

## **Political Analysis and Research Methods**

PSC 300: Fall 2015

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course introduces students to the logic and methods of research in political science. The first part of the class focuses on why hypotheses/arguments/claims to knowledge should be scrutinized with empirical (observable) evidence. The second part of the class focuses on "how" we can study political questions. The structure of the class moves from the abstract world of theory to empirical investigation of the world around us. You will begin to learn about some of the methods by which political scientists come to regard some propositions as "true" and others as "false." You will begin to understand when and why you should have more confidence in certain claims of fact and not others, and why most propositions remain debated.

The class begins with a look at some of the ways in which people can and do make errors in casual observations about the world around them. Then we introduce the logic and rationale for scientific inquiry. After that, we will shift our attention to concepts in research: variables, hypotheses, a research strategy, measuring concepts, and related topics. This course will introduce to you the theoretical and analytical reasons for doing social science research. Gaining some familiarity with the procedures used in political research will better allow you to critique that of political scientists whose work you read.

This course is different from others you will take in political science at DePaul. It will be like learning a new language and it will reorient your thinking about politics and political science. This is a challenging course for students because it is conceptually different, though not necessarily difficult. How you think about the world will change, though you may not realize it as we go along. This course will help you in your careers after you graduate—whatever you do after you graduate. The class is important for preparing for graduate or law school. Even if you do not go to graduate or law school, this class has practical application in a wide range of careers—particularly in the realm of political or policy work. Finally, the class will change how you look at and think about the world. This is a fundamental course that will help you in your other courses. You will start to get a sense of what you can consider reliable and valid evidence versus what is conjecture.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- Understand common errors of reasoning and empirical inference that distort casual thinking.
- Understand logic of scientific inquiry and the limits of scientific approaches to the study of political organization and behavior.
- Understand the criteria for causation as opposed to a coincidental or correlational relationship.
- Understand the importance of comparison a basis for assessing arguments.
- Learn about approaches to answering empirical questions (research design) about the relationships among political phenomena.
- Learn about methods of observation and measurement of political phenomena.
- Gain a basic ability to make a judgment about the quality of research and evidence used to support or oppose arguments and hypotheses.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** The course will employ a seminar format in which we discuss assigned readings. I expect that you attend classes and read materials before class meets. The material of this course is different from anything you have studied before, and will change how you look at the world. Attendance is essential for understanding it. If you cannot prepare for class and attend regularly, you will struggle. Grades will depend on your participation in class discussions (15%); quizzes (5%), assignments (60%), and a final exam (20%). The assignments are practical applications of what you are learning in class and gradually build into a literature review project that applies what you are learning to a research topic of interest to you.

This is a fundamental course in political science. This course is work-intensive. Be prepared for that and give yourself time to read the materials, digest them and learn. You will develop your logic skills if you work at it and you will improve your ability to figure out what is and is not worth reading and remembering. No course that I teach do I receive as much positive feedback from alumni as I do from those who complete this course successfully. But be warned. No class that I teach has as many people fail to complete the class. This is a win/lose proposition. Rise to the occasion or get out of the way.

#### REQUIRED READINGS:

Janet Buttolph Johnson and H. T. Reynolds. 2008. *Political Science Research Methods*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. CQ Press  
Additional readings will be available for this course through D2L. These readings are denoted by the author's name in the list of topics (below). You must access and USE these readings.

#### OTHER CONCERNS:

Deadlines: I'm going to run this like law or graduate school--points are deducted for late work. Things will unravel quickly in this class if you fall behind on assignments. If you have a history of falling behind in classes, you might consider dropping this course (I mean it—about 20% of the students in prior sessions of this class have failed to complete the course). The subject matter of this class accumulates, so falling behind tends to be a permanent issue, leading to incompletes or a lousy grade.

I will work with any student outside of class as much as needed to keep up and understand the materials. This is the most labor intensive course that I teach and probably the most labor intensive course that you will take in college. That's the cost. The payoff is knowing something about how to do research when you leave. It is excellent preparation for graduate or law school or for a career as an analyst of some sort. You will not be a master of research methods—that takes years to develop, but you will be further along than most.

