5-7 <i>(Note: Please note that you do not need to know the section in Chapter 6 on binomial distribution [p.179-183])</i></p>	See Course Planner
<p>Week 6 Feb 13 and 15</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Predicting sample means using a normal distribution. - The Central Limit Theorem - Hypothesis testing <p style="text-align: center;">Readings: Chapter 7-8</p>	Quiz on Wednesday , Feb 14
Week 7	Reading Week – No Classes	See Course Planner
<p>Week 8 Feb 27 and 29</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hypothesis Testing <p style="text-align: center;">Readings: Chapter 8</p>	Quiz on Friday , March 1
<p>Week 9 March 5 and 7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intro to t-tests <p style="text-align: center;">Readings: Chapters 9 and 10</p>	Exam 2 – In class on March 7 Covering Chapters 1-9 and all lectures up to Feb 29)
<p>Week 10 March 12 and 14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independent samples t-tests - Repeated measures t-test <p style="text-align: center;">Readings: Chapters 10 and 11</p>	See Course Planner

Week 11 March 19 and 21	- Correlations Readings: Chapter 15 (up to page 510)	Quiz on Friday , March 22
Week 12 March 26 and 28	- Review of key topics - Ethics and Statistics Readings: None	See Course Planner
Week 13 April 2 and 4	- Exam Prep Readings: None	Quiz on Wednesday , April 3

Course Assignments and Tests:

Assignment or Test	Due Date	Contribution to Final Mark (%)	Learning Outcomes Assessed
Exam 1	Feb 1 – in class	20%	1-9, 11
Exam 2 (cumulative)	March 7 – in class	23%	1-9, 11
Exam 3 (cumulative)	See Below	26%	1-11
Research Assignment (5 hrs of SONA subject pool credits OR written summary of 5 research articles)	Last day of class (see SONA handouts)	5%	1-2, 4, 11
Timed Quizzes	Jan 17, Jan 26, Feb 16, Feb 28, March 22, April 3	14% best 4 of 6 quizzes	1-9, 11
In-Class exercises	During most in-person classes (See course planner)	12% (best 13 of 17 Top Hat exercises)	1-8, 11

Final examination date and time: 8:30am; April 20, 2024

Final exam weighting: 26%

Course Resources

Required Texts:

Gravetter, F.J., & Wallnau, L.B. (2017). *Statistics for the Behavioural Sciences*, 10e edition. Cengage Learning.

Your textbook is available from the University of Guelph Bookstore in digital or paper, also available from the Co-op Bookstore, and online – I have also reserved some copies at the library. Definitely take a moment to search for our textbook online and find the best deal.

NOTE – you do NOT need to purchase MindTap software for this course.

Other Resources:

Courselink website (also called D2L). The Courselink website will be used to present online resources, Drop Box, and our class message boards. You will also notice that there are outlines for each lecture and a variety of other study aids (e.g. course planner).

Top Hat software. We will be using the Top Hat (www.tophat.com) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text messaging. You can purchase a license through the bookstore or online.

You can explore the [Top Hat Student Guide](#) which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you up and running on the system.

An email invitation will also be sent to your school email account. If you don't receive this email, you can register by visiting the course website on Top Hat:

<https://app.tophat.com/e/602893>

If asked, note that the 6-digit join code is 602893 for this class.

Top Hat will require a paid subscription, and the standard pricing for the cheapest option is **\$35** for unlimited access during the semester but if you have purchased a yearlong subscription from the previous semester, you won't have to pay anything (it is valid for 12 months). For a full breakdown of all subscription options available please visit www.tophat.com/pricing.

The SONA website. To sign up to participate in an experiment for the Research Participation and Design Assignment, please check the SONA system website. This is the link to SONA (<https://www.uoguelph.ca/psychology/research/sona>). There is information there on that website about how to get into a SONA experiment and there is also information about the articles and how to hand in the alternative assignments (the written summaries of the articles). To log into SONA, you must enter the first page of the website and click the green button that says "University of Guelph SSO Log In." Clicking this green button will lead you the University of Guelph central login window, where you will need to enter your central login information. As a reminder, your username is your University of Guelph email address without including the "@uoguelph.ca" and your password is the same password you use to access Courselink. If you have questions about the login process, please email ppadmin@uoguelph.ca.

Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance is not mandatory; however, some of the material presented in lecture is not in the text and there will be questions based lecture material on exams. You are responsible for material in the lecture as well as the text. There are also in-class exercises (Top Hat questions) that can only be done in class because the answers are discussed immediately after the exercise is administered. (It is unfair to give out a question after the answer has been published.) Before every lecture an outline of the topics to be discussed during the lecture will be posted on Courselink in a folder called "Outlines". As might be expected from the title of this folder, these outlines are not meant to serve as a replacement for taking notes. In fact, note-taking (learning through listening) is one of the learning outcomes that we are trying to achieve in this course (learning outcome 8, listed above).

Note that if you need to miss a class, you should arrange to collect notes from one (or more) of your classmates. The grading of the in-class activities is also designed so that you can miss a couple (see below) without missing out on opportunities for grades.

Grading Policies

[Undergraduate Grading Procedures](#)

[Graduate Grade interpretation](#)

In class exercises: On the dates indicated in the Class Planner, you will be asked questions during lecture and you will be required to answer online using the Top Hat Software. With Top Hat, you can answer using your cell phone, computer, or tablet. Your in-class exercise mark is based on the best *13 of 17* Top Hat Questions. If you have technical problems or miss a Top Hat question due to illness, personal issues, religious holidays, etc., just consider it one of the 4 you will drop. (There are no re-dos or extensions on these. Once a Top Hat question has been given in class, there is no way to do it later because the answer will be discussed in class immediately after the question is completed.)

Research Assignment: One of the best ways to learn about research is to participate in studies and there are special benefits for students taking this course because participation will give you a chance to see how the concepts of this course are applied in actual research projects that are being carried out at the University of Guelph. In this course, you may learn up to 5% for participating in the psychological studies occurring in the department (these are advertised in SONA). Your assignment is to participate in this experiment, and to read the debriefing sheet to learn more about the rationale for the study.

If you are not interested in participating in a study or if there are no studies available to you on SONA, you may also choose the option of reading published journal articles from the list available on the SONA website. Specifically, for each of the 5 credits participation time, you will need to read one of the articles and write summary for each in the format described on the SONA website. Note: These must be written in your own words, not ones from the article or ones written by your classmates. Plagiarism and cheating are regarded as academic misconduct. For further information, see the section

on academic misconduct.

Thus, there are two types of research participation and design assignment: those based on actual research participation and those based on reading published articles on Courselink and writing the required summary. Many of you will find that you end up doing both types of assignment to make up your 5% for the Research Participation and Design Assignment mark. For example, you may have 3% based on participation in 3 hours-worth of experiments and another 2 % on summaries from 2 of the articles posted on the SONA website. All research participation and design papers are due by no later than midnight on the last day of scheduled classes. It is a good idea to spread these out over the term to prevent you from being overwhelmed at the end of the year. (This is where planning and time management enters in.)

Timed Quizzes: These quizzes will help prepare you for the time pressures you will experience on exams as well as the type of question. Your overall quiz grade will be based on the best 4 of 6 quiz marks. Quizzes must be done on the days assigned. If you have technical problems or miss a quiz due to illness, personal issues, or religious holidays, or any other reason just consider it one of the 2 quiz marks you drop. *It's a good idea not to skip a quiz frivolously, because you never know if you'll have an emergency later in the semester.*

Course Policy regarding use of electronic devices and recording of lectures:

Electronic recording of classes is expressly forbidden without consent of the instructor. When recordings are permitted (that is, you have asked for the presenter's permission and they have said yes) these are solely for the use of the authorized student and may not be reproduced, or transmitted to others, without the express written consent of the instructor.

University Policies

Disclaimer:

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings, changes in classroom protocols, and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email. This includes on-campus scheduling during the semester, mid-terms and final examination schedules. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/>) and circulated by email.

Academic Consideration

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for

Academic Consideration:

[Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions](#)

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community, faculty, staff, and students to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring.

