PLSC 308: Introduction to Political Research

Christopher Zorn

April 12, 2016

Career Workshop and Banquet

- **When**: Thursday, April 14th from 1-3:30pm
- **Where**: Bank of America Career Center
- **What**: Take part in one or two half hour sessions with successful alumni for networking and career guidance
- **Who**: The event is for all PLSC and IP majors
- **How to participate**: Send resume, career interest and time available to ATL3@psu.edu

Analysis Tips and Strategies

1. Start with tables (maybe), then figures, then statistics...

2. When useful, analyze data at different units of analysis. Change units of analysis via aggregation (means, etc.)

3. Think about the "reverse" relationship (what should X look like for different values of Y?).

4. Rely on some existing papers/studies on the same subject as models...

In-Class Presentations

Details

- Presentation = Five percent of course grade (50 points)
- Length = Five minutes
- Goal: Help (a little) to write a better research proposal

Rules

- *Use slides* (PowerPoint, etc.)
- *Four slides* maximum (including a title slide)
    - Title slide
    - Theory / Hypotheses
    - Data / Operationalilization / Measurement
    - Analysis Strategy

[Start example presentation...]

Aging and Voting in the U.S. Supreme Court

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A presentation for PLSC 308, "Introduction to Political Research."
Presented April 19, 2016.

Theory and Hypotheses

Theory:

- Strong link between political attitudes and Supreme Court voting (e.g., Segal and Spaeth 2002)
- Widespread association between age and conservatism (Cornelis et al. 2009; Jost et al. 2003; Van Heil and Brebels 2011)

Hypotheses:

1. SCOTUS justices will be more likely to support conservative outcomes as they get older.
2. The older a justice is at his/her appointment, the less conservative s/he will become over time.

Data and Operationalization

Data

- Votes of U.S. Supreme Court Justices, 1791-2014, from the *Supreme Court Judicial Database*.
- Birth year for each justice, from the *Biographical Directory of Federal Judges, 1789-present* (Federal Judicial Center, 2016).

Measurement

- Outcome: *Ideological direction* of each justice's vote, coded 1 if *conservative*, 0 if *liberal* (Supreme Court Judicial Database, 2016).
- Predictor: *Age* of each justice (in years) on the day on which the case was decided.

Analysis Strategies

- *Crosstables* of liberal/conservative votes by *Justice Age*.

- *Boxplots* of *Justice Age* by liberal / conservative votes.

- *Correlations* between each justice's age and their votes.

- *Line plots* of each justice's conservatism by their age.

[End example presentation...]

Presentation Schedule

Tuesday, April 19	Thursday, April 21
Lamas	McCabe
Knabb	Klavens
Nahvi	Li
Wagner	McDonnell
Pelosi	Westerfer
Thomas	Bernicker
Arnold	Chen
Daniel	Levin
Parikh	Shipman
Shaffer	Rankin-Wahlers

Note: R code for determining the dates and order of presentations is here.