

Homework 0: Collaboration, Cheating, and Plagiarism

36-402, Spring 2025

Due by 6 pm on Thursday, 23 January 2025

Instructions

- This course's policy on collaboration, cheating and plagiarism is part of the syllabus, <http://www.stat.cmu.edu/~cshalizi/uADA/25/>. Please read it.
- Please also read CMU's policy on academic integrity, <http://www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/academic-integrity.html>.
- Finally, please read sections 7.9 and 7.10 of Turabian's *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*¹ on Canvas.
- After reading all three documents, please complete the following true-false and multiple-choice questions. Explaining your reasoning is encouraged but not required.
- This assignment will not factor in to your grade, but you must turn it in, with at least 80% correct answers, before any of your other work will be returned to you. If you do not get a score over 80% on your first attempt, you will get a chance to re-do this.

Questions

1. Alice and Babur share a table in the library while they work on the 402 homework. While they work, Alice complains to Babur about how lame the problems are, and Babur posts to BrainEatr² that it's super unfair to have the homework due the night after 15-XXX. True or false:
 - (a) (1) This interaction is enough that Alice and Babur should report that they collaborated.
 - (b) (1) Babur should report that he got help on the problems from Alice.

¹8th edition; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013

²Or whatever social media your generation actually uses, unlike Facebook.

- (c) (1) Babur discussed an assignment with people outside the class in a way which is prohibited for homework assignments.
2. Alice likes to go to the library and read old statistics textbooks for fun³. One day, she discovers an example which is *very similar* to a problem in the current homework. True or false:
- (a) (1) Alice must stop reading, and report her forbidden reading to the professor, on pain of failing 402.
- (b) (1) If Alice takes pictures of the example with her phone, shares them with Babur, and then asks Babur if he “can give her a hint” about how to solve that problem, she just needs to report working with Babur.
- (c) (1) Alice can read the example and adapt it to the homework problem, without mentioning the old textbook.
- (d) (1) Alice can read the example, adapt it to the homework problem, and give credit to the old textbook in her write-up.
- (e) (1) Alice can post to Piazza / BrainEatr / anywhere else, “Hey everyone, the trick to doing problem x of homework y is on p. z of *The Over-Generalized Gamma Distribution*”.
3. Babur is hanging out in the room of his friend Chandra, who took 402 last year. While there, Babur discovers a bound copy of the 402 solutions. Chandra says “Hey, aren’t you in that class? Borrow that if you like, the professor is really lazy about writing new problems and it’ll save you so much time.” Which, if any, are appropriate actions for Babur to take at this point?
- (a) (1) Read the old solutions, but make sure he hasn’t looked at a particular solution for at least a week before doing the relevant homework, so his work is original.
- (b) (1) Politely thank Chandra for his offer to help, but decline to read the old solutions. (Priggishly explaining that he will learn more by actually doing the work is optional.)
- (c) (1) Borrow the old solutions, but only read them when he gets stuck.
- (d) (1) Borrow the old solutions, but only read them when he gets stuck, and acknowledge the use of the old solutions in his write-up.
- (e) (1) Borrow the old solutions, scan them, and share them with his friends online.
4. Alice and Babur are back in the library working on another homework assignment. Babur asks Alice how to do problem x , and she tells him “It’s just like the example on page y of the textbook”. True or false:

³No one expects you to be like Alice.

