

DATA ANALYSIS IN PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

PSY 295 – Fall 2023

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Professor Curran:

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Office Hours: 1:30-3:30pm M, online via zoom; available outside of these times as well

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See D2L for any updates to all office hour times and links to zoom meeting rooms where applicable.

0. My Teaching Philosophy.

Before anything else, and for those that might only read one thing on the syllabus, I want to make it clear that as a professor, I am here to help you learn. You are the reason this university exists. You are the reason I am in this role. You - or someone else - has paid for your opportunity to be in this class, learning. I take that seriously, and I hope you do as well.

My goal is to make the process of learning the content in this class as open and accessible and accommodating as possible for each and every one of you. My goal is not only to *not* throw up artificial barriers to your learning, but to actively try to dismantle any barriers I can find. If there are things you think that are detracting from - or in the way of - your ability to learn, let me know. I'll try my best to help.

While I can try my hardest to give you an experience that helps you learn this content, I know that there's only so much I can do if you're not also here with the goal of learning this content. The process of being in college is hard, and honestly in the modern era it's likely harder every year. I respect that, and recognize that my college experience was much different than yours, and likely substantially easier simply due to shifts in that experience over time.

I never want you to worry that I'm going to be an impediment to your learning in this class. I never want you to worry about reaching out to me with a question or a problem or worry about how I'm going to react to the same. I know that as a modern college student you all have unique worries and challenges, and I don't needlessly want to be one of them. I'm. Here. For. You.

With that in mind, it's up to you to get as much out of this class as you can. If you put in the time and effort I promise that you can learn the content of this class. I'm here to help you on that path.

But success - not just grades, but the true success of understanding the content and taking away knowledge and skills you can and will use in the future - is largely up to you.

I'm here, with my hand outstretched, ready to help you learn. I hope that you give this class your best, and walk away with useful knowledge and skills that are well worth not only the monetary cost of this class, but also the time and effort that it requires. Learning takes effort, but that's why we're all here. Thanks for taking the time to read this. =)

I. Course Overview

This class serves as an introduction to statistics and statistical thinking. As an introductory class, this class starts from very basic principles to help build an understanding not only of specific statistical methods (e.g., correlation, regression, ANOVA), but of general statistical understanding. Students will learn what statistics is, what it is used for, how it is used, and how to evaluate the credibility of statistical evidence.

II. About Your Instructor

A. Contacting me. The best way to contact me is via e-mail. I typically check e-mail throughout the day, but only reliably during normal business hours (9 am – 5 pm). If you send me an email in the evening or over the weekend, you should not expect to get a response until the next business day. I will try my best to get to emails as quickly as possible, but there are so very many of you. If you have simple questions about the class or content it is very likely that you will get a faster reply from one of your TAs, especially around exams when many of you are emailing all at once - feel free to use the TAs for simple questions about the course and content.

If you think I've missed an email from you, please just reply to that email with a quick note asking if I've seen it. Please wait at least 48 hours to do this, unless the matter is particularly time sensitive. Do not just send the same message again, as email clients can do odd things with things that are interpreted as quoted text in an email. As well, replying to the original email is better than sending a new email, as then all the information I need is in the same chain.

If you think I've missed your email multiple times, or have something that you've sent an email about but is particularly time sensitive, here's my cell number: (708) 381-0337. Obviously, don't abuse this. Calls from unknown numbers will almost certainly be ignored, but if you feel the need to text me just make sure you are as specific as possible about whatever you're reaching out about, and also let me know who you are and what class (and section) you're in.

When emailing myself or the TAs, make sure to include the course number and course section somewhere in your email (subject, body, somewhere). This is a huge help to solving your problems, as I have multiple classes and sections of things each semester. As well, please try to be as specific as possible with any questions. If you're having a problem with a system like D2L or SONA, attach screenshots if applicable - the more information you give the easier it is to respond quickly and effectively.

Take note, I do NOT use any of the message systems built into D2L - if you send messages through D2L they'll never be seen.

