

IP309-15 Quantitative Methods: Understanding relationships in data

22/23

Department

Liberal Arts

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Lauren Bird

Credit value

15

Module duration

11 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

As individuals and scholars, we are frequently confronted with the claim that A causes B, or the requirement to verify whether a relationship between A and B exists. While anecdotal accounts can help inform our opinion, it is dangerous to rely on one-off observations to verify more general relationships. Equally, even where we believe there may be a relationship, we can be misled by confounding influences which obscure or mislead us.

This is where quantitative approaches can help us untangle the relationships we observe around us, and help us answer question of whether these relationships hold in the wider population. The skills acquired on this module will be invaluable for any student wishing to pursue research which involves large numbers of participants, or which involves the analysis of datasets from official sources.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

This module uses an innovative Problem-Based Learning approach to teaching intermediate quantitative concepts which promotes self-directed and reflective learning. Through tackling

multifaceted and complex social issues, students will begin to generate, appreciate and understand broader, underlying, conceptual problems around why quantitative approaches are relevant, and to uncover the appropriate methodologies. In addition to improved learning outcomes, this approach also aligns learning activities with the processes of independent research — effectively preparing students for independent project work or modules which encourage individual enquiry. Through group discussion and research, students will begin building their knowledge and confidence in plotting and estimating bivariate relationships, uncover the core technical approaches we use for this, and the conditions under which these approaches are appropriate. They will build on existing knowledge of distributions to study the principles of hypothesis testing to understand how we can use results based on a sample to make inferences about the wider population. As the course develops, problems will move toward the requirement to understand more complex multivariate relationships, the importance of control variables in reducing 'noise' in our models, and finally extensions which allow us to use our frameworks to plot non-linear relationships. The combination of PBL discussion classes, and practical workshops will build students' confidence at using statistical computer packages to put into practice the concepts they uncover through their research, and to take their first steps in statistically modelling the relationship between two or more variables. This module builds on the introductory understanding students acquired in IP110 Quantitative Methods for Undergraduate Research.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

The following outline represents the core knowledge and competency gain associated with the course activities. In order to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and competency, the course is delivered via Problem-Based Learning which emphasizes student knowledge acquisition via efforts to understand the parameters of, and solutions to, complex real-world situations. Study will encourage engagement in contemporary challenges across themes such as education, deprivation, social statistics, climate and environment, and health and wellbeing.. The course will be based around four key conceptual problems around the use of quantitative research to elicit relationships:

1. Why employ quantitative approaches to relationships, and why not? Which will allow students to develop knowledge and understanding around:

- Core statistical concepts used to describe relationships
- Differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches and their respective strengths
- Why correlation isn't causality

1. How can we model the strength of a relationship? Which will allow students to develop knowledge and understanding around:

- Core principles of linear regression modelling
- Estimating straight line relationships using ordinary least squared (OLS) approaches
- The required assumptions of ordinary least squared modelling and what happens when we ignore them
- Using regression analysis of data samples to make inferences about the population

1. How can we deal with complex multifaceted relationships? Which will allow students to develop knowledge and understanding around:

- Control variables, confounding influences, and the usefulness (and shortcomings) of multivariate modelling
- Estimating linear relationships using OLS when we have many variables
- The required assumptions of multivariate ordinary least squared modelling and what happens when we ignore them
- Using multivariate regression analysis of data samples to make inferences about the population

1. What happens when we don't have a linear relationship? Which will allow students to develop knowledge and understanding around:

- The role of interactions in data
- Inclusion of data transformations in regression models and what they mean
- Interpreting binary variables in the context of statistical models

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding and usefulness of the key concepts in describing relationships in data, the meaning and of descriptive statistics used to describe such relationships, and the generation and application of such statistics using real-world data.
- Use regression analysis to evaluate linear bivariate relationships in real-world data, understand issues in data and its collection

Research element

This is an optional module on the Liberal Arts course which aims to facilitate the acquisition by students of a range of methods of enquiry from various disciplines and equip them to deploy those skills in research. Research skills are embedded into the teaching strategy of all of the course's modules which, collaboratively, seek to develop and enhance students' capacity to conduct independently original research into a current problem. Specifically, the approach used in this module serves to align learning activities with the processes of independent research – effectively preparing students for independent project work or modules which encourage individual enquiry.

Interdisciplinary

This is an optional module on the Liberal Arts course which adopts an interdisciplinary approach spanning the arts, humanities, social and natural sciences fields in order to engage with debates on topical, local national and international issues

International

This is an optional module on the BA in Liberal Arts course which offers a unique transdisciplinary

learning experience allowing students to achieve breadth and depth of knowledge

Subject specific skills

Skills in data analysis using a range of methods

Transferable skills

Skills in using statistical computer software packages to manage data and perform data analysis tasks

Problem solving

Information technology

Numeracy

Oral and written communication

Digital literacy

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	10 sessions of 2 hours (13%)
Practical classes	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Private study	62 hours (41%)
Assessment	50 hours (33%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Research and preparation for classes and assessments

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A2

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Technical Report 1 x 1,250-word technical report (30%)	30%	10 hours	Yes (extension)
Reassessment component is the same			
Assessment component			
In-class group presentation	15%	10 hours	Yes (extension)
Reassessment component is the same			
Assessment component			
Group technical report	15%	10 hours	Yes (extension)
Reassessment component is the same			
Assessment component			
Computer-based exam Questions seen 7 days before the test.	40%	20 hours	No
Reassessment component is the same			

Feedback on assessment

- Written feedback for written assignments (individual and group) will be provided via Tabula
- Written feedback will be provided for presentations via Tabula in addition to feedback and discussion in class at time of presentation
- Feedback on the exam will be provided individually with written comments via Tabula.

Availability

There is currently no information about the courses for which this module is core or optional.