

POLS 205: Concepts for Midterm Exam

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The questions on your midterm examination will assume your familiarity with the following concepts. You should feel comfortable using these concepts in discussing, critiquing, or suggesting improvements to an example research project.

variable	unit of analysis	large N
independent variable	covary	case study
dependent variable	correlation	critical case study
confounder	null hypothesis	plausibility probe
spurious correlation	alternative hypothesis	direct observation
causation	confidence level	indirect observation
operationalization	formal theory	participant observer
hypothesis	random variable	non-participant observer
hypothesis testing	noise	overt observation
measurement	direct relationship	covert observation
data	indirect relationship	structured observation
parsimony	conditional relationship	unstructured observation
evidence	reciprocal causation	archival data
scope	inference	survey data
explanatory power	fundamental problem	ethnography
predictive power	of causal inference	thick description
cases	unit homogeneity	method of agreement
scientific method	conditional independence	method of differences
experimental methods	controlled experiment	necessary condition
observational methods	matching	sufficient condition
replication	ecological fallacy	selection bias
naturalism	treatment	selection on
empiricism	control	dependent variable
contingent effects	randomized assignment	shadow cases
subjectivity	internal validity	process tracing
deterministic	external validity	validity of measurement
probabilistic	pre-test	face validity
omitted variables	post-test	content validity
generality	intent to treat	construct validity
falsifiability	measurement error	reliability of measurement
research question	testing effects	intercoder reliability
normative	case-control experiments	continuous variable
concept	average treatment effect	discrete variable
qualitative methods	local average treatment effect	nominal variable
quantitative methods	longitudinal design	ordered variable
time series	natural experiment	binary variable
cross-section	field experiment	
time series cross-section	small N	