University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection. Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:
[Academic Misconduct Policy](#)

Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments

University Policy on the Use of AI Technologies

Students' work must reflect their unique intellectual capacity and demonstrate the application of critical thinking and problem solving. Unauthorized use of AI to complete assessments violates the fundamental intellectual purposes of the University and does not demonstrate student achievement of course learning outcomes.

Submission of materials completed by AI, without permission of the instructor, constitutes an offence under the University's academic misconduct policies, either as a form of plagiarism or the use of unauthorized aids.

Acceptable use of AI should be determined by the course instructor and may vary across disciplines, programs and types of assessments. In setting out course requirements and assessment criteria, the instructor should specify allowable uses of AI, if any, through the course outline and/or the learning management system (e.g., CourseLink). Clarity about the acceptable use of AI is critical for students and instructors. Students are responsible for appropriately referencing how and to what extent they have used AI in assessments in keeping with University and course requirements.

**Please note that the use of AI is not permitted for PSYC*1010.*

Accessibility

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of

the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) as soon as possible.

For more information, contact SAS at 519-824-4120 ext. 54335 or email accessibility@uoguelph.ca or the [Student Accessibility Services Website](#)

Student Feedback Questionnaire

These questionnaires (formerly course evaluations) will be available to students during the last 2 weeks of the semester. Students will receive an email directly from the Student Feedback Administration system which will include a direct link to the questionnaire for this course. During this time, when a student goes to login to CourseLink, a reminder will pop-up when a task is available to complete.

[Student Feedback Questionnaire](#)

Drop date

The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is Friday April 8, 2024. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the [Schedule of Dates in the Academic Calendar](#).

Instructors must provide [meaningful and constructive feedback, at minimum 20% of the final course grade, prior to the 40th class day](#). For courses which are of shorter duration, 20% of the final grade must be provided two-thirds of the way through the course.

Additional Course Information

Course instructors are allowed to use software to help in detecting plagiarism or unauthorized copying of student assignments. Plagiarism is one of the most common types of academic misconduct on our campus. Plagiarism involves students using the work, ideas and/or the exact wording of other people or sources without giving proper credit to others for the work, ideas and/or words in their papers. Students can unintentionally commit misconduct because they do not know how to reference outside sources properly or because they don't check their work carefully enough before handing it in. Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisort.

In this course, your instructor will be using Turnitin.com to detect possible plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration or copying as part of the ongoing efforts to prevent plagiarism in the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences.

A major benefit of using Turnitin is that students will be able to educate and empower themselves in preventing misconduct. In this course, you may screen your own assignments through Turnitin as many times as you wish before the due date. You will

be able to see and print reports that show you exactly where you have properly and improperly referenced the outside sources and materials in your assignment.

A Note on The Grading of This Course:

Grades and other evaluations reflect your performance in a course. In other words, your mark is something that you earn based on your effort as well as the quality of your work; it is not something assigned to you at random by the instructor or your TAs. Sometimes you can work really hard on an assignment or test and still receive a grade lower than what you hoped for. Similarly, I could try really hard to knit a sweater and the result may still not fit the wearer how I hoped it would, no matter the amount of time or effort I felt I had expended.

Your TAs and I take time to carefully evaluate the performance of all of our students throughout the course. Still, there are a handful of students every semester who insist on contacting us to argue their grades, without being able to present strong evidence for a grading error. Many instructors find these types of attempts to negotiate for a higher grade a sign of disrespect. Additionally, it can be interpreted as a sign that the student thinks that their instructor doesn't carefully evaluate grading and performance. I understand that this may not be your intention, but nonetheless, be mindful when sending emails.

This does not mean that you should not feel welcome to raise any concerns you may have about your assignments or exams, I wish only for you to be aware that unfounded negotiation can be a detriment to your reputation as a student. If you feel that an error has been made in the grading of an exam or assignment, I encourage you to raise your concerns with us; however, I will ask that you be able to present strong evidence of a grading error if you do so. Importantly, if you are unclear about the value of an assignment (or extra credit) for any course, please take time to clarify with your instructor and/or your TAs well before the end of the semester or the due date of an assignment.