Attendance and Participation: Attendance is required. You will be granted two absences—excused or not. After that, you will lose one-third of your participation grade for each absence thereafter. People who attend infrequently tend to do poorly in terms of mastering the material for the course. People who blow off classes generally do not complete the class. As with any class, you are paying a small fortune for this class, and you do not get the value of the course without class sessions. If you must miss class, you are responsible for the material covered that day.

Academic Dishonesty: Cheat and I'll flunk you! That is my policy. Several activities constitute cheating. Copying material from another source (e.g., a book, a wiki, blog, or other student) without proper acknowledgment is cheating. So, be warned. Come see me if you have any questions.

Learning Disabilities: Students with special learning needs are encouraged to discuss them with the instructor early in the course. Every attempt will be made to accommodate students with such needs.

The Dean of Students Office (DOS) helps students in navigating the university, particularly during difficult situations, such as personal, financial, medical, and/or family crises. Absence Notifications to faculty, Late Withdrawals, and Community Resource Referrals, support students both in and outside of the classroom. Additionally we have resources and programs to support health and wellness, violence prevention, substance abuse and drug prevention, and LGBTQ student services. Please feel free to contact us at <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos/>.

**STANDARDS FOR GRADING**: Your work will be evaluated according to the following criteria.

**A**: designates work of extra-ordinarily high quality; reflects thorough and comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; arguments are clearly organized with supporting ideas and/or evidence. Student volunteers comments and participation indicates that the student is prepared at all times if asked to provide a summary of the assigned readings.

**B**: designates work of high quality; reflects a clearly organized but less than comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; presents organized arguments that are supported by ideas and/or evidence. Student participates as above about 75% of the time, and attends all class periods.

**C**: Designates work which meets the minimal requirements of the assignment; written work reflects adequate organization and development of ideas, but arguments are communicated in a superficial or simplistic manner. Student does not volunteer, but responds only to direct questions, remains silent during group discussions, and often cannot summarize readings if called upon.

**D**: Designates work of poor quality which meets the minimum requirements of the assignment, but demonstrates poor organization of ideas and/or inattention to development of ideas, grammar, and spelling; treatment of material is superficial and/or simplistic; may indicate that the student has not read assignments thoroughly. Student does not volunteer, cannot respond to direct questions, keeps silent during class discussions, and is unable to summarize readings if called upon.

**F**: Designates work of poor quality that does not meet the minimum requirements of the assignment or task; fails to reflect an understanding of the issues at hand; fails to present organized arguments or fails to adequately support arguments with ideas; or which is not handed in on time. Student fails to participate even minimally in class or group discussions. Student may be frequently absent and participation is inadequate (silent) when student attends.

## TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

### Part I Introduction to scientific thinking & the philosophy of science

**Thur, Sept. 10:** Introductions, social sciences and the humanities, overview of scientific logic, types of inference (induction, deduction, retrodution), casual v. causal relationships, and more

**Tues, Sept. 15:** Why scientific methods? Casual vs. Scientific Observation and Inference (**quiz**)  
Raymond S. Nickerson, “Some Common Reasoning Fallacies.”  
Nisbett and Ross, Human Inference: Strategies and Shortcomings of Social Judgment, ch. 1 & chapter summaries (especially biases in information recall and how that affects judgments)

**Th., Sept. 17:** What is a social science?  
J & R, ch. 1, “Introduction” (examples of political science research)  
J & R, p. 33-42 “characteristics of scientific knowledge”

