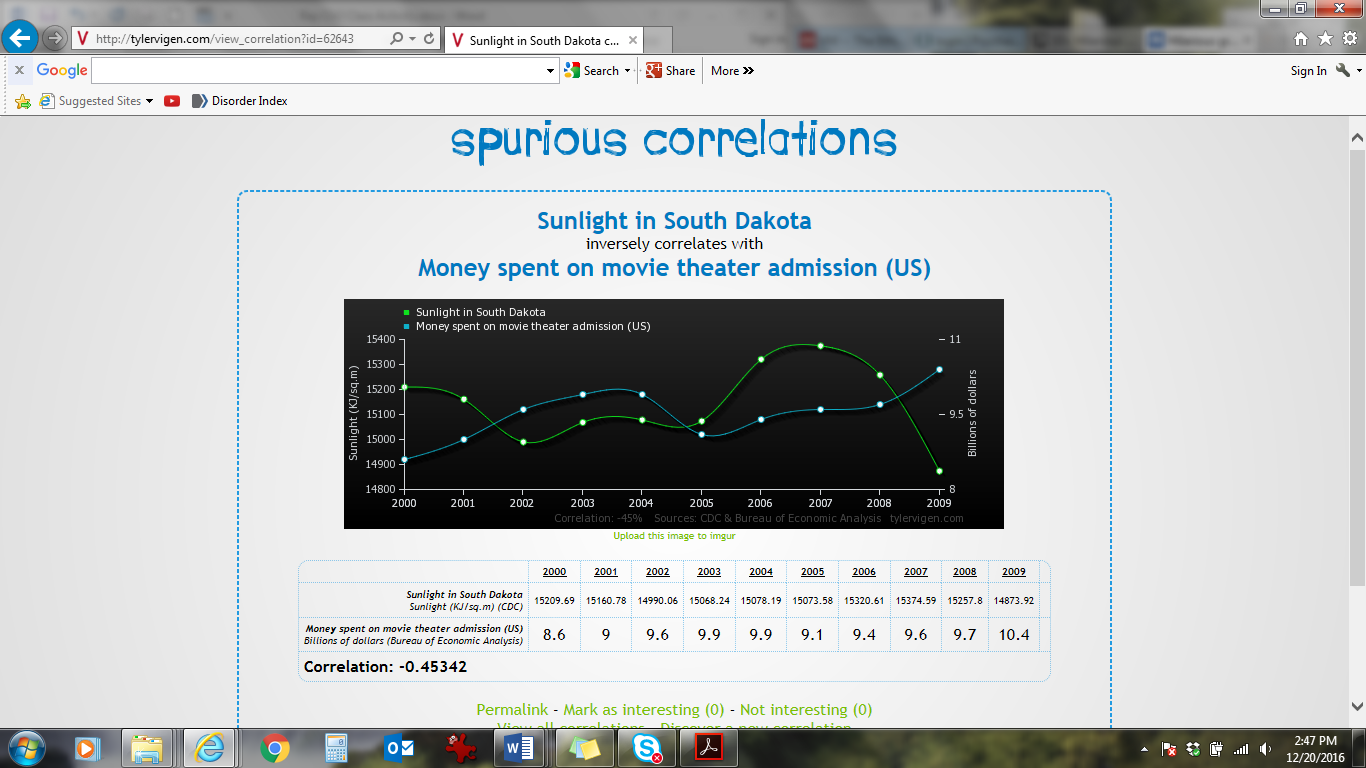
Class Activities

# Chapter 3: Research Methods

<http://tylervigen.com/discover>



1. Visit the following webpage <http://tylervigen.com/discover>, working in groups of 5 students, allow students to explore the site and generate correlations among the variables provided. The example above correlates Sunlight in South Dakota with Money spent on movie theater admissions in the US.

Describe the correlation between variables. What is the strength of the relationship? What does the negative or positive correlation mean in relation to the variables? What may be other variables that help to explain the relationship between the variables of interest? Generate INCORRECT causal (cause and effect) statements regarding the variables. And finally, why would describing the relationship as causal be incorrect?

2. Develop work groups of 3-5 students. Have them discuss the following for 10-15 minutes in their groups.

Why is it important to have a community member on the IRB committee? Researchers and university officials may be biased in wanting to conduct research studies. What contributes to this bias? In what ways can the interest of the community and the public be protected with an IRB committee? Additionally, can a person with a mental illness truly give consent to studies providing promising treatment, given the degree of suffering the person may be undergoing given their symptoms. How does this question relate to consent and implied coercion?

3. Develop work groups of 3-5 students. Have them discuss the following for 10-15 minutes in their groups.

Design an experiment where you will provide an intervention utilizing dispensing of delicious chocolate and ratings of happiness (improved mood). What is the dependent variable and what is the independent variable? What would you add to improve this experimental research study? What are additional considerations in regards to threats to internal and external validity? Who would you exclude from the study and why? How will you randomly assign the individuals into the groups? Describe who would you recruit for the study and why. Incorporate Group A and Group B into your experimental design. How would you measure improved mood?

Group A receives chocolate placebo (looks like chocolate, tastes like chocolate but not chocolate)

Group B receives chocolate