- (a) (1) This interaction is enough that Alice and Babur should report that they collaborated.
 - (b) (1) Babur should report that he got help on the problems from Alice.
 - (c) (1) Babur can follow the example, but his write-up must explicitly say that he's doing so, and note which example it is.
5. (*continued*) Babur says he can't see how to make the textbook example fit the problem, so Alice shows him how she answered problem x . True or false:
- (a) (1) Babur's write-up should state that he got help from Alice.
 - (b) (1) Babur's write-up for problem x can follow Alice's exactly, provided he says that he got help from her.
 - (c) (1) Babur does not need to acknowledge any help, if his solution doesn't have exactly the same wording as Alice's. For instance, Babur should re-name all the variables in the code, and do a word-for-word paraphrase of Alice's text.
 - (d) (1) Babur can follow Alice's write-up as closely as in the previous answer, provided he acknowledges getting help from Alice.
 - (e) (1) Babur should acknowledge getting help from Alice, and should use the same ideas to write his own answer, using his own words and code, rather than starting from Alice's exact answer and modifying it.
6. Alice cannot remember the formula for the density of a standard Gaussian distribution. She consults a resource which reminds her that the answer is $\frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}}e^{-x^2/2}$. True or false:
- (a) (1) Alice needs to report her source, no matter what it is.
 - (b) (1) Alice needs to report her source if it was not a previous class (e.g., if it was an online resource or a classmate).
 - (c) (1) Alice needs to report her source if she cannot find this fact in the textbook for 402.
 - (d) (1) Alice does not need to report any source, because this fact is common knowledge by this point in her statistical education.
7. Dolores and Eric work separately on the homework each week, but the morning before it's due, they meet to see if they've gotten matching answers. If their answers don't agree, they argue it out until they feel they know who was right, and then update their work. True or false:
- (a) (1) Dolores and Eric are collaborating by sharing work.
 - (b) (1) If Dolores changed his work to match Eric's answer, Dolores should report working with Eric, but Eric doesn't have to.

- (c) (1) If their initial answers agree so they don't change anything, this isn't working together and they don't have to report it.
8. Babur has access to a large language model (like ChatGPT, or CoPilot, or Claude) and decides to see how it can help him with 402. (After all, some LLMs advertise having an "Advanced Data Analysis" capability.) Which of the following uses are allowed in this course?
 - (a) (1) Giving the LLM the complete text of the homework assignment and asking it to write answers to all the questions.
 - (b) (1) Giving the LLM the complete text of the homework assignment and asking it to write a *first draft* of answers to all the questions, which Babur then checks for accuracy.
 - (c) (1) Asking the LLM for a first draft of the wordy parts, like the final discussion of the results.
 - (d) (1) Giving the LLM the text of the homework questions one by one, asking it for first drafts one at a time, and revising them one by one.
 - (e) (1) Paraphrasing the text of a homework question and asking it for just the necessary code.
 - (f) (1) Asking the LLM to outline the stages of the analysis.
 9. Babur wakes up one Thursday morning hungover and homesick. He decides to blow off attending the 402 lecture in the morning, and instead spend the day going to groceries around Pittsburgh, to see if *anyone* has melons like his grandfather used to grow. This takes him all day, and he doesn't remember about turning in his (incomplete) homework until well after 6 pm. True or false:
 - (a) (1) Babur can use this as one of his drops for lecture exercises.
 - (b) (1) Babur can use this as one of his drops for homeworks, *unless* it's one of the weeks when the homework takes the form of reports, since those cannot be dropped.
 - (c) (1) Babur can turn in the homework within 24 hours of the deadline for a 10 point late penalty, but only if it is complete.
 10. Dolores has a job interview on a Tuesday morning which overlaps with 402 lecture. She tells the professor about it a week in advance, with documentation. True or false:
 - (a) (1) Because of the advance notice, the purpose of the absence, and the documentation, this is an excused absence, and Dolores won't be graded on that day's lecture exercise, without it counting as one of her drops.
 - (b) (1) Because of the advanced notice and the purposes of the absence, this is an excused absence, and Dolores won't be graded on that day's lecture exercise, without it counting as one of her drops. (No documentation was required.)

- (c) (1) Dolores can use this as one of her drops, without having to tell the professor why or even that she is doing so. (There is no such thing as an “excused absence” in this class.)
11. Eric decides that lecture goes by too fast to take notes, so he takes pictures of everything on the board with his phone, and tells himself he will read the pictures later to study. True or false:
- (a) (1) This is fine, so long as Eric does not also make an audio recording.
 - (b) (1) This violates class policy, because Eric’s using a phone; a tablet or laptop would be fine.
 - (c) (1) This violates class policy, which specifies no electronics of any kind, unless Eric has a formal accommodation from the Office of Disability Resources for a note-taking device.