Also, before you ask simple questions about the course (e.g., when is something due, when are the exams, when is the final, how many points is something worth), **make sure you've read the syllabus!** The answer to many questions that professors are asked is 'it is in the syllabus.' There are also many things I don't know off the top of my head without looking at the syllabus myself, so asking those questions is much slower than just checking the syllabus.

B. Office hours. Office hours are listed above, but I am available to meet with you during other times, if you make an appointment with me by e-mail. Office hours are a valuable resource for students that are largely underutilized - feel free to drop in with any questions on course content, questions about psychology, careers in psychology, etc.

III. Required Reading

Required Text: *An Introduction to Psychological Statistics* (2018) by Garrett C. Foster, David Lane, David Scott, Mikki Hebl, Rudy Guerra, Dan Osherson, & Heidi Zimmer. Publisher: University of Missouri - St. Louis; Open Textbook Library.

<https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/709>

Take note, the above textbook is not available for purchase in the bookstore, because it is an open-source, non-profit, and most importantly, free textbook. A free pdf of the textbook can be downloaded or browsed in from the above website, and I will also post a copy of it for download or reference on D2L.

This textbook should be an invaluable asset in helping you understand the concepts of the class. This class contains many complex ideas and concepts, and while I will lecture about these topics it is very helpful for you to be able to read about those same topics from a different source.

Make sure you are accessing the textbook through the link in this syllabus, or searching for that version through the title provided here, or using the copy on D2L. If you have questions, ask!

Other Required Readings: Additional required readings (if necessary) will be posted on the course D2L website under 'content'

IV. Evaluation

A. Exams. There will be 3 exams throughout the semester - check the schedule at the end of the syllabus for dates. The exams during the semester will be non-cumulative, and cover only the material picking up where the prior exam ended. There is no final exam.

B. D2L Quizzes & Homework. In order to incentivise reading assigned materials and coming to class for lecture, there will be online quizzes (on D2L) throughout the semester. Quizzes should be posted by Friday of each week, and be completed before 11:59pm the Sunday before the next week of class. These quizzes will be short, and should be fairly easy if you have been keeping up with class material. You may take quizzes as many times as you want before the deadline, and your score will be the highest score you achieve.

In addition, homework will be posted regularly on D2L as well. This component of the course will be a combination of small assignments as assigned throughout the semester. This will include assignments handed out in class or assigned on D2L. These assignments will always be mentioned in class slides, so if you miss class it is up to you to make sure you are keeping up to date on D2L.

In general, on D2L, while both quizzes and homework assignments will show up in similar locations, each will be marked as either quizzes or homework. I'll try to keep this as clear as possible, but there's only so much possible in the framework of D2L. If you have questions on this, please ask for clarification.

IT IS VERY EASY TO LOSE A LARGE PART OF YOUR POINTS IN THIS CLASS BY NOT DOING ANY OF THE HOMEWORK AND/OR QUIZZES ON D2L. I warn you about this because students regularly fail the class because they simply don't pay attention to lectures and/or D2L, and miss a lot of these assignments.

C. Research Participation: Learning about Psychological Research.

NOTE: It is very easy for you to say 'I'll take care of this later', and then forget to do it all semester. If you simply forget to do this part of the class, you should note that your grade - by simple virtue of this component of the class being worth 10% of the grade - will automatically be two steps lower on the grading scale than if you had done it (e.g., a 87% or 3.5 would become a 77% or 2.5). Don't put this off - get it done early!

Students are required to participate in activities designed to acquaint them with the nature and variety of research in psychology. Students must participate in four (4) credits worth of enrichment activities. Generally, each hour of research participation is worth 1 credit.

Objective

The objective of this assignment is for you to gain direct experience with psychology research studies and what it is like to participate in them. In class, we shall discuss the social psychology of psychology research and how experimental designs take into account the expectations and beliefs of the participants. By participating in studies yourself, you can gain an understanding of the strengths and limits of psychological research. Psychology Department faculty and their research assistants perform the studies, all of which have been reviewed and approved by the university's Institutional Review Board.

