

Journal 3: Recommendations for Future GH811 Students

Dear Future GH811 Student,

Welcome to GH811! Throughout this course, you will design and conduct a research study from beginning to end. Upon completion of this course, you will have gained valuable skills in quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, as well as manuscript writing and working successfully as a team. Although you may encounter challenges and frustrations throughout the course, the end product of your research and the skills you will learn will make it worthwhile. I have compiled some recommendations and words of advice for you to help you succeed in this course.

First, be sure to start the problem sets as early as possible. While the course does not cover everything you need to know in R Studio during class, the learning modules that Professor Stokes has developed are helpful. I also benefited greatly from attending any TA sessions covering the modules. Do not be afraid to ask Professor Stokes or the TA for assistance, and I also found it helpful to supplement the modules with online resources for the problem sets. Also, although our class did not tend to use the class list serve for questions often, I think this could potentially be a very valuable resource to gain insight from your classmates. Finally, try not to get too frustrated! R Studio can be a complicated program for many students, and there is a steep learning curve. However, with the help of Professor Stokes, the TA, and your classmates, you will do just fine!

Second, in terms of the team project, I have several recommendations. This course requires a high level of group work, and it is essential that you function well as a team. Although you may have developed team charters for BUSPH courses in the past, I would *strongly* recommend putting a lot of thought and effort into how you organize and decide how you will

work as a team. In addition, I would encourage you to carefully choose a topic that the whole group is interested in, as you will be spending a significant amount of time on this research throughout the semester. I would also strongly recommend having a standing group meeting time for every week, as communication and planning as a group is essential in this course due to the high workload of the project. My group generally met after class, divided up the deliverables for the week, and then communicated throughout the rest of the week via email and text. We all worked off of google docs, which allowed each team member to view what the other members were working on and write comments and questions before submitting the final product. Because all of the deliverables are due at 5pm on Sunday before class, my group found it extremely helpful to have an internal deadline of Friday at midnight, so that we had the weekend to compile and review the complete assignment. Finally, I would also encourage you to start collecting both the quantitative and qualitative data as soon as possible in order to achieve your calculated sample size and to have ample time to analyze and interpret the data.

Overall, you will learn many useful and valuable skills throughout this course. I have often referred to the skills I learned throughout this course in applications and interviews for jobs, and I have also used these skills in my work. It was extremely rewarding to view the tangible work product at the end of the semester and to be able to explain the findings of our unique and original research study to the class. It may even inform policy or recommendations for the school, if you are lucky! Enjoy the course, and good luck!