SCIENCE, SOCIETY, AND SOCIAL RESEARCH

Learning About the Social World

- the puzzle (interesting question about the world)
- observe
- generalize
- reasoning
- reevaluating

Example:
1. College students go to Starbucks a lot.
2. College students study better at cafes.
3. Coffee (caffeine+theophylline) helps students get better grades.
4. Test it - does coffee improve the grades of students?

Problems:

- Selective Observation
  - Choosing to look only @ things that are in line w/ our preferences or beliefs.
  - Only looking @ Starbucks near campus

- Inaccurate Observation
  - Based on faulty perceptions or empirical reality.
  - Not looking @ other places, like the library

- Overgeneralization
  - Unjustifiably conclude that what's true for some is true for all.
  - All college students must like Starbucks.

- Illogical Reasoning
  - Prematurely jump to conclusions largely on the basis of invalid assumptions.

- Resistance to Change
  - The reluctance to change our ideas in light of new information.

The Social Science

- Relies on the scientific method to investigate individuals, societies, and social processes.
- puzzle
- past research → proposition
- proof
- policy implication
Types of Research

- **Descriptive** → what is the situation?
- **Exploratory** → what is actually going on
- **Explanatory** → the causes and effects
- **Evaluation** → the effects of an intervention

Things we'll go over:

- **Quantitative Methods** → surveys and experiments that record variation in social life in terms of quantities.
- **Qualitative Methods** → observation, intensive interviewing, and focus groups that are designed to capture social life as participants experience.
- **Triangulation** → the use of multiple methods to study one research question. Also used to mean the use of two or more different measures of the same variable.
- **Basic Science** → develops scientific knowledge and predictions
- **Applied Science** → focuses on the development of technology and technique.