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Students requiring accommodations as a result of disability, must contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities 778-782-3112 or [csdo@sfu.ca](mailto:csdo@sfu.ca)

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**Instructor:** [Dr. Rachel Altman](#)

**Prerequisite:**

Admission to major or honours programs in statistics or actuarial science at SFU.

**Calendar Description:**

Guided experience in written and oral communication of statistical ideas and results with both scientific and lay audiences. **Writing.**

**Outline:**

This course exposes students to typical genres of writing in the field of statistics. These include technical reports for both statistical and lay audiences, consulting reports, and critiques (e.g. of the use of statistics in the media). A framework called The Statistical Method (MacKay and Oldford, *Statistical Science*, 2000) is used as a backbone for structuring reports and for conducting statistical work in general.

Writing requires an in-depth understanding of the subject matter. Therefore, **students are encouraged to take this course in their fourth year.** Completion of STAT 350 is highly recommended.

The course will give students the opportunity to receive feedback from the instructor, a TA, and their peers in the class on their writing. The first draft of such reports will be critiqued but not marked. Students are expected to respond to the critiques and resubmit a final version for marking. Each student will complete approximately six such reports during the semester. In addition, students will be asked to make at least one in-class, oral presentation. Finally, students will be marked on their contribution to seminar-type discussions led by the instructor.

It is assumed that you are familiar with the following topics:

- Elementary probability theory, including properties of the normal, Poisson, binomial, etc., distributions
- Confidence intervals, p-values, hypothesis testing
- Linear regression theory
- Other standard data analysis tools (diagnostic plots, t-tests, ANOVA methods, etc.)

The course will involve seminars for three hours per week.

**Grading Scheme:**

20% - In-class work

20% - Participation in class discussions

60% - Quality of the final version of reports, including response to critique of draft

Quality of reports will be assessed according to layout, scientific logic, and language clarity. There will be no final examination.

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*Students should be aware that they have certain rights to confidentiality concerning the return of course papers and the posting of marks. Please pay careful attention to the options discussed in class at the beginning of the semester. Students are reminded that Academic Honesty is a cornerstone of the acquisition of knowledge. Scholarly integrity is required of all members of the University. Please consult the General Guidelines of the calendar for more details.*