Online Registration

To participate in studies, you must register on the Study Scheduling System, accessible from the Psychology Department website (<https://msu-psychology.sona-systems.com/>). The vendor maintains a strict policy protecting privacy and confidentiality. (This policy is available for review in the Psychology Office.) Navigating the Study Scheduling System is straightforward, and if you need guidance, detailed instructions are available on the Psychology Department website.

Participating in Studies

You will register for studies on the Study Scheduling System. Before you sign up to participate in a study, review any listed restrictions (for example, “left-handed people only”). If you sign up for a study and you do not meet the posted eligibility requirements, you will not receive credit for the study.

Arrive before the scheduled time, as studies start punctually. You will be given a description of what participating in the study will involve, and you will be asked for your consent before the study begins. If you then choose not to participate, you may leave without penalty. You can check to see that you have received credit by selecting My Schedule/Credits, where credits are typically posted within a week after you participate in a study.

If you sign up for a study but cannot attend, please cancel your session on-line.

Under 18?

Special rules apply to students who are under 18. If you are under 18, please contact Audra Jeffrey (jeffre22@msu.edu), for information about permission requirements before participating in studies.

Need Help?

If you need assistance registering for studies, please contact Audra Jeffrey (jeffre22@msu.edu). Your instructor generally cannot be of help with the SONA system, as instructors only get information about SONA participation at the end of the semester, and do not have access to student records or participation information during the semester.

Deadline

The last day to participate in studies is when the SONA system closes for the semester, which can be as early as the Friday before the last week of classes. Do not wait until this time, as many studies finish before this and you may not have any opportunities to participate left. Get this done quickly so that you don't have to continue to worry about it. Once SONA closes, I have no ability for you to make up this element of your grade.

SONA Profile

MAKE SURE THAT WHEN YOU SIGN UP FOR SONA, YOU SIGN UP FOR *THIS CLASS!*

If you sign up for the wrong class, I won't receive any of your credits at the end of the semester. This can be fixed after grades are in, but it takes more paperwork and can have impacts on your transcript in weird ways. If you sign up for the wrong section you can change this throughout the semester, but it is your responsibility to know what section you are in and make sure this is correct in SONA. Check this more than just when you initially sign up.

Alternative to Research Participation

If for any reason you do not want to participate in the above research, an alternative exists that involves writing a series of papers on existing psychological research. If you want to engage in this option instead of research please contact the instructor for more information. Take note that this alternative assignment is not an effective solution for finding yourself at the end of the semester without having participated in research, as the alternative is likely to be more time consuming than simple participation. More information can be found by contacting the instructor.

Any assignments completed this way are due at the end of week 12. This alternative to research is not meant to be a failsafe for those who completely forget about this component of the grade all semester, but rather for those who choose not to participate in research (for whatever reason).

TROUBLESHOOTING SONA AND PROBLEMS WITH STUDIES.

If you have an issue in the SONA system, the answer is almost always to email the SONA administrator (jeffre22@msu.edu). I do not have access to this system, so if you reach out to me with those sorts of questions I'm likely to tell you to contact the SONA administrator.

If you have a problem with a specific study, the first step should be reaching out to the researcher(s) listed on that study. You should give a few days for a reply, but if you're unable to resolve a problem with a study with the researchers on that study you should next reach out to the SONA administrator (jeffre22@msu.edu). You can feel free to CC me at this step if you'd like, but I'm unlikely to be able to do more than the SONA administrator.

Do take note that when you complete a study - especially in person studies - that it may take a few days for that credit to move from pending to complete. Some labs only update credits once a week. If it's been less than a week since a study don't worry too much about pending credits, but if it's been more than a week feel free to reach out to the researchers on that study.

D. Late policy.

For a long time in my syllabus I've had a fairly strict late policy with the intent of keeping students focused on deadlines and the pace of class. While that policy was in place to help keep students deadline focused, I rarely if ever actually used it other than as a looming threat that was rarely if

ever actually enacted.

