

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

# Welcome!!

Let us start by [introducing ourselves](#)...

[Major news](#):

- to find the latest course information... → web page for VHM 801:  
[www.stryhnstatistics.ca/vhm801](http://www.stryhnstatistics.ca/vhm801)
- to “connect” yourself to the course (information, discussion...) → log into the Moodle account for VHM 801 ([moodle.upei.ca](http://moodle.upei.ca)),
- to follow the course efficiently → **recommended** that you decide about a [textbook](#) and the [statistical software](#) to use pretty soon.

This video: [Introduction to course logistics](#):

- demonstrations of [where to find and do](#) stuff,
- [main topics](#): schedule, textbook, software, and marks,
- also a statement of (and reflection on) the [course objectives](#).

## SCHEDULE, COURSE WEBSITE AND MOODLE SITE

### Schedule:

- all sessions are planned to be conducted **in-person**,
- plenty of **online material** for course → allows you to replace some in-person sessions with work on your own, as needed,
- only the **exams** (mid-term and final) are **mandatory** in-person components.

Course **webpage/site** ([www.stryhnstatistics.ca/vhm801](http://www.stryhnstatistics.ca/vhm801)):

- the **primary source of information**:
  - schedule, lectures, labs (data and solutions), assignments...<sup>1</sup>,
- **dynamic page/site**: continually updated (so check back for updates),

**Moodle site** for “2024F VHM–8010–01” (should be in your Moodle account)

— mostly for communication and extras,

- \* **Discussion forum**: for you to view and participate in discussions (the **preferred platform** for all questions and discussion),
- links to home assignments (eventually) and other assorted course material,
- (optional) quizzes to confirm and/or improve your understanding.

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<sup>1</sup> Also includes links to **previous years**: allow you to explore assignments and exams (“everything”).

## COMPUTING RESOURCES FOR THE COURSE

### Calculators:

- traditional learning tool for statistics<sup>2</sup>, and handy for quick calculations,
- this course: **helpful for exams**; a calculator with basic calculus<sup>3</sup> should suffice.

### Computers and statistical packages:

- today, we cannot imagine statistics without computers,
  - \* easier — by avoiding tedious calculations, and vastly widens the feasible range of models and analyses,
  - \* however increases also the risk of errors . . . .
- the course uses primarily<sup>4</sup> **Minitab**, but supports **Stata** and **R**; all 3 software packages:
  - \* are well-documented and updated programs, available at UPEI (Stata note<sup>5</sup>),
  - \* have good graphing facilities, and have **both menus** and **commands**,
- **you choose** between Minitab and others — a trade-off:
  - \* **Minitab** (version 21, or earlier): is easier to use through menus,
  - \* **Stata/R**: are used in other AVC/UPEI courses, have wider range of statistical methods, but also steeper learning curves.

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<sup>2</sup> Based on what historically was available; also, their use may improve understanding of formulas and methods.

<sup>3</sup> Including memory and logarithm etc., possibly also “1-variable statistics”.

<sup>4</sup> All demonstrations in lectures and labs will be based on Minitab.

<sup>5</sup> At this point, UPEI does not have a site license for Stata, so personal licenses are needed.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAM FOR THE COURSE

The course mark is made up by:

- **4 home assignments** (two for 10% and two for 15%),
  - \* tentative dates: 26/9, 10/10, 31/10 and 15/11 (deadlines one week later),
  - \* will you have “own data” by mid-November (to replace the last assignment by a small project)?
- **final exam** (50%):
  - \* tentative date and time: Monday 16/12, 9am-12pm,
  - \* 3 hours, in-class, open book, no computers (instead: computer listings),
- **mid-term exam** (**optional** ~ 15%, deducted from final exam):
  - \* date: around 24/10, duration: 1 hour, covers Sessions 1–7,
  - \* same conditions as final exam  $\Rightarrow$  training session.

**Past experience** with marks and exams in the course:

- as a general rule, students who follow the course seriously should pass the course (minimum 60%) rather easily...
- typical course marks: **average** around 80%, **range** from mid-60s to low 90s.

## WHAT ABOUT CHATGPT?

**Generative AI** is “everywhere” (ChatGPT and many other AI tools), and there is no point in avoiding the technology.

Generative AI **as a helper**:

- improvement over simple web searches (“Google”), by offering (mostly) well explained and **balanced answers**,
- may offer an interactive dialog, which can help to make answers more precise and to generate understanding,
- can **refine one’s writing** (both logic and grammar), and this may in particular help people who do not have English as their first language,
- can offer suggestions for coding (but Minitab does not require coding).

Generative AI **being misused** (in the context of the course):

- as a reference for definitive “true” statements; **Wikipedia is not a proper reference**,
- as a way to achieve good marks on assignments and tests; **this would be very unfair**,
- when replacing independent thought and judgement; **good statistics comes very much from having experience**.

**Bottom line**: your use of AI tools is mostly allowed and welcomed, but there will be rules to follow for the home assignments.

## WHY VETERINARY BIostatISTICS VHM 801?

Some **possible reasons** for your interest:

- mandatory<sup>6</sup>, unless you've had “statistics” before,
- statistics is useful (or **indispensable**) for data analysis, maybe in particular the data analysis you expect to carry out in your graduate program,
- statistics helps to develop a **critical sense** for data and the results of data analysis,
- this course could be the foundation/building block for more advanced methods,
- maybe you expect statistics to be fun! :-)

**Possible scenarios** where this may **not** be the right course for you:

- AVC students with a reasonably solid background in statistics may want to consider obtaining a waiver<sup>7</sup> for the course requirement,
- students unable to participate in most/all in-person sessions may want to consider enrolling in an online introductory statistics course (many exist with similar content) that is specifically designed for online delivery.

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<sup>6</sup> UPEI Calendar: “All [AVC] students are expected to complete VHM 801 [...] unless comparable training has been completed prior to entry into the program.”

<sup>7</sup> The requirement being waived means that the course is no longer mandatory, but that other courses will have to meet the requirements for credits in the program.