**Instructors’ Frequently Asked Questions about Teaching a One-Credit Course at The Methodology Center**

**What are The Methodology Center’s One-Credit Courses?**

Every year, the Methodology Center organizes three one-credit courses, taught over the Fall and

Spring semesters. Each course is highly focused on a specialized methodological topic. The courses are aimed at advanced graduate students but are also attended by post-docs, research associates, and faculty. Examples of topics of previous courses are latent class/latent transition analysis, missing data, and time-varying effect modeling.

**Why would I want to volunteer to teach a one-credit course at The Methodology Center**?

There are many reasons. Here are a few:

• You may be interested in a topic and love talking about it, and see that there is a need for a short, focused course.

• You may get a lot of questions on a particular topic and think it would save time in the long run to educate people.

• You may want to organize your thinking about a topic, perhaps in preparation for a grant proposal or major article.

• You are thinking of writing a book and want to try out the organizational structure and get feedback.

• You want to develop and try out materials for a workshop.

• You want to learn about the topic yourself, and this would be a way help you get going.

**Should these courses be fun?**

Yes, definitely, for both the instructors and the students. This does not mean they should be easy.

**Will I be paid for teaching one of these courses?**

No, at least not by us.

**Will I have a teaching assistant?**

If you would like a teaching assistant, The Methodology Center will provide you with a budget of

$500 to pay the teaching assistant during the five-week period that the class meets. If you have someone in mind, great; if not, we will try to help you find someone. To arrange payment for the

TA, contact Tina Meyers (tmm2@psu.edu).

**When do the courses meet?**

Course times vary by instructor. Each course is usually five weeks long, but classes may be held any day of the week. Class time is two and a half hours. Typically, the courses are offered sequentially so that there will be no conflicts for those who wish to enroll in all three courses.

**Does the course have to meet for exactly five weeks?**

Not necessarily. The idea is to fit a one-credit course into a five-week maximum. Each course needs to meet for about 12.5 hours total. A course over five weeks would meet 2.5 hours per week, plus time for a break. It is possible to increase the length of each class in order to decrease the number of weeks. For example, if you wanted to have the course be four weeks in length you could meet for a little over 3 hours per week. You might want to do this if you knew you would be traveling one week, or you wanted to have an extra “free” week in case you need to make up a weather-related cancellation. If you think you want to do this, please discuss it with us. The decision would have to be made in time to be mentioned in the announcement.

**Where do the courses meet?**

The default is for all courses to meet in The Methodology Center Conference Room. The room has a laptop with remote control and internet access, multiple ways to project material, ample white boards, and teleconferencing equipment. (You may use your own laptop if you prefer.)

However, if you prefer, you are free to arrange a different room. Just let us know in time for us to specify the room when we announce the course. If you would like to check out our conference room before deciding whether to use it, contact Bethany Bray (bcbray@psu.edu), Outreach Director of The Methodology Center.

**Is each course run independently?**

The courses are run independently in most respects. The instructor is responsible for determining the syllabus, prerequisites, enrollment limits, and grading criteria. An instructor is responsible for arranging a course number in his or her own department. Please direct questions about this to Bethany Bray (bcbray@psu.edu), Outreach Director of The Methodology Center.

**What expectations does The Methodology Center have for the instructor?**

Although for the most part the instructor is free to conduct the course however he or she wishes, there are two expectations:

(1) We ask that anyone who is a part of The Methodology Center, including [PAMT](http://methodology.psu.edu/pamt/) trainees, will be allowed to enroll or sit in, assuming they meet any prerequisites, make the request in a timely manner, and do not detract from the course in some way.

(2) We ask instructors to cooperate with us when we conduct our own evaluation of the course. You may collect SRTE’s independently if you wish, but we will collect our own open-ended evaluations as well.

**Are the courses intended for graduate students from any particular department?**

No. The material should be geared broadly to any graduate student in the social/behavioral sciences who is interested in advanced quantitative methods. A prototypical graduate student to aim at would be one who has completed the four-course methodology sequence in HD FS or similar training. Graduate students in departments such as statistics and business frequently take these courses as well.

**Can I limit enrollment?**

Yes, and you are encouraged to do so. There are two ways to do this: enrollment caps and prerequisites. Many instructors of these courses cap enrollment at 12-15 students. You are encouraged to cap the enrollment at whatever number seems suitable to you. If your course meets in The Methodology

Center Conference Room, keep in mind that seating is limited to about 25.

You are also encouraged to institute whatever prerequisites will make the course run smoothly. In courses like these there is not much time to help students gain background, so we advise making prerequisites clear and enforcing them strictly. You may also want to note that it is likely you will receive numerous requests to sit in. It is up to you whether to allow this (with the exception for The Methodology Center and PAMT folks mentioned above). Don’t feel bad if you have to turn people away. We arrange these courses every year. If a course is very popular and you would like to teach it again, you are likely to have the opportunity in two or three years.

**Is there a minimum number of paid enrollments needed for a course to fly?**

Not from our perspective. If you want to give the course to a room full of unenrolled auditors that is

OK with us. However, the department that provides the course number may have a policy about this.

**How are course numbers assigned?**

Each course is officially offered by the home department of the faculty member. An instructor is responsible for arranging a course number in his or her own department. Please direct questions about this to Bethany Bray (bcbray@psu.edu), Outreach Director of The Methodology Center.

**Can these courses be team-taught?**

Yes, in fact this is encouraged. Joining forces with another faculty member, or perhaps a research associate or post-doc, can distribute the work and keep teaching the course from being a burden on anyone. However, we do not encourage giving a teaching assistant a lot of lecture responsibility in these courses because of the advanced nature of the material that will be covered.

**What about a lab portion of the course?**

The Methodology Center Conference Room is not equipped with computers (except the one at the lectern). However, students could bring laptops to class. Power strips and the Penn State wireless network are available in our conference room. If you want to go this route, please discuss it with us in advance so that we can make sure you don’t have to waste class time getting technical arrangements sorted out. Note that some instructors do demonstrations of data analysis in class, and then give students take-home assignments in lieu of an in-class lab.

**When and how will the courses be advertised?**

Courses are announced via The Methodology Center’s Penn State-specific eNews (sent once a semester), as well as listed on the Center’s web site ([methodology.psu.edu/training/courses](http://methodology.psu.edu/training/courses)). We can also send out emails to the entire College of Health and Human Development and to the Statistics Department. If you would like us to arrange additional email distribution, we would be happy to do so, including your own part of the University if you are not in the College of Health and Human Development or the Statistics Department.