The purpose of all (reasonable) late policies is to keep you focused on the pace of work in a class. If work can simply be turned in whenever, it's easy to get behind and believe you can work on and turn in a semester's worth of work on the last day of class. You can't. Even if you could, your learning outcomes will be substantially impacted.

I'm trying something new here, and just being open and honest with you with the hope that you're open and honest with me. I'm pretty flexible if something comes up and you need a little bit more time on assignments. If something is due on a Sunday night but your power goes out (for instance) and you can't get to it until the next day, that's not a problem, and certainly not something I'd ever penalize.

That said, if something is due on a Sunday night but you just have a bad weekend, or have other things going on, or honestly just forget, but realize the next day you missed the assignment and want to complete it, I'm kind of fine with that as well.

I've had students point out that some students are likely to take advantage of my kindness in this space, and I recognize that. But putting systems in place to try and stop some of you from taking advantage of this also hurts some of you who simply need that little kindness to succeed. Personally, and morally, I'm willing to make that trade to help those who need it.

This flexibility is not unlimited, and there are constraints outside of my reach.

If you need to turn something in late, send me an email letting me know, or put a note in the comments on the assignment in D2L. Again, even just saying 'sorry, I forgot about this' is enough.

Do not get into a habit of simply turning all work in late. There's another term for that, and it's called 'falling behind in class' - your goal should always be to catch up on anything you missed as quickly as possible. If you want help planning out a schedule for things you've missed, let me know.

I reserve the right to not accept excessive amounts of late work, or excessive late work that is excessively late.

The reason for this is something that is out of my hands - the grade deadline. While I can be flexible during the semester, the university has strict policies that prohibit me from accepting late work after the close of the semester. While you can catch up on work - even larger parts of it - earlier in the class, this gets difficult to impossible the later in the semester we are.

Take note that students frequently believe an incomplete is something that can help them in this situation of catching up on huge parts of the class after the close of the semester - I am here to tell you right now that it cannot.

The university policy on incompletes requires that a student had completed 6/7ths of the work in a

class (roughly 85%), and had something that came up that stopped them completing that last bit. The university is very very strict on this, and I have no power in this space to override policy, and can be penalized if I do so. (<https://reg.msu.edu/academicprograms/Print.aspx?Section=528>)

All in all, make sure you're doing your work on time. Use deadlines that are clearly listed on D2L to plan out your workload and stay on pace. If you need a little extra time here or there, that's fine. But - and this is a very important but - do not let this honesty and kindness on my end result in you falling behind. Stay on pace and any late policy is irrelevant.

E. Point breakdown by category. (Note: Points in D2L will not always match these points)

ASSIGNMENT	% OF TOTAL
D2L Weekly Quizzes	15%
D2L Homework Quizzes	15%
Other Homework & Labs	15%
Research Participation	10%
Exams (3x)	45%

V. Grading Scale

GRADE	PERCENT
4.0 (A)	90%-100%
3.5 (B+)	85%-89%
3.0 (B)	80%-84%
2.5 (C+)	75%-79%
2.0 (C)	70%-74%
1.5 (D+)	65%-69%
1.0 (D)	60%-64%
0.0 (F)	<60%

THESE ARE FIRM CUT-OFFS. I round up to the nearest percent (e.g., 89.5% rounds up to 90% and equals a 4.0, but 89.4% rounds down to 89% and equals a 3.5). The point categories listed above reflect this rounding. DO NOT attempt to negotiate grades with me. It is your responsibility to make sure your grade ends up where you want it to be. I have provided ample opportunities for students who wish to do well in this class. Students who want to improve their *learning* (and therefore their grades) should see me *early* in the class for assistance. I will *not* negotiate grades with you, but I will do everything in my power to help you put in the necessary work to be as successful as you desire.

