

# OWL and PRS Components to Res Ec 211, Introductory Statistics

## OWL Component

### Prelecture Assignments (Worth Five Percent of Your Final Grade):

I want you to look at the text material ahead of time. So, I am requiring you to do some reading and to answer questions about that material, all before you come to class. More specifically, after reading the text material for the day's lecture, go to OWL and answer five questions. Again, you must answer these before coming to class. The questions are randomly selected from a larger pool. Answer four of five correctly, and you get full credit for that assignment. (I refer to each reading task and OWL exercise as a prelecture assignment, or "prelec" for short.)

Reading assignments by date and lecture number are presented in the reading list. You are under a time constraint within which you must complete the OWL exercise. The OWL component for a given day's prelec is normally activated at 9:30 a.m. on the day of the previous lecture. It is deactivated (i.e., turned off) one-half hour before the given day's lecture. There are 35 prelec assignments during the semester.

If you do the OWL exercise within the time constraint and answer four of five questions correctly, you get full credit for that prelec; i.e., you earn a grade of one. Suppose you score less than four correct in OWL. You have two choices regarding what you can do. Either you can quit and earn a grade of zero for that prelec, or you can try again. Before trying again, you may want to review the reading material. If you do try again, OWL will randomly select a new set of five questions, and you repeat the process. In fact, you are permitted to repeat the process as many times as you wish within the time constraint, with no penalty. In addition, each time you answer a question – whether correctly or incorrectly – you are provided with immediate feedback pertaining to that question.

Regarding the contribution toward your final grade, there are 35 prelec assignments for which you can earn a maximum of 38 points. (Prelec 1, which is a tutorial, is worth 3 points. Prelec 2 is worth 2. All remaining prelecs are worth one point each.) Suppose that your total prelec scores sum to 19. You have earned  $19/38 = 50\%$  of the maximum. Since OWL prelecture assignments count 5% toward your final grade, the contribution toward your final grade is  $0.50 \times 0.05 = 0.025 = 2.5\%$ .

### Words of Caution Pertaining to the Deactivation of the First Five Prelecs:

Prelec 1 has nothing to do with the text material. Rather, it is a tutorial in using OWL. Completing the tutorial results in earning full credit for Prelec 1. The tutorial is currently activated. The readings for Lecture 1 (January 28) and Lecture 2 (January 30) comprise Prelec 2. Prelec 2 is activated on January 28 at 9:30 a.m. Prelec 3 covers the readings for Lecture 3 (February 1). It is activated on January 30 at 9:30 a.m. Prelec 4 covers the readings for Lecture 4 (February 4). It is activated on February 1 at 9:30 a.m. Prelec 5 covers the readings for Lecture 5 (February 6). It is activated on February 4 at 9:30 a.m.

To combat the confusion that usually accompanies a large course during the first week, I am extending the time period during which the first four prelecs can be completed. Specifically, you have until February 6 at 8:30 a.m. to complete Prelecs 1-4. Please note that this is the normal deactivation time for Prelec 5.

Beginning with Prelec 5 and continuing for the remainder of the semester, the activation and deactivation of all prelecs will follow the general rule presented in the second paragraph above. That is, the OWL component for a given day's prelec will be activated at 9:30 a.m. on the day of the previous lecture; it will be deactivated (i.e., turned off) one-half hour before the given day's lecture.

### **Quizzes (Worth 10 Percent of Your Final Grade):**

You will take four quizzes in OWL during the semester. Each quiz will be taken prior to a scheduled exam. A quiz consists of five to 15 questions. Quizzes are designed to test your conceptual and mathematical skills. They are not multiple choice nor are they true/false.

For each quiz, you get three tries for each question. The best score in three attempts is recorded as your grade for that question in that quiz. Pay attention to when our evening exams are scheduled. In general, a quiz is activated at 9:30 a.m. approximately nine days before the exam is scheduled. A quiz is deactivated (i.e., taken down) at 8:30 a.m. two days before the exam. You must complete the quiz within this time frame.

Be cautious when it comes to answering the questions. When repeating a question for a second or third try, the sentence structure for questions remains the same as in previous attempts. Any numbers appearing in the questions, which form the basis for performing calculations, will change from all previous attempts. This suggests that you must be familiar with the logic and procedure of the problem in order to answer it correctly. Guessing will not work. (I refer to these questions as "parameterized." This approach affords me great flexibility in reusing questions that require calculations.)

