

Very Quick Introduction,  
Quick Look at Data,  
Discussion of Your Happiness Research

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# outline

intro

quick data

discussion

- first go over syllabus
- then these slides here
- and then, once we have basic idea about the class
  - we'll do lengthy introduction of ourselves
  - and discussion for the reminder of tonight

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## setup

- no pre-requisites, but we will go as fast as possible
- want this to be more conversation than lecture
- do interrupt me and ask questions

## disclaimer: but wait, there are bad news :(

- i teach it for the first time
- it will be intensive—i will assign a lot of work
- make sure you set aside plenty of time
- do ask questions often:
  - i tend to be overly parsimonious
  - but i respond fast to emails
  - asking questions early is important for your success!

## today

- we'll do proper intro to the topic next week
- today just very quick intro
- and quick overview of data,
- so that you can get going with research from day 1
- ideally we'll figure out, or at least get closer
- to what you want to study in this class :)
- but first some super basic things

## happiness, what is it?

- super-interdisciplinary; in this class:
  - social psychology, geography, and sociology
- it's a cognitive evaluation of one's life as a whole
  - not domain (say neighb, financial satisfactions)
  - not affective (happy at a moment)
- so technically properly called “life satisfaction”
  - but typically used interchangeably with
  - “happiness”, and there is also a scientific term
  - SWB: Subjective Wellbeing



## how do we study it?

- typically in this class and in my world:
  - if you cannot measure it with numbers, you cannot study it
- and there is no point collecting data, because it already has been collected!
- a typical survey question reads:
  - “are you satisfied with your life as a whole”
  - and is answered on a Likert scale say from 1 to 5 or 1 to 10
  - it's reasonably valid/reliable
- and then we regress it on what we're interested in
  - say age, education, income, inequality, poverty, etc

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## if you cannot measure it, it doesn't exist

- depending on your research interests and skills, get familiar with at least one dataset from the next slide
- (i use them and can also share with you my Stata code)
- ie download it and play with it, read literature using it, eg google scholar “happiness, general social survey”

## the datasets (more coming later)

- difficult but comprehensive containing almost everything panels (need to be great with data management):  
<https://psidonline.isr.umich.edu/>,  
<https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/content/DSDR/add-health-data-guide.html> and <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/21600/datadocumentation>
- user friendly but still comprehensive cross sections:  
<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>  
<http://gss.norc.org/>
- interested in communities/localities, ie counties? use brfss!  
<http://cdc.gov/brfss>
- want to use any other data? interested in anything specific? let me know!

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## this will be a great class!

- you'll become happier (really)
- because this is my area of research
- so i know a lot here
- and we can publish something together
- i want to spend on this much time and have discussion like 30min
- so that we can start figuring out collaborations asap
- first check out my research, and then each of you discuss yours `theaok.github.io`

## 2 questions about you

- what do you study or want to study?
  - (we'll be able to link just about anything to SWB)
- what data are you using or want to use?
  - (i am a “quant, ” and it's better if you are too)