# Assignment 1: Descriptive Statistics

This assignment will help build the foundation for future assignments and your final paper

***General overview***

A. Select a topic that you want to study through secondary data analysis

B. Identify and download survey data that can be used to examine your topic

C. Begin cleaning your data (for this assignment, include at least five variables)

D. Compute and table descriptive statistics

E. Describe descriptive statistics table in text

***Detailed information***

**A**. Scientific research is the process of (a) developing an empirically answerable question, (b) deriving a falsifiable hypothesis based on a theory that "answers" your question, (c) analyzing data to test your hypothesis, (d) rejecting or failing to reject your hypothesis, and (e) relating your results back to the theory from which your question was derived. However, before you can develop a question, you must have a topic. For now, your topic can be general, but it must ultimately be narrowed and specified. In a couple of paragraphs describe and explain your topic. Note: Ultimately you will need to use a GLM technique to examine your topic. Keep in mind that you will need a DV that is, or can be manipulated into, a categorical, binary, ordered, or count measure. (5-points)

**B.** Select the survey data that you will use to examine your topic. Describe the data in approximately one paragraph that includes information on when, where, and how the survey was conducted (e.g., the sampling strategy and survey methods). In another paragraph or so, specify your analytic sample. Consider the following questions: Are you including the full sample, or are you limiting it to a unique

subgroup (e.g., older adults, married, blacks, rural residents, etc.)? How much missing data is there? What is your analytic sample size and how did you obtain it? (10-points)

**C.** Select at least five variables that you will likely use in your final paper. This should include at least one DV and IV, and three control variables. Construct your measures by recoding and renaming the variables in meaningful ways. For example, sex is typically a binary variable, so it should be recoded as [0,1], and this new variable should take on the name of the category that "1" denotes (e.g., if 0 = male and 1 = female, then the variable should be named female). After you have recoded and renamed your measures, write a description of each and how it was constructed. (10-points)

**D.** Create a table that summarizes your study measures, which includes meaningful names of the measures and appropriate summary statistics. Note: include survey name and analytic sample size in table headers. Tables should be informative and able to stand alone. (5-points)

**E.** Include a 1-to-2 paragraph summary of the descriptive statistics (i.e., part D). (5-points)