

BIOS 691- Field Observations in Biostatistics

Fall 2013

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Field Observations in Biostatistics is designed to teach students about ongoing biostatistical activities and statistics-related research projects outside academics: in non-profit organizations, government, pharmaceutical companies, and contract research organizations (CROs). Students learn the specifics of the hiring process and prepare for creating a strong job application to a biostatistics job. In addition, students learn about the work environments and the different roles occupied by biostatisticians in varied organizations through presentations by a wide-range practicing biostatisticians and programmers as well as human resources representatives.

BIOS 691 DATES: Here are the tentative dates for the field trips and meetings:

Monday, Aug 26	Organizational Meeting (SPH - Room to be determined)
Monday, Sept 9	Quintiles (RTP)
Monday, Sept 16	Research Triangle Institute (RTP)
Monday, Sept 23	NIEHS (RTP)
Monday, Oct 7	FHI 360 - Family Health International (RTP)
Monday, Oct 14	Rho (Chapel Hill)
Monday, Oct 28	GlaxoSmithKline (RTP)
Monday, Nov 4	PPD (Morrisville – a longer drive)
Monday, Nov 11	Interviewing/resume skills (SPH - Room to be determined)

Presentations will be on these MONDAYS from 3-4:30.

ARRIVE AT LEAST 10 MINUTES BEFORE 3:00. Allow for time to find an unfamiliar location, receive nametags, go through security, etc. **You may need to leave campus as early as 2:20 to arrive at some of these locations, as required, by 2:50.**

Allow for travel time following the sessions; following off-campus visits, students should be back on campus by 5 PM.

Students are required to attend all sessions. There is no adequate way to 'make up' these experiences. In the case of an extreme medical emergency or religious holiday observance, contact the instructor for alternate assignments.

TRANSPORTATION:

Your help in assisting with transportation is greatly appreciated. During the organizational meeting, I will ask students who have access to transportation to volunteer to drive – a sign up sheet (on google docs) will be available to facilitate the process.

Ultimately, students are responsible for securing transportation to the sites. UNC- CH and the instructor assume no responsibility/liability for drivers and passengers in private vehicles.

Drivers will receive a modest reimbursement for their mileage from the department. Drivers will also receive the gratitude of the instructor! Carpooling is necessary to receive reimbursement for mileage. Reimbursement to drivers is made at the end of the semester based on departmental mileage rates (regardless of number of passengers).

Instructor will distribute directions to each site before the field trip via email and/or Sakai.

WHAT TO WEAR:

You will be representing our department. Please dress neatly and use good judgment.

Some sites are quite casual- others are fairly formal. Err on the side of looking too professional rather than too casual.

Shorts, graphic t-shirts, tank tops and flip-flops are strongly discouraged.

Sneakers and jeans are also not recommended.

For men, khaki pants and polo shirts or button-down collared shirt would be appropriate.

For women, pants or skirts (not too short) and modest tops would be appropriate.

WHAT TO BRING:

- Directions!
- Picture ID
- International Students – Passport may be needed for NIEHS
- Paper and Pen to take notes encouraged

[Many companies require this identification to enter the work site – you will be given nametags when you enter some sites and may be restricted to the area that you can visit.]

WHAT NOT TO DO:

Keep your cell phones silent and out of sight. No texting.

Do not be late.

Do not fall asleep.

EVALUATION:

Students are required to attend each session.

Students are required to complete an evaluation after each site visit. These evaluations require the thoughtful reflection about the items that were covered by the presenters. Students have exactly one week (by 5 PM Monday of the following week) to submit the evaluation form online in Sakai.

Blank forms are available under >Resources. Complete the form in MSWord. Submit completed form under >Assignments.

One volunteer will be asked to write a thank-you note to the company “contact person” and is exempt from completing that evaluation. (Letterhead/instructions/stamp will be provided.)

GRADES:

H (or A):

Student arrives on time to all sites AND

Student thoughtfully completes each site evaluation on time AND

Student is exhibits professional behavior throughout the course.

P (or B):

Student is late to one site OR

Student is late in submitting one assignment OR

Student submits a site evaluation without thoughtful consideration OR

Student exhibits one example of unprofessional behavior (for example texting during a presentation).

L (or D)

Student does not attend one site visit without completing alternative assignment OR

Student is late to more than one site visit OR

Student is late in submitting more than one assignment OR

Student submits more than one site evaluation without thoughtful consideration OR

Student exhibits more than one example of unprofessional behavior.

F

Student does not attend two or more site visits (without completing alternative assignments).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Determine the differences and similarities in the different types of workplaces that employ biostatisticians: business, non-profit, government (and academics)
- Determine software primarily used for biostatistics projects in industry
- Determine job responsibilities for employees with different degrees and job responsibilities in biostatistical roles
- Determine whether a more advanced degree is recommended for different roles within different organizations
- Evaluate the strengths of different work sites with respect to each student's preferences
- Determine coursework that biostatistics employers and employees consider valuable within biostatistics careers
- Determine the background of a diverse selection of practicing biostatisticians at many levels
- Determine ways to strengthen a job application for biostatistical jobs
- Learn resume and interview expectations for biostatistical jobs
- Learn examples of current public health and pharmaceutical projects and the role of a biostatistician within those project
- Learn about the importance of previous job experience in hiring process
- Learn the specifics of the hiring process including interview information and resume preparation
- Learn information about biostatistical jobs that might not be discussed during an initial interview (Part-time possibilities, reimbursement for continuing education, benefits, flex-time,...)
- Learn current trends and how the economy may be impacting hiring of biostatisticians

HOPE YOU FIND THE EXPERIENCES VALUABLE!