Political Science 30: Political Inquiry
Section 1

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Learning Outcomes

By the end of section today, you should:

- Understand key concepts from lecture:
  - Independent Variable
  - Dependent Variable
  - Confounding Variable

- Be able to evaluate whether hypotheses meet the criteria to be “good” hypotheses and write your own
Plan for the Day

- Introduce ourselves
- Go over section participation expectations
- Answer questions from lecture this week
- Dig in!
A Little About Me

5th year in the program, PhD candidate, professor at WUSTL in the fall

Focus Areas: American Politics and Methodology
Dissertation: How does information get distorted as it diffuses from the media to the masses? How does this distorted information impact political behavior?

I love teaching!

Before UCSD

Home: Minnesota (Go Vikings!)
College: College of William & Mary in Virginia

Contact Information:
Email: tncarlson@ucsd.edu
Office Hours: Thursdays 9am-11am in SSB 341, or by appointment
Discussion Section slides and materials can be found at http://pages.ucsd.edu/~tfeenstr/
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Getting to Know You:

Please take out a piece of paper and write the following:

- Name (and preferred name you go by)
- Fun fact about yourself
- 1 thing you are looking forward to in this class
- 1 thing you are nervous about in this class
- 1 thing that I can do to be helpful to you and your learning
Discussion Section Format and Expectations

- Section participation is *required* and accounts for 10% of your course grade.
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- Attendance taken every week with “check ins” that you’ll turn in (bring paper!)
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Review concepts from lecture, give additional examples, practice problems, help learning Stata

- Large group (whole class) discussions
- Small group discussions with the people around you
- Small group activities
General Advice for POLI 30

Don't give up!

Inspiration: Minneapolis Miracle: Keenum to Diggs; Bruno Mars: Don't Give Up; Michael Scott

Come to lecture – very interactive, take notes on the discussions and examples

Come to section

Practice!

Odd problems in the textbook (answers in the back)

Examples from section and lecture

Come to office hours sooner rather than later

There are office hours every day of the week — you can go to any TA or Prof. Desposato

Post on the discussion forum!
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- Post on the discussion forum!
Questions??

What questions do you have from lecture this week?
**Hypothesis Recap**

**Hypothesis**: A testable statement about the empirical relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable
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**Good Hypothesis Checklist:**

- Falsifiable
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- General
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Hypothesis Practice: Together

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- How would you make it better?
Hypothesis Practice: In Groups

Hypothesis: Age and voter turnout are related

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- Is it general?
- How would you make it better?
What questions do you have?
We want to make causal claims ...
Causality

- We **want** to make causal claims ...
- But it’s hard
Confounds and Spurious Relationships

- Three criteria for a **confound**
  - Causes changes in the DV
  - Is correlated with the IV
  - Is causally prior to the IV

Examples of Confounds: Do ice cream sales cause shark attacks?

IV: Ice cream sales
DV: Shark attacks
Confound?: Weather!
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Confounds and Spurious Relationships

Practice exercises available at pages.ucsd.edu/~tfeenstr/
Maybe a quiz??
Once you have your hypothesis, you need to find some data

- Identify your IV and DV

- Read the dataset’s codebook to find a variable that is as close to your IV and DV as possible