17.801. First assignment
Fall 1998

1. Find a newspaper article that describes a political issue or policy problem and that, either implicitly or explicitly, makes a causal argument about the issue or problem.

2. Formulate a simple-yet-non-trivial hypothesis that arises from this article that might be tested through (further) social scientific research.

3. Figure out how you would measure the dependent variable (the thing being caused) and the independent variable(s) (the thing doing the causing). Included in this part is demonstrating that the data you are interested in actually exist.

4. Present your work
   4.1 Write a one or two page memo to me that summarizes the newspaper article (and provides a citation), formulates the hypothesis, discusses measuring the testing the hypothesis, and reports on the availability of data.

   4.2 Make a four minute (that’s right, four minutes) presentation to class about your articles and your ideas for research. We’ll have one or two minutes each to discuss or comment on what you’ve found.