The Measured Life
IDST 89.001
Spring 2017

Building and Room: Room 1370 of the Genome Sciences Building
Meeting Days and Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30-10:45 AM
Office Hours: By appointment

Instructors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nathan Markiewitz</th>
<th>Michael Little</th>
<th>Katy Ascanio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Psychology</td>
<td>Education Policy</td>
<td>Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:ndmark@live.unc.edu">ndmark@live.unc.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:mhlittle@live.unc.edu">mhlittle@live.unc.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Kascanio@live.unc.edu">Kascanio@live.unc.edu</a></td>
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Course Description

The unexamined life is not worth living

' -- Socrates

Purpose:
By conscientiously applying, consuming, and/or ignoring measures, we can live better lives and help other people to live better lives. This course aims to provide the tools to critically engage in human measurement and the policies that surround it.

Description:
Whether it's by the ACT or Buzzfeed, we've been measured since we can remember, and that, like it or not, changes our lives. This measurement, especially the measurement of indirectly observable human traits--ability, personality, disorder--is both entirely necessary and terribly difficult to do well. Do it poorly and you disenfranchise people from the opportunities they deserve. Do it well and our world might become just a bit better.

But human measurement is not just one thing; it permeates the social and behavioral sciences and public policy from education to health to the workplace. To understand it, we must take a truly interdisciplinary approach. Only by tackling issues from college admissions to personnel selection to IQ testing, can we begin to see how our society measures itself.

For this class to succeed, we are asking everyone to bring their skills and perspectives to the table. Every meeting will be about applying social and behavioral science to defend, to question, and to change how we see the world. By the end, you will be equipped to use measurement in a way that recognizes its potential and limitations, no matter what your interests may be.
Course Objectives:
1. You will be able to describe and explain the importance of major aspects of measurements (reliability and validity).
2. You will be able to articulate and evaluate different personal, social, and economic motivations for measurement in education and the workforce.
3. You will be able to identify and analyze how the use of specific measures differentially impacts people on personal, social, and economic terms.
4. You will be able to develop and present a recommendation that critically reviews different measures for the use in public policy, industry, or social and behavioral research.

Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Topic</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/10</td>
<td>Introductions and course overview</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

Early Childhood: How can we identify where inequality starts?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Resource</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/7</td>
<td>Can we ask people indirectly about sensitive topics?</td>
<td>Christopher S. Miller, Joshua Woodson, Ryan T. Howell &amp; Alan L. Shields (2009) Assessing the Reliability of Scores Produced by the Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory, Substance Use &amp; Misuse, 44:8, 1090-1100, DOI: 10.1080/10826080802486772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/14</td>
<td>Progress meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/16</td>
<td>Spring Break!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/20</td>
<td>Presentations I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/25</td>
<td>Presentations II</td>
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</table>
Class Policies:
1. Attendance: It is mandatory. You should arrive prepared with your coursepack for each meeting. Should an emergency or illness arise, please email the instructors informing them of your circumstance.
2. Discussion: We embrace diversity of thought and opinions in our discussion. However, discourse must remain respectful. We seek to foster an environment conducive to open discussion and expect utmost respect of your classmates and instructors.

Class Standards:
- Argue ideas not people (No Ad Hominem attacks)
- Be mindful of different perspectives: specifically seek to understand
- Allow others to finish their thoughts: do not interrupt
- Be an engaged conversation participant: listen, take notes, do the reading, ask questions

3. Food: Non-disruptive food and drink in class is acceptable. Non-disruptive food is not excessively loud or odorous.
4. Office Hours: We encourage you to make an appointment with us to meet throughout the semester with any questions or concerns you may have. Additionally, we require that you meet with the instructors once to go over your paper which you will be working on throughout the semester.
5. Electronics: No electronics in class. This seminar emphasizes discussion, and electronics are disruptive to your classmates, your instructors, and yourself.

Required Texts: Course Pack or print each reading and bring to class.

