36-303: Sampling, Surveys and Society

On Posters
Brian W. Junker
132E Baker Hall
brian@stat.cmu.edu

Handouts & Stuff

- Handouts Today
  - These Notes
  - Poster Evaluation Sheets
- Online – Week 14 area
  - Links to poster advice and poster templates
  - Criteria for final presentations
  - Criteria for final papers

Week 14 – This Week

- Today – On Posters
- Thu – Guest presentation
  - Leah Lang
    - Survey and Market/User Research for EDUCAUSE & Carnegie Mellon University
    - Mathematical Statistician at the US Census Bureau
    - B.S. in Statistics (Penn State) & MS from Joint Program in Survey Methodology (JPSM) at the University of Maryland.

Week 15 – Next Week
Final Presentations (almost random)

- Email me a copy of the slides
- Criteria posted in Week 14 area
- **Tue**
  - F: Parking Meters at CMU
  - C: How to Improve On-Campus Parking
  - D: Political Attitudes and Academic Major
  - A: A Political Survey of the CMU Community
- **Thu**
  - B: Music/Movie Internet Piracy at CMU
  - G: Spatial and Analytic Study of Student Housing
  - E: Analysis of Off-Campus Housing Search

Week 15 – Next Week
Final Items to Turn In

- Friday by 11:59pm – Final papers
  - 1 pdf per group
  - Email to me or submit on blackboard
  - Criteria posted in Week 14 area
- Friday by 11:59pm – 2nd Peer Evaluations
  - 1 email to me per person
  - Evaluations (one per group member) attached to that email

Posters – Free Printing

- Must fit on poster board 3 ft high x 4 ft wide.
- I need one name from each group, to give the Psychology Department
  - That person should put the poster on a flash drive as a .pdf file
  - Bring to Baker 332V to be printed
- DO NOT WAIT 'till the last minute to print it
  - MoM is Weds May 9
  - ***Many*** groups printing posters using this service
  - Print your poster NO LATER THAN Mon May 7
    - Preferably by Fri May 4!

Posters at MoM

- Everyone in your group must participate
  - Stand together by your poster at the scheduled time
  - Each person should have 1-3 minutes of stuff to say about the project – very similar to your powerpoint presentations *(practice this – it is different!)*
  - Be ready to answer judges' (or other visitors') questions!
- I will try to come to your poster at your scheduled time also
  - Please wait for me, since you can only drop an exam grade if I know you're there!
- All posters eligible for Statistics poster prize(s)

Posters

- A poster SHOULD NOT BE
  - A *complete record* of your project
  - A *self-contained* document that a visitor can read and understand without your help
  - *Full of text* or cluttered in any way
  - *Difficult to follow* or understand the main ideas
- A poster SHOULD BE
  - *Attractive and interesting* from a distance
  - *An invitation to talk* with you (be ready to talk!)
  - *An invitation to read* your final report (bring a couple copies!)

Posters – What is the Goal?

- You want to draw people in from a distance.
  - *Think of making an ad for the side of a bus.*
  - Make a passerby 20 feet away think it would be interesting to come in for a closer look.
- You want people to talk to you.
  - Poster should have *a few* details, and some things for you to point at when you give your presentation.
  - If you get the person who is looking at the poster to ask you good questions, you are doing good.
- Posters are visual.
  - Lots of tiny text: ***bad***. Tiny figures, tiny labels: ***bad***.
  - Make it big – just enough info to suggest main ideas.

Making a Poster*

- Planning
- Focus
- Layout
- Headings
- Graphics
- Text
- Colors
- Editing

*Remainder of lecture taken from http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters . Go look at it!

Making a Poster – Planning and Focus

- Planning
  - What is your message?
  - You must be able to state your main point and your main conclusion clearly and succinctly
  - ***ALL*** visuals and text should relate to this main point and conclusion
- Focus
  - Simple messages are more memorable
  - Which details are absolutely essential for conveying your main message? Omit all else
  - Edit carefully – simplify verbiage, reduce sentence complexity.

