

Welcome!

Week 1: Concepts and Measurement

TA: Jennifer Lin

PS 210: Introduction to Empirical Methods

2021-09-22

Who Am I?



- Ph.D. Student
- Department of Political Science (WCAS)
- Research morality, political attitudes, polarization
- Interest in computational social sciences, statistics
- **Favorite TV Shows:** The Office and Parks and Recreation
- **Favorite Ice Cream Flavor:** White Chocolate Raspberry Truffle by Haagen Daz

Introductions

- Name
- Pronouns
- School/Major
- Why you are taking this class
- Fun Fact OR
 - Favorite TV Show
 - Favorite Ice Cream Flavor
 - Favorite Hobby
 - Something Interesting about Yourself!

Section Syllabus!

Political Science 210: *Introduction to Empirical Methods for Political Science*

TA: Jennifer Lin

Fall, 2021

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Student Hours/Office Hours: TBD

(in Scott Hall 109 or Online – [Schedule Appointment Online](#))

TA Section 1: Thursdays from 5:00 - 5:50 PM at University Hall 118

Canvas Section 1: <https://canvas.northwestern.edu/courses/153244>

TA Section 2: Fridays from 11:00 - 11:50 AM at University Library 3622

Canvas Section 2: <https://canvas.northwestern.edu/courses/153038>

Section Participation

Each week, we will meet for an hour outside the lecture times to discuss the course materials. This is your opportunity to **ask questions, review the material** and **clarify** anything that can be confusing from the course.

- Come to section prepared to discuss the materials from the readings and lectures. I will briefly review the lecture material for the week during each section. However, the emphasis will be on your questions.
- Please be respectful of others when speaking, listening and responding.
- Please try to check your emails and Canvas at least once daily for any course readings and updates from Dr. Seawright, myself or any of the other course TAs.

Student Hours

- AKA Office Hours
- Options to meet in person in my office or online

If you have any questions at any point in this course, please do not hesitate to email me. If you would like to speak to me and cannot make my office hours, I am **happy to set up an appointment to meet**. Please note that if you **email me after 7 PM Central Time on the weekday or at any point during the weekend, I may not respond to your question until the next business day**. If I can be of assistance in any way to you in this class, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Campus Resources

- Accessible NU
- Counseling and Psychological Services
- Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- COVID-19 Resources
- ETC.! Go Explore!

Review of Material

Political Science is a ***SCIENCE***

And So We...

1. Ask Questions
2. Do Research and Formulate a theory
3. Make Predictions
4. Test Predictions with Data and Experiments
5. Run statics and report results
6. Share findings with the world!

Models

In Political Science, we try to model the political space.

Think about a model in your life. What are some things that come to mind



But Models are **WRONG**

- It is missing something
- It captures one aspect well but not others
- Social science research can only capture one aspect of the world, not multiple so there is *always* something wrong!

Applying it to Research

- I study *rural political behavior*
- But it is too much to write a full paper on *everything* there is to know about rural political behavior
- So we break it up
 - What is "rural" and how do we measure it?
 - What kinds of political behavior are we interested?
 - What perspective are we taking? (historical, recent elections, etc.?)

Measurement

So you want to build a model?

What is the concept that you want to measure?

Someone's feelings towards a member of the opposing party

Measurement

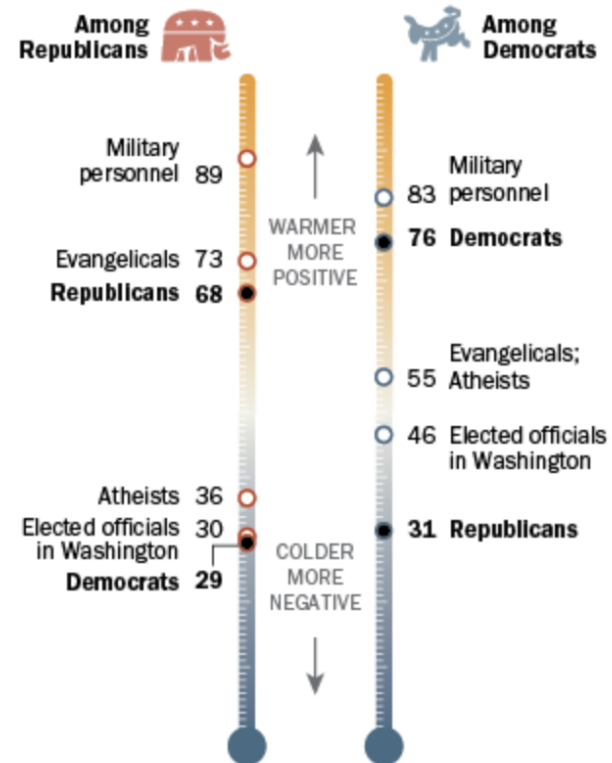
So you want to build a model?

What are some things we need to consider in thinking about how to measure "**someone's feelings towards a member of the opposing party**"

- How we define "feelings" and "opposing party?"
- Reliability of the Measure -- same thing each time
- Validity of the Measure -- measures what we are intending

How partisans view each other

Mean thermometer ratings



Note: Ratings of the parties are based on a "feeling thermometer" from 0 (coldest) to 100 (warmest).

Source: Survey conducted March 2-28 and April 5-May 2, 2016.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

But Remember....

All Models are WRONG!

What might the Feeling Thermometer model NOT capture?

QUESTIONS?