
***Ruth J. and Howard F. Newton Memorial Graduate Student
Teaching Award in Statistics
2017 Recipient – Soutrik Mandal***

Soutrik Mandal is the 2017 recipient of the Ruth J. and Howard F. Newton Memorial Graduate Student Teaching Award in Statistics. The Awards committee selected Soutrik for this teaching award after reviewing the student evaluations of the two sections of STAT 303, an undergraduate statistics courses, that Soutrik had taught during Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 semesters. The course, STAT 303 is an introductory course in statistics taken mainly by students who are social sciences or education majors. Soutrik's teaching style enabled him to mitigate the students' negative attitude towards any quantitative course. During my unannounced classroom visits to his classroom, I observed that Soutrik's teaching philosophy is to emphasize concepts through examples relevant to the students' fields of study while minimizing the equations that many of our faculty use to define and explain statistical methodology.

Soutrik's average scores on the students' end-of-semester evaluations were 4.13 and 4.17 out of a maximum score of 5 on the question "On the whole, this was a good instructor". Most of the instructor of STAT 303 have average scores on this question of 3.5 or lower. Thus, it is quite an achievement for a graduate student to achieve a score above 4.0. Soutrik's very positive attitude and appreciation of the students' struggles with quantitative subject matter is reflected in the following comments from his students' end of the semester evaluations (without editing):

- "Very good at explaining everything, wants to make sure he is not tricky and just trying to help you apply statistics in whatever career endeavor you choose."
- "Soutrik was an awesome teacher and made the class interesting."
- "Very approachable and willing to help."
- "He described things thoroughly and did not get frustrated when we would not understand."
- "He seemed as if he legitimately cared about his students succeeding. He was very respectful and considerate."
- "Soutrik Mandal was an amazing professor, he was always readily available for assistance and really cared whether is students learned the material. Before moving on to different material, he always made sure that we understood the objective at hand and gave us endless examples to ensure that."
- "Mr. Mandal is a very intuitive teacher. He cares for his students and extended help in all places. I was able to understand his lecture and he did a very good job of covering what was in our book."

Michael T. Longnecker

George P. Mitchell '40 Endowed Chair in Statistics
Professor & Associate Department Head of Statistics