

# The Study of Politics

POLI 205 Doing Research in Political Science

Fall 2015

# Facts and Values

- Types of Assertions
  - *Empirical*: A verifiable assertion of “what is”
  - *Normative*: An assertion of “what should be”
  - *Combination*: A compound claim containing a mixture of empirical and normative
- What type of assertions are used in the *study* of politics?

# Science is Empirical

- Research based on direct or indirect observation
  - *Direct Observation*: protests, voting, wars, etc.
  - *Indirect Observation*: democracy, ideology, political knowledge
    - Both can be measured (with some degree of uncertainty)
- Characteristics of empirical research
  - objective, systematic observations
  - shared set of standards and procedures
  - construct causal theories
- Empirical Verification
  - Claims can be verified or disproven (but not “proven”)
  - *The LaCour scandal*
  - Retraction Watch

# The Scientific Method

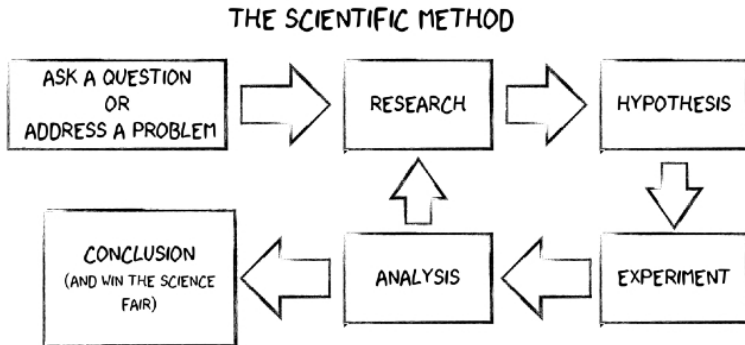


Figure: From <http://www.wired.com/2013/04/whats-wrong-with-the-scientific-method/>

## From *Reynolds and Johnson*

- Income inequality
- Who votes?
- Human rights
- Judicial decision-making
- Influencing bureaucracies
- Campaign advertising
- Public support for war

The Study of  
Politics

POLI 205  
Doing  
Research in  
Political  
Science

Studying  
Politics

What Do  
Political  
Scientists  
Study?

Example

# Jonathan Haidt



*Your Morals*