Medical Condition/Disability:
If you have a medical condition/disability that may require reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to this course, please contact the Department of Disability Services at 919.962.8300, on the Internet at http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/eligibility or via email at disabilityservices@unc.edu

Instructor statement on wellbeing:
As previous undergraduate students and current graduate students, we both respect and understand the pressure to perform at your top levels. Maximizing performance requires both mental and physical health. In this seminar, we aim for students to push themselves in their analytical and communicative abilities, partially through classroom participation. Although we require such participation, we understand that at times throughout the semester well-being, either or both mentally and physically, may be compromised. Should
you feel on any day unable to participate, please notify one of the instructors before class so that we know not to “cold-call” you. We intend to drive intellectual growth and participation with this exercise, which may not always be comfortable, but we do understand that an individual's circumstances may prohibit the real benefits of the exercise from being realized. We also encourage students to visit both websites for Campus Health Services and Counseling and Psychological Services for resources and appointments.
https://campushealth.unc.edu/services/counseling-and-psychological-services
https://campushealth.unc.edu/

**Honor Code:**
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-led honor system for over 100 years. Academic integrity is at the heart of Carolina and we all are responsible for upholding the ideals of honor and integrity. The student-led Honor System is responsible for adjudicating any suspected violations of the Honor Code and all suspected instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the honor system. Information, including your responsibilities as a student is outlined in the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance. Your full participation and observance of the Honor Code is expected. For more information visit studentconduct.unc.edu

**Harassment and Discrimination:**
It is the University's policy not to discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or veteran status as consistent with the University's Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct. See http://policies.unc.edu/policies/nondiscrim/ for more information.

**Assignments and Grading:**

It will be possible to earn a total of 200 points in this class. Grades will be awarded according to the following schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>179-173</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>159-153</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>139-133</th>
<th>D+</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200-187</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>172-167</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>152-147</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>132-120</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>186-180</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>166-160</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>146-140</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>&lt;119</td>
<td>F</td>
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**Active Engagement (35%)**
Participation is more than showing up--it's bringing the coursepack and being present. We will ask you about the reading every class, whether through discussion or through specific questions. Do the reading.

From experience, we know these grades can feel arbitrary. To keep you informed, we will return preliminary (and by no means final) participation grades with your first three papers.

Papers (50%)
You will be responsible for producing a final project that critically examines the measurement of some aspect of human experience. You will select a topic from a list provided or propose your own. We generated the topics because we know that there is sufficient work on their measurement, but we strongly encourage you to pursue your own interests. After selecting your topic, you will be responsible for four papers on it:

**Paper 1: Background and Motivation (20pts)**
In this paper, you will not only describe the construct you are measuring, but also the motivations behind its measurement. We will ask you to revise and resubmit this paper with our input to support your progress on the final project. As such, your grade for this paper will be the average of your first and second submission.

**Paper 2: Compare and Contrast (20pts)**
In this paper, you will select at least two measures (we will provide you with direction as to which measures might be most interesting) and compare and contrast them using content knowledge and psychometric theory.

**Paper 3: Implementation and Effects (20pts)**
In this paper, you will critically examine the current and future effects of the measures you selected on personal, social, political, and social levels.

**Final Paper: Bringing it all together (40pts)**
In this paper, you will integrate your three (revised) papers into one cohesive document. In addition to your past work, you will include your own recommendations for how an organization (e.g. the government, a school, a business) should measure this construct.

The first three papers should be between 800-1250 words, while the final needs to be sufficiently long to include the previous three papers and your policy recommendations (3000-3500 words). Although the final paper may seem long, you will have written most of it already through your first three papers and your blog posts. To acknowledge improvement, if your final paper grade is higher than your lowest short paper grade, then the average of that final paper grade and that original short paper grade becomes that short paper grade.
(If you receive a 40 on the final, and got 15, 17, and 18 on your short papers, your paper grades will be 17.5, 17, 18, 40).

**Presentation: (30pts, 15%)**

You will be grouped into a team based on the thematic relationship between your final project's construct and the measures. Together, you will be responsible for a ten-minute executive summary of your measures. For example, those of you presenting on performance metrics for human capital might present them as if you are consultants, while those of you presenting on Common Core metrics might decide to present as if to a school board.