Making a Poster - Layout

- Use a visual grammar (headings big, main idea medium, details smaller [if present])
- A columwise layout helps guide reader's eye
  - 3 or 4 columns is common
  - If 3 columns, the middle one is usually double-wide
- Organizational cues (like numbering the sections) help if your poster is not organized column-wise
- Use white space to separate columns and sections within columns
  - Balance whitespace in overall poster

Making a Poster – Headings

- **Title**
  - Be interesting – draw people in
  - Be informative – give the bottom line to someone who just glances at your poster from 20 feet, and walks on
  - Be bold – make the strongest statements your research will allow (but not stronger!)
- **Section Headings**
  - Headings help the reader skip to what he/she needs, to follow your main points and conclusions
  - Organize and label headings to help reader move through your poster
- **Figure & Table Captions**
  - Help the reader get at least a superficial idea of the message

Making a Poster - Headings

- Boring but effective:

Title Team Members		
Introduction Objective Methods	Selected evidence (preferably visual!) to support Results of study	Results Conclusions Acknowledgements

- Experiment with Caution!

Making a Poster – Graphics

- Good graphs communicate relationships quickly.
- Graphs should be simple and clean.
- Write explanations directly on figures, instead of referencing from elsewhere.

- Uncluttered 2-dimensional graphs work best

- Photos and clipart can help convey your message, but they can also make a cluttered mess – ***use sparingly!***

Making a Poster – Text

- Posters are a VISUAL MEDIUM
  - Minimize text – use images and graphs instead!
  - Keep text elements to 50 words or less
  - Use phrases instead of sentences
  - Use active voice not passive
    - "We use weights to correct for nonresponse" vs "Weights are used to correct for nonresponse"
  - JARGON – define it or avoid it
  - Serif fonts for extended text; san-serif OK for titles
  - ***Don't dumb down content, just make it easy to read quickly***.

Making a Poster – Colors

- Use a light color for background, dark or black for text.
- Dark background/light text, or day-glo colors, get very tiring very fast – ***avoid***.
- Use colors in a consistent pattern so they do not distract reader
- Keep in mind red/green color blindness, etc.

Making a Poster - Editing

- ***If it doesn't provide critical support for your main message, ELIMINATE IT!***
- Edit! Edit! Edit ruthlessly! to reduce text.
- Edit all text to simplify verbiage, to reduce sentence complexity, and to delete details.
- ***If it's not relevant to your message, remove it!***
- Print your poster on 1 8.5x11" sheet
  - If you can't read the text, the font size is too small
  - Can you get the whole idea in a 1-minute scan?
  - Show it to a friend – do they agree? Why?
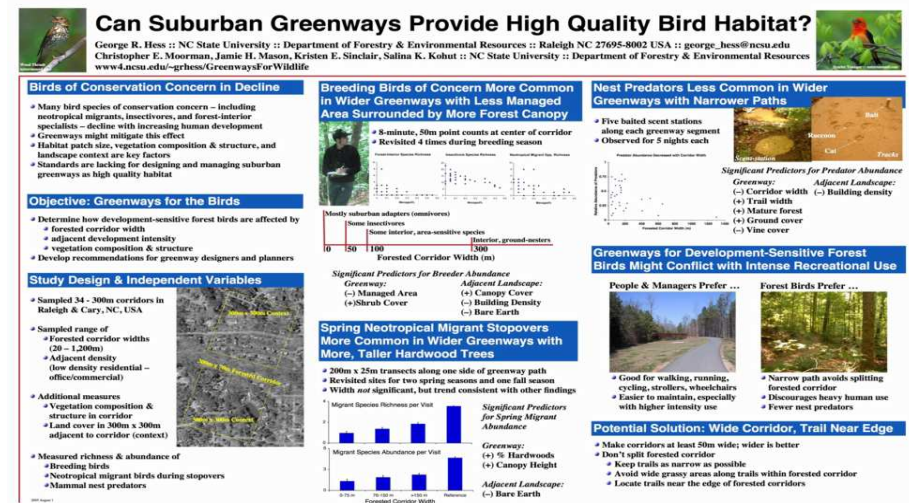- A "60 second checklist" is posted under Week 14!
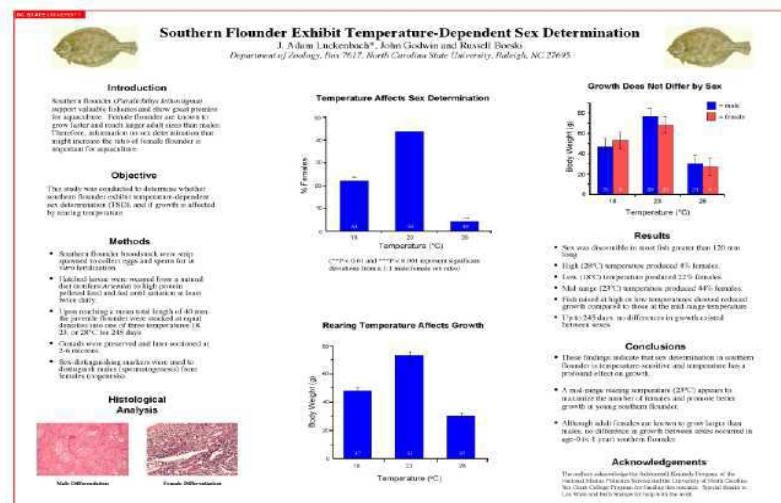
Example I

