Hi, on March 9th I announced on the course home page that I would be in Peru from April 18 to May 3 and shared some thoughts on how that would work and what you could be doing to minimize the impact on you of me being gone during that time. Now that the trip is approaching I would like to go over it again and provide some more details.

First, I would like you to know that I do not taking being gone during the semester lightly. This research trip has been two years in the making and this is the only time I could arrange for the trip to occur. Fortunately I am not teaching any lecture classes at this time of the semester, all of my classes are online, and I will continue to have some (somewhat limited) access to the internet so that I can continue to connect with you all, which makes this trip feasible. I, of course, have cleared this all with my department chair. I am really looking forward to this trip.

During the trip I will be traveling to remote villages in the high Andes of Peru. Despite this I should be able to access the internet every couple of days to answer your emails. Still, the turnaround time for answering any questions you have will be longer than normal. In the March 9th announcement I recommended that if you are concerned about my not being as available as I usually am that you complete the course work before I leave. I am posting this letter a couple of weeks before I go to remind you of that so you still have time to do that if you would like. To accommodate students who choose to complete the work early I have arranged with U Online to allow you to also take the fourth exam a week early if you want, thus taking advantage of having completed the assignments early.

I might not have access to Java in Peru, which means that I will not be able to reset any deadlines in Oak Software. Consequently, I recommend that you plan to complete the assignments a couple of days before their deadlines so that if anything comes up you will still have time to get the assignments in on time. If you hand them in late remember that the penalty is automatically 10% off per day late for the first week (then no credit after that). If you do happen to hand something in a little late remember that as you hand in so much this semester that a small late penalty on any one item will have only a miniscule effect on your final grade.

You will be taking Exam 3 before I leave. U Online will not be getting those to me before I go so I won't be able to grade them until I get back. I will, however, post the answer key before I go so that you can see all of the right answers to the questions (and the computations that lead to those answers). While the exams are not comprehensive you will still benefit by studying the answer key to the third exam.

Now here is something important having to do with the 'Grade Book' available through Oak Software. Once the date for an exam has passed the formulas that compute your grade-so-far and your semester grade will assume that you received a score of zero on the exam if I haven't yet posted your grade on it. So don't panic if your grades seem to have suffered after exam 3 because the software thinks you received a score of zero on the exam. If you would like, you can look at the answer key to the exam and use that to guess what your grade would be on the exam, and then enter it to see what your grade in the class is (see the instructions in the Grade Book for how to do that).

You will be taking Exam 4 while I am gone.

The vast majority of students don't contact me at all during the semester, or just once or twice, so I am
hoping that everything will be ok. Please consider doing what you can to minimize the chance of any problems (e.g. by completing as much of the class as you can before I go).

The bottom line is this. If anything comes up while I am gone that can't be adequately handled by the steps I have put into place then I will handle it in a fair and reasonable manner as soon as I get back. I will still have a couple of weeks before I have to input the grades after I return.

Best wishes and regards until I get back,

Oakley