These readings identify flaws in casual (even informed) thinking. The flaws in everyday “reasonable” thinking are considerable and result in a lot of bad logic and arguments. The idea of scientific inquiry is that we can have more confidence in what we think we know if we engage in systematic observation, comparison, and interrogative inquiry—asking questions and attempting to disprove an argument (a failure to disprove leaves us a bit of confidence in the hypothesis/argument). Philosopher Karl Popper offered a rationale for scientific inquiry that goes like this. As human beings, we lack the cognitive capacities to know or reason through everything, so relying on reason alone is susceptible to incomplete, inaccurate, and biased conclusions. Also, as humans, we also lack the perceptual capacity to observe everything so we cannot rely on observation alone to understand what is happening in our world, much less what occurs elsewhere or at another time in history. Given that we necessarily have incomplete knowledge, how much confidence can we have in what we think we know? The scientific approach is to be skeptical—we posit a hypothesis or argument which we can try to disprove (rather than to build a case for). If we subject the argument to evidence, try to disconfirm it, *and* fail to disconfirm it, then we can have more confidence in the argument. It does not mean that the argument is necessarily true. We improve our understanding of the world by eliminating false or disproven arguments. A lot of what we think we know is wrong, or at least inaccurate or incomplete, so trying to eliminate false beliefs is progress. In short, we can’t know with certainty what is true, but with disciplined inquiry and skepticism, we can get a pretty good idea about what is not true.

Note that I am saying a “pretty good idea” rather than using language that implies a more definitive answer. Another famous philosopher of science, Imre Lakatos argued, “The strategy of falsification will not work unless we are sure that our test or experiment is the crucial test of the theory or hypothesis. No experiment will be a crucial test unless all possible variables (or limiting conditions) have been controlled or taken into account. There must be no other possible explanation for the failure of the experiment except the falsity of the hypothesis. This degree of control is, of course, impossible—practically and in principle. There are, in principle, an infinite number of things to be controlled in order to falsify any theory or hypothesis. Not all of them can be controlled, if only because there is no control over the particular point on the space-time continuum where any study is conducted—that is, each study is conducted as a particular place and time. Consequently, the effects of that particular context can never be controlled experimentally.” Thus, the scientific approach is not definitive, but it is just arguably better than alternative approaches to knowledge.

**Tues., Sept. 22.** Limits of a “Science of Politics” (quiz)

Friedrich, “law of anticipated reactions” in Constitutional Government and Democracy, 588-91

Bachrach & Baratz, “Decisions & Non-Decisions”

O’Brian, “Normative versus Empirical Theory and Method”

J & R, p. 51-58 interpretation & constructivism

These readings identify three major limitations of social science and knowledge based on the interplay of reason and empirical observation. These limitations will become apparent when we get into research design and making inferences from observations/evidence.

## **PART II STEPS & TASKS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH**

This part of the class will focus on the introduction and application of steps in the research process. We will begin with developing research questions, hypotheses, literature reviews, research design, and strategies of observation and data collection. For this part of the class, students will begin to use the concepts in class for a research proposal of their own that will be the main project for the class. Be sure to read the syllabus for each day, in addition to the readings.

**Thur, Sept. 24.** Overview of the empirical approach

J & R, Ch. 2 “The Empirical Approach to Political Science”

**Assignment 1 for next class (Tuesday, Sept 29) Send to me by 12:00 noon on Tuesday, Sept. 29**

Identify three possible research questions for the class. I highly recommend that you use a research question that relates to a class that you have already had or that you are currently taking. The reason is that you will be doing a research

**Tues., Sept. 29.** Identifying a topic and developing the research question

J & R, ch. 3 (Beginning the research process)\

This week we focus on questions and developing a literature review (as opposed to book reports).

Examples of research questions?

R1: Are Americans becoming more polarized along party lines?

R2: Does congressional redistricting reduce citizen control of Congress?

R3: Do tax increases kill jobs?

R4: Will Hillary Clinton win the Democratic presidential nomination?

R5: What is causing economic inequality to increase?

Class discussion questions:

Q? Are these descriptive or explanatory questions? (what is the difference)

Q? Can these questions be reframed to reflect explanatory questions? (why & how)

Q? How can these questions be focused to embody something observable? (define and focus)

Q? What are the concepts in each of these questions?

