


- What do people say when you tell them you study political science?
  - “Are you going to be a politician?”
- Political science
  - = scientific study of political phenomena
- Why it's important to learn how political scientists do research
  - → better understand political science readings for other classes
  - → become a better consumer of information
  - → get over the first step towards becoming a producer of scientific research

# What does it mean to study politics *scientifically*?

- Think about it for 2 minutes
- Then, discuss it with your neighbor for 5 minutes
- Be ready to share your ideas
  - Write them down if it helps you

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- Thinking about the world in terms of theoretical models vs. “just learning the facts”
    - What is the problem with “just learning the facts”?

# Defining key concepts

- Variable
  - = a concept of interest
  - Independent variable v. dependent variable
- Theory
  - = a tentative conjecture about the causes of some phenomenon of interest
    - Conjecture = belief, guess, hunch

# Defining key concepts (continued)

- Hypothesis

- = a theory-based statement about a relationship that we expect to observe
- *Null hypothesis* = a theory-based statement about what we expect to observe if our theory was incorrect
- *Hypothesis testing* = a process in which scientists evaluate systematically collected evidence to make a judgment of whether the evidence favors their hypothesis or the null hypothesis