POLS201 Spring 2019

Literature Reviews

February 18

Today's Agenda

- How to write a lit review
    - Zotero. Monday meet in the library
- Some reminders
    - Research Design A due tomorrow (11pm)
    - Five homework questions due UPDATE (Monday)
    - Another weekend quiz (scored this time)

Midterm in two weeks

- Readings and applying concepts
- I am reviewing your Friday submit

Zotero Introduction

- Miranda Carney-Morris will walk through Zotero
    - We will meet in the library classroom next Monday
- Zotero and similar apps will save you time
    - It creates a simple database of readings and automatically generates cites and bibliographies.

Literature Reviews

- Notice all of the pieces:
    - Title Page, Abstract, Introduction
    - Theory, Hypotheses
    - **Literature Review**
    - Data Description, Methodology, Results

Literature Reviews

- And then. . .
    - Tests for Robustness
    - Discussion
    - Conclusion
    - Worked Cited

Good to Recall this is 2 classes in one

- Causal inference and the basics of social science methods
- Develop original political science research
  - Which means: learning some stats and data management

Your paper is original but doesn't stand alone

- You're joining a community of people who care about your research question.
    - Some have tested your hypotheses.
    - Some have answered your RQ differently.
    - Some have used your theory.
    - Some have used your variables.
    - Some have dealt with the same endogeneity issues

A promise:

- Dozens if not hundreds of researchers have considered your research question.
- Part of your work is to bring readers up to date.

Have you written a lit review?

- It might seem like an entire research project.
- How did you approach it? Let's record some ideas.
    - Do you recall disagreements?
    - Do you recall insufficient research?

Many ways to frame a research question

- Suppose you're interested in this hypothesis:
  - "Women elected to the Senate are more successful than men shepherding legislation to final passage."
- Could connect to either:
  1 "What is the effect of descriptive representation?"
  2 "What ameliorates congressional gridlock"
- These would give you two different lit reviews

Strategies:

- For well established questions:
    - "Camps" of research
    - Camps might be contradictory or just emphasize different aspects
    - The evolution of the literature.
- For novel questions:
    - Theory building by way of literature.

Outline these excerpts you read:

- Facial similarity (start at "Political scientists typically focus" on p. 936)
- Retrospective voting ("As mentioned above" on p. 288 to "Although a great deal of research" p. 289)

What makes a good lit review

- Synthesize, don't just summarize.
- Consecutive strings of citations suggest you're synthesizing.
  - "In general, individuals judge similar others more attractive (Berscheid and Walster 1979; Shanteau and Nagy 1979) and persuasive (Brock 1965; Byrne 1971)."*

Sources

- How many is enough? Hard to say but definitely more than 10-20.
- The first 10 cites you find are probably not the same as the most important 10 cites.
- Library databases to find strategies will be discussed later, but keep in mind the following:

Sources

- Locate existing literature reviews. The Annual Review of Political Science is a gold mine but any well cited article will give you something.
- Look at citation counts in Google Scholar.
- Use articles to find more articles: both backwards and forward searches