VI. Disability Accommodation

Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at rcpd.msu.edu. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to the instructor at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date may not be honored. Please contact the professor to coordinate what accommodations will be made in your individual case for this class.

VII. Academic Honesty

Unless otherwise noted, all work for this course should be independently completed. Students should take special care to provide proper citation of sources when submitting written work. Adopting words, passages, or ideas without citation is plagiarism and will be treated as such per MSU guidelines. Furthermore, students should not self-plagiarize, that is, reuse their own work from another course. In addition, unless explicitly stated that it is allowed, students should not use their own work from within the course.

Letting any other student in this class see your work, even if you're only 'comparing' or 'checking it', or doing whatever you want to say you're doing, is a clear violation of academic integrity. The easiest way to make sure that no other students turn in your work without your knowledge is to not let your work out of your hands. Your work is your intellectual property (IP), and you should protect it as such. Sharing your work with other students may very well lead to you failing the class if they turn it in as their own.

Doing work with another student and then turning in the same (or slightly altered) work, using the work of another student to complete your own work, submitting another student's work as your own, having another student do your work, or copying direct wording from another student or other source, are only some examples of cases that are essentially definitions of plagiarism. If no one has ever told you this, now I have. Copy-pasting anything while completing an assignment is quite possibly plagiarism, and it is not hyperbole to say that while you are in college you should think deeply about what you are doing any time you copy-paste anything for a class assignment.

Copy-pasting things from the internet 'as a start' for completing assignments is one of the worst strategies you could ever hope to apply in a classroom setting, and doing so will likely also lead to some degree of plagiarism. YOUR WORK IS YOUR WORK.

The use of generative AI (e.g. ChatGPT) is not allowed in this class, unless explicitly stated. As 18-22 year olds, you should recognize the threat of AI taking jobs from you in the future. You're here in college to build skills that hopefully - *hopefully* - keep you protected in that regard, at least as much as possible. You should recognize that the use of generative AI to do work in any

of your classes is explicitly AI taking your job from you right now, in the moment. While you may have other jobs, being a college student is very much a job. If you let generative AI do that work for you (or if you cheat in any other ways) it's likely you'll leave college feeling like you have no marketable knowledge or skills.

Penalties for plagiarism and cheating include a range of outcomes, up to and including automatic failure of the course. Please read that again. If you commit an academic integrity violation, you may simply fail the course, regardless of how much of it you have completed, or in what capacity. This happens frequently, despite all my warnings.

Penalties for academic integrity violations generally start in the range of a 'double zero' - a zero for the assignment that counts worth double. This is meant to make academic integrity violations more impactful than simply not doing the work at all. Please read that again. If you cheat on an assignment, the grade you will receive will be worse than if you turned in nothing at all, but, depending on the infraction, you're also likely to simply just fail the course.

In addition to all of the above, plagiarism and cheating are reported to the university and a record of these events is held by the university. There is an office of the university specifically dedicated to this, and one of your goals in college should be never interacting with it. This goal is relatively simple to achieve: maintain appropriate standards of academic integrity and honesty.

I do not claim to be able to catch everyone that cheats in any class, so when I do catch individuals I make sure that the penalties are sufficient to attempt to deter this behavior in the future. I do not enjoy in the slightest entering failing grades for students who have committed academic honesty infractions - it is in fact one of my least favorite parts of teaching. I do it because it is my responsibility to all of you to do so.

You should also consider, at this point, if you haven't before, that cheating in any class here in college means that you have not actually earned a college degree. While you may get a diploma in this way, it thus renders the actual important part of college - the learning - voided. A college diploma will open some doors, but the knowledge and skill that you - and you alone - learn during that college experience is what will actually get you jobs and careers and success.

I recognize that cheating is often situational. You have multiple jobs, you have family issues come up, you have relationship issues come up, you have other class commitments, or you simply didn't budget your time well. College is stressful, and demanding. If you find yourself in these situations in any class: TALK TO YOUR PROFESSOR. I guarantee that they are happier to work with you ahead of time and find ways for you to complete work rather than having to fill out academic integrity paperwork.

