SOC-5811 Week 1: Introduction

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- 12 years of coding/stats experience

Introduction to the course

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- I've been doing this for 12 years and still don't know things and get stuck. I will spend all day working on a problem and finish with the deflating feeling that I know that "shouldn't" have taken me all day.
- But, many things take me 15 minutes today that took me 3 hours last year, or all day three years ago.

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- People may have also had access to very different opportunities around math/stats up to this point - or very negative experiences.
- **This course will be a space where it's very important to ask questions and be confused.**

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- A critical skill is being able to know where your understanding is and where you want it to be.
- It's very common to take a math/stats course that focuses a lot on first principles, say "why do I need to know this?", and give up on any level of understanding.

Why should we understand quantitative methods (and coding)?

- **There is some inherent value.** Quantitative methods can provide empirical, falsifiable facts about the social world (but not what those facts mean!); for example, how did different groups vote in 2024, and was this different from how those groups voted in 2020?

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- **Non-academic careers.**
- **Organizing/advocacy.**

Structure of the course

- Lectures

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- Lab

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- Lectures
- Lab
- Grading

Coding

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