Q? What is observable for concept? (not the difference between levels and change/rates)

For example, how do we define ideology and how would we observe it?

For example, how do we define power and how would we observe it?  
Q? Does that observable phenomenon match the concept? (face validity)  
Q? What is the dependent (what is to be explained) variable in each question?  
Q? What is the independent (causal or explanatory) variable in each question?

**Tu., Sept. 29 & Th. Oct 1:** Conducting a literature review (in three stages)  
J & R, p 81-96  
Steger, “Who wins nominations and why?”  
Literature review advice at the end of this syllabus

**Assignment 2 for Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> email me a pdf of at least one journal article by noon of October 1<sup>st</sup>.** see below for the directions for step one in the literature review.

We are going to spend a week developing a literature review. A literature review is not just telling readers what some author(s) said in a book or article. It involves analysis—deconstructing a piece of literature, and synthesis—identifying patterns, commonalities, and differences across pieces of literature. We will spend Thursday as a tutorial on reading journal articles (using the articles that you have sent me).

**Tues. Oct 6:** Developing hypotheses (tentative answers), concepts, and variables  
J & R, ch. 4 “The building blocks of social science research”  
Larry Bartels “What’s the Matter with ‘What’s the Matter with Kansas?’”

Class discussion questions:

Q? What are we trying to explain in each question? (dependent variable)  
Q? What is the causal factor in each question? (independent variable)  
Q? What are the observable phenomena in each hypothesis? This tells us about data collection options.  
Q? What are the comparisons in each hypothesis? This tells us about our methods to test the hypotheses.  
Q? Why do we expect this relationship? This tells us about the theory guiding our thinking  
Q? What are the dependent variables in each hypothesis?  
Q? What is the independent variable in each hypothesis?  
Q? What else could cause changes in the dependent variable in each hypothesis? (the importance of recognizing alternative explanations / non-spuriousness)  
Q? What is a cross-level inference?  
Q? Why did Thomas Frank get it wrong in his book, *What’s the Matter with Kansas?*

**Assignment 3: hypotheses:** From one of the studies that you have identified in assignment two, identify the main argument or hypotheses in each of the articles that you found.

1. You should state the central hypothesis in the study, as well as other explanations that could account for variation in the dependent variable. A hypothesis states a causal, empirical relationship between the independent and dependent variables. (it should answer a why or how question)
2. After the hypothesis, give me a paragraph explaining why the relationship in the hypothesis is expected.

**Thursday, Oct. 8 Measurement**

J & R, ch. 5 Measurement

Shively, "Problems of Measurement: Accuracy" (Problems of Reliability and Validity) D2L

This class focuses on aspects of measurement, including reliability and validity, "operationalization" of concepts to something that can be observed in the real world, levels of measurement in quantitative studies. :

Q? What is measurement?

Q? What is validity?

Q? What is reliability?

**Assignment 4: Operationalization of variables (due Tues., Oct 13).** For the study that you used from assignment 2 and 3:

1. Identify the concepts in the hypothesis in your article, starting with your dependent variable, and tell me what the data is. You should explain where you got the data or evidence, and where a reader could get that information.
2. Explain the measurement of the variable. If the study used survey questions, you should list the question and possible responses, and how those responses are coded. For speeches or government records, you should tell your readers what the numbers mean (if a quantitative study) or why the variables measure the concepts being used (for a qualitative study)

**Tues., Oct 13, Causal inferences, correlation vs. causation, & spurious correlations**

J & R, pp. 165-177

<http://www.tylervigen.com/spurious-correlations>

There are four elements for establishing a causal relationship:

**Correlation** which can be thought of as a systematic coincidence (necessary, but not sufficient)

**Non-Spurious**- factor is not caused by some other variable or variables

**Temporal sequencing**- cause precedes effect, but note anticipated reactions

**Theory** – need to have a logical reason to expect a relationship

Q? How do you demonstrate correlation?