Feedback is available for the questions in the quizzes, but feedback will not be activated until noon one or two days before the exam. All three items – the length of time during which each quiz is active, the three tries that you get to assist with improving, and the eventual feedback – should be a help when it comes to preparing for each exam.

Regarding the contribution toward your final grade, suppose there are 40 quiz questions in total. Each quiz question answered correctly earns you one point. So, the maximum number of quiz points that you can earn is 40. Suppose that you answer half of the quiz problems correctly, so that you earn 20 quiz points. You have earned  $20/40 = 50\%$  of the maximum. Since OWL quizzes count 10% of your final grade, your quiz scores have contributed  $0.50 \times 0.10 = 0.05 = 5\%$  toward your final grade.

### **Beginning Tutorial in Owl**

As mentioned in the "Words of Caution" section above, Prelec 1 will be a tutorial in using OWL. Even if you are already familiar with OWL, I encourage you to take the tutorial. It amounts to points for Prelec 1.

### **Logging Into OWL and Res Ec 211**

There are several ways to get into OWL. Below are two of the simpler approaches.

Simple Approach 1: After selecting a browser, type the following URL: <http://owl.oit.umass.edu/>. Next, scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on Resource Economics. Where it says "Login:", type in your eight-digit student number. Where it says "Password:", type in your last name. Click on LOG IN. After this first time around, you have the flexibility to change your password to something else.

Simple Approach 2: Type the following URL: <http://courses.umass.edu/rese211b/> . This is the URL presented at the top of the course syllabus under "Web Site." Once you're there, click on OWL. Repeat the process for logging into OWL presented in the paragraph directly above.

Whichever approach you select, you may want to bookmark the URL for quick access in the future.

### **Watch for Announcements Relating to OWL and Res Ec 211**

If there is a new announcement, it will pop up automatically each time you log onto OWL.

### **If You Have a Technical Problem with OWL**

If you have a technical problem with OWL, e.g., something wrong with a quiz, an error with a question, type a short message as to what the problem is and hit the "Send Message" button once. The message will go to me and to my OWL technician. You will receive a reply later. Three items here: do a "Print Screen" so that you have visual back-up if it gets to that point. Second, be brief in your message yet as substantive as possible. Third, when submitting the message, click only once.

### **If You Have a Problem with the Course Material**

Never use "Send Message" if you are having trouble with the course material. If you don't know how to do an OWL question, that is quite a different issue than there being a technical problem with OWL. Questions relating to lecture material, lecture notes, "handouts," and outside "homeworks" are reserved for your teaching assistant and instructor. They are not the responsibility of the OWL technician.

## **The PRS Component**

We begin using PRS on February 4. (This is Lecture 4). **You must register your clicker ID number.** You can do this by getting into OWL and clicking on Clicker Registration.

A daily PRS session is worth two points. You earn a maximum of one point simply for trying all questions during a session. You also earn a maximum of one point for answering all questions correctly during a session. The number of questions during a session determines the weighting scheme for each point. Several examples follow.

Suppose I give you only one question during a session. Since there is only one question, this one question contributes 100% to each point. If you answer incorrectly, you earn one point for trying and zero points for being correct. Your total earned is one point. If you answer correctly, again you earn one point for trying. Now, you also earn the additional point for being correct. So, in this instance, you earn the maximum of two points.

Suppose I give you four questions during a session. Since there are four questions, each one contributes 25% to each point. If, for example, you answer all four incorrectly, you earn 0.25 of a point for each question that you tried, for a total of one point. You earn zero points as your contribution toward correct answers. Thus, you earn one point in total.

For the same four questions, suppose that you answer two correctly. Again, you earn 0.25 for each question that you attempted, for a total of one point. You also earn  $0.25 + 0.25 = 0.50$  of a point for the two questions that you answered correctly. So, in this session, you earn a total of 1.5 points.

Regarding the contribution toward your final grade, suppose that there are 40 PRS sessions during the semester. The maximum number of PRS points that you can earn is  $40 \times 2 = 80$ . Suppose that you earn 60 PRS points. You have earned  $60/80 = 75\%$  of the maximum. Since PRS activities count 5% toward your final grade, your PRS activities have contributed  $0.75 \times 0.05 = 0.0375 = 3.75\%$  toward your final grade.

### **Missing A PRS Session**

If you do not bring your clicker to class, if the battery in your clicker quits, or if you decide not to attend a class (for whatever reason), you can't engage in PRS activities. You are permitted to miss up to three daily PRS sessions with no penalty.