GV101 Week 04: Political Science Methods
Tasks and Questions to Consider

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Office Hours (by appointment via the Student Hub):
Wednesdays, 10:30 – 11:30, CBG.4.13
Wednesdays, 14:30 – 15:30, CBG.4.13

Tasks:

This week you will not focus on questions about the readings, though these have been included below in case you wish to think about them. Instead, in your groups, you will undertake one of the following two tasks:

1. Using the five steps in the scientific method outlined by Clark, Golder, and Golder, design a research project, which should include (in order):
    a) A clear research question;
    b) A theory providing an answer to the question, which you wish to test;
    c) The implications of the theory that you can test (i.e. hypotheses);
    d) The method that you would use to gather the data to test your hypotheses;
    e) The manner in which you would analyse the data to evaluate your hypotheses.

2. Using the variables in a quantitative dataset, which you will be given a summary of in the class, specify a regression model as follows:
    a) Choose the dependent variable (which should be interval);
    b) Choose at least one independent variable;
    c) Choose at least one control variable;
    d) Specify (i.e. hypothesise) the relationship between the independent and dependent variables;
    e) Specify how you think the inclusion / exclusion of the control variable(s) will affect relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Essential Reading Questions:

1. What does it mean to say that a hypothesis is falsifiable, as outlined in Clark, Golder, and Golder?
    a) What does fasificationism imply about the nature of knowledge that we obtain through scientific enquiry?

2. According to Clark, Golder, and Golder what is the difference between deductive and inductive approaches to learning?
    a) How clear cut do you think the line between the two is?

3. What is the difference between a necessary and sufficient condition, as specified by Clark, Golder, and Golder?
    a) Can you think of examples of a necessary condition, and sufficient condition, and a necessary and sufficient condition for an outcome of interest?

4. What is the difference between establishing a relationship and establishing causality, as outlined by Shively?
    a) What are the three possible explanations for observing a relationship?

5. According to Shively, what are the elements of designs without control groups, designs with control groups (with and without pre-measurement), and a true experiment?
    a) What are the questions that are left open by each approach?

6. What problem does regression to the mean present for political scientists, as specified by Shively?
    a) What is a potential solution to this problem?

Further Reading Questions:

7. What is Gerring's proposed definition of a case study?
    a) What is your assessment of this definition?

8. What are the three types of case study outline by Gerring, and what are their features?
    a) What are the strengths and weaknesses of case studies on the six trade-offs outlined by Gerring?

9. What is Kreuzer's argument about the role of history and historians in political science?
    a) Are you convinced by this argument? Why?
    b) What are the five benefits of dialogue between historians and political scientists, according to Kreuzer?

Essential Readings for Next Week:

- Russell J. Dalton, 'Political Cleavages, Issues, and Electoral Change', in Lawrence LeDuc, Richard G. Niemi, and Pippa Norris (eds.), *Comparing Democracies 2: New Challenges in the Study of Elections and Voting* (London, Sage, 2002), pp. 189-209.

- 'Left and right in comparative context', chapter in Kenneth Benoit and Michael Laver, *Party Policy in Modern Democracies* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2006), pp. 129-148.

- Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, 'Trump and the Populist Authoritarian Parties: The Silent Revolution in Reverse', *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Jun., 2017), pp. 443-454.

Further Readings for Consideration Next Week:

- Maria Teresa Grasso, Stephen Farrall, Emily Gray, Colin Hay, and Will Jennings, 'Thatcher's Children, Blair's Babies, Political Socialization and Trickle-down Value Change: An Age, Period and Cohort Analysis', *British Journal of Political Science* (Jan., 2017), pp. 1-20.

- Elias Dinas, 'Why Does the Apple Fall Far from the Tree? How Early Political Socialization Prompts Parent-Child Dissimilarity', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Oct., 2014), pp. 827-852.