Q? What is needed to establish temporal sequencing? (why is this problematic in social sciences)

Q? What is needed to rule out alternative explanations?

Comparison is critical to establishing a causal relationship. For example, we make before versus after comparisons to assess the impact or effectiveness of a policy. We may compare kinds of cases to see how they differ (e.g., Acemoglu & Robertson's evaluation of the impact of culture and institutions looking at the communities along the Rio Grande river). Comparison is essential for establishing correlation, temporal sequence, and ruling out alternative explanations.

**Thursday, Oct. 15**, research design: a strategy for making comparisons to get comparisons for establishing correlations causation.

J & R, p. 178-183 – experiments

The critical matter in research design is develop a strategy for making comparison across observations. Without comparison, there is no way to establish correlation. Experimental research designs are the “gold standard” because you can make comparisons rule out alternative explanations, and control for temporal sequencing. We will discuss kinds of experimental research designs. The great difficulty is that a lot of political phenomenon cannot be studied in experimental settings.

**Assignment 5: Research Design (due Oct. 20).** For the studies used in Assignment 2, 3 & 4, write a brief explanation of the kind of research design that was used and what was compared in the study.

1. What type of research is used (e.g., secondary analysis, field research, policy analysis, survey research, experimental research).
2. What is the author comparing in the study.
  - a. If the hypothesis involves a temporal dimension, the variables may be measured across time and have measures for before or after some event.
  - b. If the hypotheses involves a relationship between two variables, then you will indicate that you are assessing how variables are correlated?

**Tues., Oct 20** quasi-experiments, natural experiments, intervention analysis

J & R, 184-193

Morgan & Pelissaro “Urban Policy: Does political structure matter?” (D2L)

**Assignment 7: Annotated bibliography (due Thurs., Oct 22) See step two of literature review (this is a 10 point assignment)**

**Thurs., Oct 22** Cross-sectional v. longitudinal: surveys v. aggregate analysis

J & R, p. 194-215

**Tues, Oct. 27** Sampling—selecting what will be observed

J & R, ch. 7

**Assignment 8:** collect a “convenience sample” of your family and friends. You should build an Excel spreadsheet that has the following data for 10 people. **Email to me by 12:00 NOON on Tues., Oct 29**

case	name	age	gender	height	party ID
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**Thurs, Oct. 29** Direct and Indirect observation  
J & R ch. 8

**Assignment 9: Rough Draft of Literature Review Due in Class: Tuesday, Nov. 3rd.** see literature review below (This is a 10 point assignment)

**Tues., Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>** Document analysis (content analysis, records)  
J & R., ch. 9

**Assignment 10: Due Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>** Use the **PEW survey** links listed below to identify the survey questions you would use to answer research question, Are Americans becoming more polarized along party lines? You should state three hypotheses that posit a relationship between a variable and political polarization? You should identify the questions that you would use to measure the dependent and independent variables in your hypothesis, and explain whether you think the variables are valid and reliable measures of the concept (see below—advice on hypothesis testing)

**Thurs., Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>** Survey Research & Interviewing  
J & R., ch 10

<http://www.people-press.org/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/>  
<http://www.people-press.org/files/2014/06/2014-Polarization-Topline-for-Release.pdf>

Tues., Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>, Case Studies  
Thomas, “Case Studies”

**Assignment 11: Revised Literature Review due in class Nov. 12 (this is a 10 point assignment)**

Thurs, Nov. 12, catch up

**Final Exam: November 24, 2015, from 2:30 PM to 4:45 PM**

**Introduction to Political Analysis and Research Methods**  
**Advice on formulating a research question**  
**Assignment 1**

The assignment is to think about a topic and formulate a research question for which you might write a proposal to research (see research proposal guidelines). Come to class with three possible research questions.

