

# BIOS 691- Field Observations in Biostatistics

## Fall 2015

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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 24 (3:00)†	Organizational Meeting	(SPH - McG 1301)
Monday, TBD**	Quintiles	(RTP)
Monday, TBD**	Research Triangle Institute	(RTP)
Monday, TBD **	NIEHS	(RTP)
Monday, TBD**	FHI 360 - Family Health International	(RTP)
Monday, TBD**	Rho	(Chapel Hill)
Monday, TBD**	GlaxoSmithKline	(RTP)
Monday, TBD**	PPD	(Morrisville – a longer drive)
Monday, (3:00) †	Interviewing/resume skills	(SPH - Room to be determined)

\*\*Presentations at these off campus sites will be from **3:30 (sharp)** to-4:45 (approximately). STUDENTS SHOULD ARRIVE AT OFF CAMPUS SITES BY 3:20 to allow for time to find an unfamiliar location, receive nametags, go through security, etc. **You may need to leave campus as early as 2:45 to arrive at some of these locations by 3:20 for the off campus presentations which start at 3:30.**

Allow for travel time following these off campus visits. Usually students should be back on campus by 5:15 PM.

In other words, for most days above that involve off campus travel, commit to the class approximately 2:45-5:15 PM.

†The two on-campus meetings (Aug 24 and Nov ?) will start at **3 PM**.

Students are required to attend all sessions. In the very unusual case that a student must miss a class (such as an extreme medical emergency or religious holiday observance), contact the instructor for an alternative, in-depth written assignment which will include research of the company visit that was missed.

**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 mileage rates (regardless of number of passengers).

Instructor will distribute directions to each site before the field trip (at least 24 hours before departure time) 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.
- Do not wear shorts, graphic t-shirts, tank tops and flip-flops.
- 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 (Picture ID) 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* (submit 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 particular 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 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!**