Example II

Example III
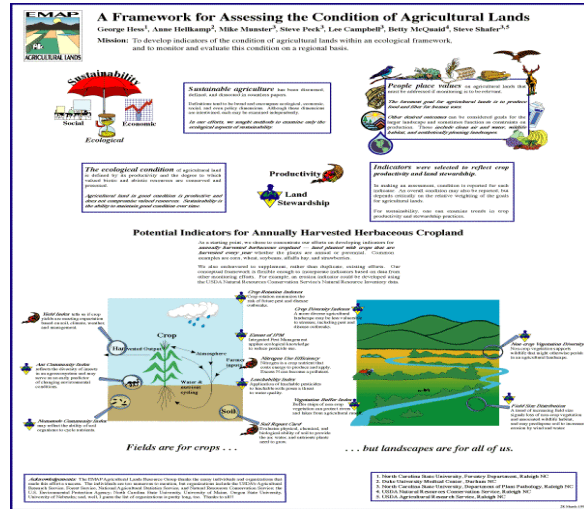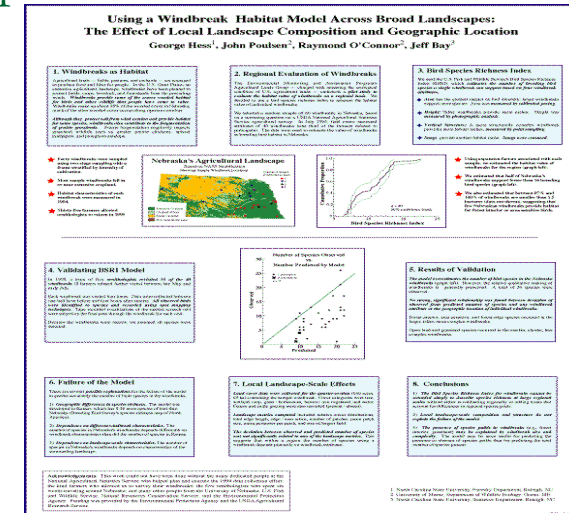
Example IV

Example V

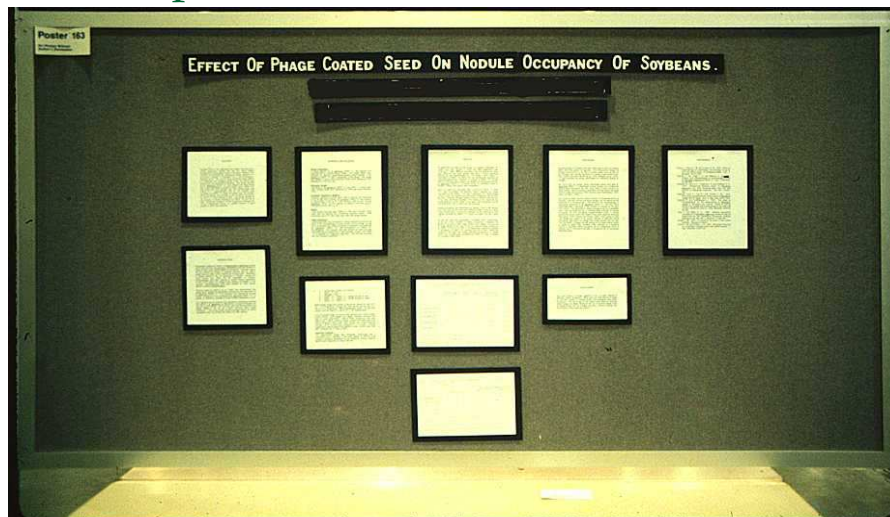# Summary/Review

- **This week**: Posters and Leah Lang
- **Next week**: Final presentations, final papers, peer review
- **Meeting of the Minds, May 9**
  - One person from each group can get poster printed for free – **Print early!!**
  - Posters - http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters
  - Ppt poster templates – online