Your research question should be one that could be answered with empirical information (that which you could gather from personal experience, experimentation, observation, or secondary sources of information). You should aspire to ask an explanatory question. That is, your research question should be in the form of a “why” question as opposed to a question of “what” or “how” which are essentially descriptive in nature. If you cannot develop a “why” question, you may begin with a descriptive question. For example, you might ask, “**How** does voter turnout differ across education levels?” Such a question is perfectly legitimate, but it is more of a first step. If you begin with a descriptive question, you may be able to develop it into an explanatory question. Of the preceding question, we might ask, “Why does voter turnout differ across levels of education?”

For the first part of the assignment, ask several descriptive questions. Then, rephrase them as explanatory questions (i.e., one that involves a causal relationship between two empirically observable phenomena). Finally, try to phrase your descriptive question as a hypothesis, a tentative answer to the question you have asked.

Here are several examples that may help illustrate the task at hand.

- How does education effect vote turnout? Why might increasing education lead to voter turnout? Note that in forming the question as an explanatory question, I am assuming that the relation between education and voter turnout is positive—that increasing education is associated with a greater probability of voting. As such, I also have implicitly developed a hypothesis. A hypothesis is a tentative answer to the question being asked. In this example, the tentative answer to the first question is that greater education makes people more likely to vote. The hypothesis for the explanatory question might be, for example, that more education gives people greater ability to access and interpret political information.
- How does money effect congressional elections? Why does money affect congressional elections? In this case, we might expect to find that, the more money candidates spend, the greater their chances of being elected. This expectation also serves as our hypothesis for the descriptive question. One hypothesis for the explanatory question, then might be that money allows candidates to purchase advertising which improves their name recognition and image among voters, which in turn leads to more votes on election day.

## **Introduction to Political Analysis and Research Methods**

### **Advice on a Literature Review**

This class focuses on the question, “How do we know ....?” Conducting a literature review is an early step in the process of answering that question. You can better figure out what you need to do by seeing what others have found, their arguments, and their methods for studying a question. Without the benefit of others’ research you wind up stumbling blindly through the process—and if you are lucky, you can reinvent the wheel. Most trial and error efforts waste time and energy as you run into problems, become frustrated, and give up. The point of a literature review is to discern what the main theories (arguments) are for your topic, what conclusions scholars have reached, how (methodologically) they have tried to answer a question and arrived at those conclusions. Further, you should get a sense of what conclusions are generally accepted and which conclusions are disputed (most ideas and arguments in political science are debatable to some degree). As you become more familiar with a line of research or thinking, you will become more adept at identifying problems or limitations on what we know.

Of critical importance, you need to gain a sense of *how* others have conducted their studies. You need to identify arguments, evidence used to support the argument, and how that evidence was obtained. [Note that trying to “support an argument” is a bad way to approach research even though that is often what happens – and why so much journalism is bad or misleading. As we will see shortly, a bedrock principle of the scientific approach is to try to disprove an argument.

When you do a literature review, don't just read the material for substance but also read to see what kinds of empirical evidence is used to support the argument and how that evidence was obtained. Some questions include: How did the author(s) go about assessing his/her claims? How did the author(s) define their concepts? How did they operationalize their concepts (what evidence did they use)? What was their research design? How did they gather that evidence? To the extent that you can't figure these things out from reading a piece, what you are reading may be shoddy research from a methodological standpoint. Be especially wary of impressionistic observations.

Finally, reading others' research will give help you figure out what can be done to produce evidence that can be used to determine whether an argument (hypothesis) is correct. If something hasn't been done before, either 1) you are really insightful, or 2) you may be in over your head trying to do what others with more experience have tried to do and failed.

**First step: identify five sources** (must be approved by me—so generate a list) **Assignment 2**

You should identify at least one book (not a text book) and four scholarly journal articles or chapters in scholarly books.

Note that books by the likes of Ann Coulter or other pundits and journalists tend to be opinionated arguments that are based on assumptions and impressions (often incorrect assumptions and impressions) and thus are not fully grounded in fact. In general, journalistic sources do not count—blogs, Wikipedia listings, magazines, newspapers, etc. These things might be used as evidence later on (depending on what you are doing), but they are not sources for understanding what research has been done or what has been found. Any books, articles or chapters that you use should be scholarly.

