

STUDYING A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

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You will be required to submit two 1-2 page (typed double-spaced) papers - one on Monday, November 6th (the day before the election) and the other on Wednesday, November 15th (the day of your next exam for this course).

Note: Your second paper (due Nov. 15th) will count 20% toward your grade for Exam #2 which is scheduled for November 15th. View it as a good portion of the essay part of your next exam.).

Also note. Although the second paper is not due until Wednesday, November 15th, bring your notes (election results/commentary) to class on Wednesday, November 8th (the day after the election) and be prepared to present your findings (election results) to the class. You have permission from me to stay up as late as you want on election night.

Paper I - Preview of the 2000 Election (Due Monday, November 6th)

1. First, based on your last name, find which region of the country you are responsible for.
 - A-D - Far West: Alaska, HI, WA, OR, CA
 - E-H - West: NV, ID, MT, WY, UT, CO
 - L - Southwest: AZ, NM, OK, TX
 - M - Great Plains: ND, SD, NE, KS
 - N-O - Upper Midwest: MN, MI, WI
 - P-Q - Midwest: MO, IL, IA, IN, OH
 - R - Middle South: Arkansas, TN, KY, WVA, NC, VA
 - S - Deep South: LA, MS, AL, GA, SC, FL
 - T-V - East: NY, PA, MD, NJ, DE, DC
 - W-Z - New England: CT, MA, RI, VT, NH, ME
2. To complete the next steps in this assignment you will need to visit several web sites. First go to <http://www.politics.com> and click on "Electoral Vote Tracker" by reporter Hal Bruno. You will get a map of the U.S. that includes the electoral votes in each state. It is also color coded to indicate which states are "Gore" states, "Bush" states, and "undecided" or "toss-up" states.
3. Total the number of electoral votes in your region. What percentage of the total electoral votes (538) does your region represent? How important do you think your region is in terms of the outcome of the presidential election?
4. Which candidates are expected to win which states in your region? Which states are considered toss-ups?
5. Then create an "Election Watch Box" like the one on the next page. Note that I am using the Far West region here as an example.

States of the	House Before	House After	Senate Before	Senate After	Changes + -
Far West	Dem / Rep	Dem / Rep	Dem / Rep	Dem / Rep	House / Senate
Alaska	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Hawaii	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Washington	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Oregon	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
California	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___
Totals	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___	___ / ___

6. Insert in each cell the appropriate number so, for example, you will know that of the 52 Representatives in the House of Representatives from California, X number are Democrats before the election and X number are Republicans. Then, after the election, put in your appropriate totals. Notice and comment on changes, if any for both House and Senate seats. Remember all 435 House seats are up for election, but only 33 Senate seats.

Note: There are two (2) “Independents” in the U.S. House of Representatives. One is from Vermont, the other is from Virginia. You will need to indicate their status some way - perhaps use an asterisk (*) and indicate how they fared in their elections.

Important: To complete this step of the assignment, you will have to do some careful detective work. However, I strongly suggest you visit your old friend, Thomas (named for Thomas Jefferson) at <http://thomas.loc.gov/> and then click on “House Directories” and “Senate Directories.” I think you can take it from there.

7. Choose one key race (House, Senate, or Governor) that is occurring in one state of your region and follow it carefully. Try to select a “close” race if possible. Depending on your region, you may have more than one choice here but select one that you think will be an interesting and important race. You have at least two web sites to visit to find at least one key race in one of the states in your region. I suggest you visit both sites and do some thinking before you make your selection. Discuss as much as you can what the issues are, why this race is important etc. - anything you can find.
 - Go to <http://www.policy.com> and cursor down to “Special Report: Campaign 2000.” Among other things at this site, you should find 12 or 13 key Senate races.
 - Also, go to <http://www.cnn.com> and cursor down to “Politics” and find “In-depth.” Then click on Campaign 2000. Look for “What’s at Stake” in the next to last column on your screen. Read all of the items here but look for “Top Races: for Governor, Senate, and House.”
 - Go to C-SPAN (a great site for election 2000 and other politics) at <http://www.c-span.org/> and click on “Campaign 2000” on the left. Then go to “National Election Guide” and click on any 3 choices there - but “Find out about hottest races” is the best one. But look at all of them.
8. To summarize this Paper I assignment, you should prepare a 1-2 page paper (typed double spaced) that breaks down the electoral votes in your region and identifies which states are pro-Gore, pro-Bush, and “tossups.” Complete your “Election Watch Box” (only half can be completed by Nov. 6th) and analyze one “key” race in one of the states in your region.

Paper II - Analysis of the Results of the 2000 Election (Due November 15th)

1. Prepare a 1-3 page paper (typed double-spaced) in which you identify which states in your region were won by each of the presidential candidates. Then total the number of electoral votes won by each candidate in the states of your region.
2. Were there any surprises or key upsets by either Gore or Bush in your region? If so, which ones in particular?
3. Prepare and present your completed "Election Watch Box" and then summarize it in words. What can you conclude about the "political climate" of your region? Any signs of major changes or trends afoot?
4. Overall, what did the national election mean for Congress as a whole? That is, has control of the House and/or the Senate changed as a result of the election?
5. Discuss the results of the "key" race you monitored. Who won, by how much? How important was the victory in terms of the general make-up of Congress?
6. Discuss the election results for Connecticut's General Assembly. Which party controlled the House and Senate of our state legislature before the election? What, if anything, has changed as a result of the election? Present numbers here.
7. Write down the name of the town and zip code you are from (your home town or where your family lives) and state the name of your state (CT) representative and state senator both before and after the election. If you are from out of state then indicate where your out-of-state residence, but include the results for the Storrs-Mansfield area.
8. What, in your view, does the overall outcome for both the Presidency and for Congress mean for family policy in the future? You can answer this question by isolating a few "family issues" that emerged during the election. In short, explain what difference it makes if Gore or Bush is the winner and what difference it makes which party controls the House or Senate - in terms of America's families.
9. Why are the vote totals for 3rd party candidates important? Did they matter?
10. Find, copy, and attach a political cartoon that you feel best illustrates something about election 2000. Then explain why you think so. This does not count as one of the 1-3 pages. Indicate the source and date of the cartoon. You can look in newspapers but I suggest you go on the web. There are several cartoon web sites. Also, I strongly suggest you visit a web page of a newspaper in one of the states of your region.

Note: You will submit Part II of this paper assignment when you turn in your completed exam on Wednesday, November 15th. Good luck. As usual, I can be reached via e-mail if have any questions.

Teaching Note

Although this project was designed for the 2000 election, it can easily be adapted to coincide with other elections. The instructor can make adjustments to fit his or her class. For example, depending on the composition of the class, the assignment could be geared to watching the elections of incumbent female Senators or Representatives. Also, the content and availability of the various web sites will change from election to election. You will be required to submit two 1-2 page (typed double-spaced) papers - one on Monday, November 6th (the day before the election) and the other on Wednesday, November 15th (the day of your next exam for this course).

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