

Political Science 104 Homework #1

Due Wednesday, April 15th, at the end of lecture

This homework consists of three multiple-part questions, and is due Wednesday, April 15th, at the start of lecture. Late homeworks will be penalized one letter grade per day (with homeworks received after lecture that day counted as late). Due to the large enrollment in our class (over 130), we will not accept homeworks by email. Homeworks should be roughly 2 typed, double-spaced pages in length.

Question 1: In 2007 Robert D. Putnam published a controversial paper in *Scandinavian Political Studies* entitled “*E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century.*” Part of the abstract for this paper reads:

Ethnic diversity is increasing in most advanced countries, driven mostly by sharp increases in immigration. I find that immigration and ethnic diversity tend to reduce social solidarity and social capital. Evidence from the US suggests that in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods residents of all races tend to “hunker down”. Trust (even of one’s own race) is lower, altruism and community cooperation rarer, and friends fewer.

- It is clear from reading this abstract (and almost any abstract for a social science journal article) that Putnam believes he has uncovered a causal relationship. Rewrite this abstract as a one sentence hypothesis about this causal relationship. What are the dependent and independent variables in this hypothesis?
- What could be a possible causal mechanism for this hypothesis? That is, what is a plausible story for why the independent variable might affect the dependent variable?
- Come up with an alternative explanation for the findings reported in the abstract. What is the causal mechanism behind this alternative explanation?
- What data would you need to test your alternative explanation? What would you expect to see in the data if your alternative explanation was correct?

Question 2: In this question I want you to develop your own hypothesis related to an interesting public policy or political question of your choosing.

- Write a hypothesis that proposes a causal relationship between one dependent and one independent variable. Explain which is the dependent and which is the independent variable in your hypothesis.
- Explain the causal mechanism behind your hypothesis. Why do you believe your independent variable causes changes in your dependent variable?
- Describe what kind of data you would need to test your hypothesis. What would you expect to see in this data if your hypothesis is correct?
- Describe at least one alternative explanation for the relationship you have proposed in your hypothesis. What is the causal mechanism behind this alternative explanation? What kind of data would you need to consider to test this alternative explanation? What would you expect to see in the data if this alternative explanation is correct?

Question 3: Use the JSTOR archive to find one social science paper that is relevant to the hypothesis you have proposed in Question 2. (Information on using JSTOR is available in Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff Chapter 6, or you can just go to <http://www.jstor.org> and figure it out. If you are working off campus, see the library website for how to set yourself up to get access to JSTOR from non-UCSB URLs).

- What were the keywords you used for your search?
- What is the title of the paper you selected?
- In a few sentences, explain why this paper is relevant to your hypothesis.