

Biostatistics 624:

Course Project FAQs:

1. Where are the detailed instructions for the project and paper?

They were given in Class 1 Lecture Notes - See Classes Tab on website

Also see Class 5 for examples of proper style for the paper and structured abstract instructions:

2. When is the project paper due?

May graduates: Tue, May 18 (in-class or by 4p W3604)

Others: Thu, May 20 (in-class or by 4p W3604)

3. May I e-mail, fax, or use a web drop-box for the project paper?

NO. Do the volume and limited time for review, we NEED HARD HARD COPY

4. Does the paper need to be typed?

YES. Paper must be typed with double-spaced text and a font size of at least 10pt.

5. How long/short can the paper be?

As a rough guide, papers should be from 7-10 pages long, including the tables and figures, but not including appendices.

6. What needs to be in the appendices?

To limit the amount of paper, please hand in ONLY

(1) the analysis DO-FILE and

(2) sections of the LOG FILE containing any numbers used in your paper or in the tables or figures.

7. Is the title important?

VERY -- often the only thing readers read! (We'll read more)

8. Must the abstract be structured?

YES. Use the JAMA format outline in Class 5 – very important to use the JAMA format.

Note: Include the abstract as part of the paper – not enough to have submitted the draft abstract earlier.

9. Is Stata output acceptable for tables?

NO. Tables should be formatted and typed with appropriate titles and footnotes. See the document on the website home page for template tables in Word:

Tables and figures should be numbered (for easy reference in the text) and have brief, but informative titles. Also include labels for the axes and captions/footnotes, so that the table or figure is clear without reference to the text

10. Do the statistical models need to be specified in detail with betas, assumptions, and such?

NO. Describe statistical methods used in the paper briefly and provide a reference (Stata manual will suffice).

REMEMBER: "Methods" are described in the "Methods" section. A common error is to describe methods under "Results" or "Discussion".

11. Do all analyses done need to be included in the paper?

NO. Many aspects of analysis such as data exploration, model building and checking are an important part of the process of analysis but do not need to be mentioned or may be mentioned only telegraphically in the paper.

12. Do grammar and spelling matter?

YES. Use a spell checker and, if available, a grammar checker (eg, don't say "data is", say "data are").

13. What about rounding?

Common sense applies. In most cases betas, ORs, and RRs should have no more than 3 significant digits reported. Report P-values to 2 or 3 places, eg, mean difference -18.7, OR=3.4, p=0.002. Avoid NS and  $p < 0.05$  or  $p > 0.05$ . Avoid "starring" significant results. Use  $p < 0.001$  if you are lucky enough to have very small P-values. NEVER use  $p = 0.000$ .

14. Should odds ratios or betas be reported for logistic regression?

Report odds ratios or relative risks rather than the corresponding beta coefficients.

15. What about labeling categorical variables in tables?

Be brief but always make the reference category explicit: for example,

Males vs. Females

Age, years

0-5 vs. 18+

6-10 vs. 18+

11-17 vs. 18+

16. Do the units of measurements need to be mentioned?

YES. Include the unit of measurement for variables in tables and once in the methods.

17. Where does the sample size need to be mentioned?

Include the number of observations in the abstract, methods, and in all tables.

18. Should I hand in my only copy?

NO, duh. Make sure you retain an electronic copy