

## LIST OF ASSIGNMENTS

1. Look up a variable of your choice in Statistical Abstract of the United States. Try to find a variable which you think is closely related to suicide. Rank states by this variable and by suicide rates. Calculate the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient between these two variables. (The strongest correlation found will win a prize.)
2. Look up (in Vital Statistics of the United States, Volume II, Mortality, Parts A and B) the suicide rate for a demographic group (e.g., 20-24 year-old single white females) and compare this with the crude suicide rate for all persons.
3. Calculate the Chi-Squared Statistic for the tables on suicide distributed in class.
  - a. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the risk of suicide and gender?
  - b. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the risk of suicide and depression?
4. Find a popular song or a poem that discusses suicide or suicidal thoughts (The best song/poem found will win a prize).
5. Read TWO sources on a non-fictional biography on one of the following:
  - Jack London (author of Call of the Wild, White Fang, etc.)
  - Robert Clive (British soldier and conqueror of India)
  - Rudolf Diesel (inventor of the engine)
  - James Forrestal (Secretary of Defense)
  - Artur Koestler (author)
  - Vincent Van Gogh (painter)
  - Ernest Hemingway (author)
  - Virginia Woolf (author)
  - Viscount Castlereagh (British statesman)
  - Edwin H. Armstrong (inventor of FM radio)
  - Wallace Carrothers (inventor of nylon)
  - Allan Turing (computer pioneer)
6. Read TWO sources on a fictional person who felt suicidal, chosen from:
  - Hamlet
  - Macbeth
  - Anna Karenina
  - Madame Bovary
  - The Sorrows of Young Werther
  - Death of a Salesman
7. Read Durkheim's Suicide (Book II)

8. Read the case histories (just the narrative portion) in The Final Months.

When reading assignments 5, 6, and 8 try to organize your understanding under three main headings: a) what factor(s) prompted the person to kill himself? b) what factor(s) held the person back from killing himself (i.e., why did he not kill himself earlier than he did?) c) why did the person choose suicide rather than some other common method for dealing with stress (e.g., murder, murder-suicide, substance abuse, escapist literature, etc.)