Math for the Social Sciences Module - Young Researchers Fellowship

Lecture 2 - Equation Systems and Graphing

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Equation systems

- A set of of equations that share the same variables is called an *equation system*.
- For example:

$$x + y = 3 \tag{1}$$
$$2x - y = 1 \tag{2}$$

- Because both (1) and (2) share x and y, they form an equation system.
- We usually want to *solve* the system, i.e., find the values of x and y that satisfy both equations.

Solving equation systems

- There are several methods to solve equation systems.
  - Substitution
  - Elimination
  - Graphing
  - Matrices (we will see this later)
- Substitution is typically the most "mechanical" method.
  - Express one variable in terms of the other and substitute in the other equation.
- Elimination is more algebraic.
  - Add or subtract the equations to eliminate one variable.
  - Might involve multiplying one or both equations by a constant.

Solving the example system

- Let's solve the example system:

$$x + y = 3$$
$$2x - y = 1$$

- We can solve this system by substitution.
  - From (1), we have $y = 3 - x$.
  - Substitute this into (2):

$$2x - (3 - x) = 1$$

- Solve for x and then substitute back to find y.