

POLS201 Spring 2019

Four Quick Suggestions for the Paper

April 29

Suggestion 1

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- “Stick em with the pointy end”



Suggestion 1

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- Back up your work
- The cloud is great when it works, but never trust any platform.
- If you have a copy, you can run everything on your free desktop version of RStudio.

Suggestion 2

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- A theory is a claim about an underlying causal mechanism that you can’t observe directly.
- “theory – a tentative conjecture about the causes of some phenomenon of interest” (Kellstedt and Whitten 22).

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- . . . “explicit statement of a theory in terms of the expected relationship between a measure of the independent variable and a measure of the dependent variable” ((Kellstedt and Whitten 21).
- Every ingredient in a hypothesis must be observable or potentially observable.

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- A falsifiable **theory**: “Excellent critical thinking skills reduce the likelihood of support of authoritarian politician.s”
- A **hypothesis** (also falsifiable): “More graduates of Reed College report positive approval ratings for Donald Trump than graduates of Lewis & Clark College”
- The moral: If your theory is muddled with your hypothesis, restate them.

Suggestion 3

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- A unit of analysis is just the unit you are counting. States. Congressional districts. Individual survey respondents. Countries. Years. Country/year combinations, perhaps.
- If you can't describe it in one or two words, chances are you're describing something else.

And a fourth one

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- Your word processor's table feature will make it easy to write up your regression tables. Learn about tables if you don't know about them.

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- Finding data and analyzing data to support an argument is difficult, and it's necessarily difficult.
- The real world is a mess. Data are hard to create and hard to find. Observations are imperfect. Data don't naturally align with our abstract concepts.
- Was it difficult for you? Congratulations.