In addition, here is some University language:

The Spartan Code of Honor states, "As a Spartan, I will strive to uphold values of the highest ethical standard. I will practice honesty in my work, foster honesty in my peers, and take pride in knowing

that honor is worth more than grades. I will carry these values beyond my time as a student at Michigan State University, continuing the endeavor to build personal integrity in all that I do." In addition, Article 2.III.B.2 of the Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR) states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." The Psychology Department adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations.

Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use any website to complete any course work in this course. Students who violate MSU academic integrity rules may receive a penalty grade, including a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also the Academic Integrity webpage.)

VIII. Our Social Contract

In order for this course to function optimally, we both have parts to play, and when we each do our part, everyone benefits.

As professor, I promise to always do my very best to select interesting and thought-provoking course material. I will prepare course materials to the best of my abilities, and I will make decisions about the course according to the learning goals I have outlined here. I will act fairly – holding every student to the same high standard and providing equal opportunities for success.

As student, you promise to prepare diligently for class, to always contribute to the best of your abilities, to never cheat or act dishonestly, and to treat your classmates and me with the highest respect. You will do your best to attend class and be on time. You will not ask me to grant you special privileges that aren't available to the rest of your classmates, in order that I may adhere to my promise to be fair and just to all of you.

IX. Limits to confidentiality.

Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues to protect the health and safety of MSU community members and others. All instructors are mandatory reporters in these cases, and are obliged by contract not to maintain confidentiality as such. As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices (including the MSU Police Department) if you share it with me:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child,
- Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff, and
- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling Center.

X. Course Topics and Calendar (Tentative, subject to change)

Week	Dates	Topics	Reading/Homework/Due
1	8/28-9/1	Syllabus Variables, Measurement Sampling and Samples	Read: Syllabus; Chapter 1 Access: D2L, SONA, Textbook, Syllabus
2	9/4-9/8	Data Visualization Data Summary Statistics	Read: Chapters 2-4 Note: Labor Day
3	9/11-9/15	Probability	Read: Chapter 5
4	9/18-9/22	Sampling Distributions The Central Limit Theorem	Read: Chapter 6
5	9/25-9/29	Effect Sizes Introduction to Hypothesis Testing	Read: Chapter 7 Exam 1
6	10/2-10/6	Univariate z- and t-tests Bivariate t-tests	Read: Chapters 8-10
7	10/9-10/13	One-Way ANOVA	Read: Chapter 11
8	10/16-10/23	Psychological Examples Applications of Statistics	Read: n/a
9	10/23-10/27	Correlation	Read: Chapter 12 Note: Break Day
10	10/30-11/3	Simple Linear Regression	Read: Chapter 13 Exam 2
11	11/6-11/10	Non-Parametric Tests Univariate & Bivariate Chi-Square	Read: Chapter 14
12	11/13-11/17	Factorial ANOVA Multiple Regression	Read: OpenIntro-Statistics 4th edition (Chapter 9)*
13	11/20-11/24	Catch-up	Read: TBD Note: Thanksgiving

14	11/27-12/1	Statistical Power Classification Errors	Read: Lane's Intro to Stats (Chapter 13)* Note: SONA deadline
15	12/4-12/8	Wrap-up	Read: Lane's Intro to Stats (Chapter 1)* Exam 3
	12/11	Finals week	n/a

Note: Quizzes are due at the end of each week (Sunday 11:59pm) over prior week's material

Note: Homework for the week is generally due at the end of each week (Sunday 11:59pm) setting up the next week's content, but may also be due at other times.

Note: Exams and papers are generally due on Friday night (11:59pm), and will clearly be marked as such on D2L.

* These are secondary textbooks aside from your main textbook, and can be found in the content section of D2L.

Make sure you are checking D2L, and understand how to check and track deadlines on D2L. Note that deadlines are not the same as assignment closing dates - assignments are due on the due date, obviously.