

Best Practices for the Political Scientist

J. Alexander Branham

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A Quick Overview...

1. Code well

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2. Write using plain text

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2. Write using plain text
3. Use a version control system

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- ▶ Comments explain what you are doing to your future self, collaborators, and others

Comment example

```
# This code creates Fig 1
# I use the mtcars dataset (included with R)
library(ggplot2)
ggplot(mtcars, aes(mpg, wt)) +
  geom_point() +
  geom_smooth(method="lm") # Adds OLS line with SEs
ggsave("fig/fig1.pdf")
```

- Save this code snippet as fig1.R (or similar)

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 - ▶ the script to create the figure (fig1.R or similar)
- ▶ What if we could combine these to have everything in one easy-to-read file?
 - ▶ This is what literate programming is all about!

Literate programming example (using rmarkdown)

% comment # comment "" As you can see from Figure 1, as miles per gallon goes up, weight goes down (on average, anyway)!

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