If you cannot find any research on your topic, it suggests 1) the project is not feasible and others have been discouraged from doing it, 2) you haven't been looking in the right places (in which case you should come see me), or 3) you are brilliant and you've stumbled onto something worth putting in more time investigating it (see above re: letter of recommendation time).

## **Second step: annotated bibliography of your sources. (Assignment 7)**

Building an annotated bibliography means reading all of the sources. An annotated bibliography is a summary paragraph accompanying each source. Your summary should include the main argument, the main finding or result or conclusion, and identify the evidence used to support that conclusion. You should have approximately 150 words per source. As a useful guide, you could have three paragraphs for each source including: 1) a summary of the argument (hypothesis), 2) a paragraph on the evidence used to support/assess the argument (hypothesis) and how that evidence was gathered or collected, and 3) your thoughts on how the study is relevant to your research project.

For example, this is an annotated bibliography of an article that I wrote some time ago on presidential nominations.

Wayne Steger. "Who Wins Nominations and Why? An Updated Forecast of the Presidential Primary Vote," *Political Research Quarterly*, 2007, 60 (1): 91-99.

This article tries to answer the question, "What factors enable a given candidate to win a presidential nomination?" Steger argues that the invisible primary—the period before the presidential caucuses and primaries, is critical for determining the outcomes in the caucuses and primaries. Specifically, he argues that the candidate obtaining the most endorsements by elite party officials is most likely to win the most votes across all of the primaries (as a result of an "insider game and cue taking by partisan primary voters). Other factors that affect the votes in the primaries include: funds raised by candidates that are not spent by the end of the invisible primary, standing in national polls at the end of the invisible primary. He also finds that the Iowa Caucus and the New Hampshire primary have a significant impact on the voting in the ensuing primaries. Finally, he finds that there are differences between the nominations of the Democratic and Republican Parties.

Steger uses a statistical model to predict (forecast) the aggregate vote share of candidates in presidential primaries. The dependent variable is the aggregate vote share of candidates across all of the primaries up to the date on which the winning candidate has secured a majority of convention delegates. The independent (or explanatory) variables are: 1) percentages of endorsements by governors, senators and US Representatives, 2) the candidates' share of respondents in the last national Gallup poll taken before the Iowa Caucuses, 3) the candidates' share of cash reserves at the end of the calendar year before the caucuses and primaries (derived from Federal Election Commission reports).

**Third Step:** Developing the literature review from annotated bibliography (assignment 9)

At this point, you have reviews of individual books, articles and chapters, but this does not constitute a literature review. A literature review synthesizes the main ideas across a series of papers that are related in a vein of research on a particular question. Synthesizing is not summarizing. Rather, synthesis involves organizing the information according to major themes or patterns across the studies. The organizational structure of the literature review transcends the individual studies, looking for commonalities and points of difference. The information in the various studies is organized according to major themes in the studies—which could be theoretical, as in comparing and contrasting several different theoretical arguments. The themes might also be methodological as in studies with different methodologies finding different results (this is often the case in studies that look at individuals such as those based on survey data and studies that look at aggregates of individuals; or experimental versus survey research).

The literature review should identify the independent variables that different studies have used to explain a particular dependent variable (the patterns of which we are seeking to explain). In comparing and contrasting studies, you can analyze the individual studies for their unique contributions, strengths, and weaknesses. Differences in the independent variables across studies reflects differences in the explanations for (or reasons why) there are patterns in the independent variable. For example, in the literature on presidential nominations—illustrated above, there are differences between scholars who find public opinion polls are the main predictor of voting in presidential primaries and those who find that party elites play a bigger role. These are alternative explanations representing alternative perspectives on presidential nominations.

Importantly, a literature review is not an opinion piece. A literature review is used to synthesize and analyze prior research. That is it.

**Assignment 11 will be a revised version of the literature review**