

STATISTICS IN THE REAL WORLD: ESSAY 2
Jo Hardin Fall 2018

Find a political race which which you find engaging and that will be decided on November 6, 2018. Use the readings and other sources you find to frame the information being presented in the media.¹

Your essay should be accessible to a general reader who may be unfamiliar with the political race and political polling in general. 800 - 1000 words (ish).

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pick a political race about which there is enough media attention that you can find ideas and sources.
2. Find a poll describing the race and try to get as much information as you can about the poll (Who they asked, What they asked, Who funded it, etc.). Then ask as many follow-up questions as you can about the poll (How do they know that? How were the people selected? Who did they miss?...).
3. Write an essay in which you explain the way the media has portrayed the chances of your candidate winning their race. The idea is for you to use a outside text(s) (readings from class are fine, the text(s) do(es) not need to be academic / peer reviewed) to get deeper insight into how the candidate will fare on election night.
4. Your essay should include a claim (thesis statement) that you argue throughout the paper. You may be arguing that some aspect of the campaign / polling / media is similar to 2016, or it may be different. Or you may argue that there is something particular to your race that makes polling particularly important or unimportant. The idea is to make a claim and use the the readings to back-up or contextualize your claim.

ASSIGNMENT TIMELINE

Micro-essay. Provide a very short description of the race (type of seat, geographic location, background of candidate, etc.). Contextualize the race in the larger political sphere (why does this particular race matter and to whom?). Give a short indication of how the readings on polling are relevant to the way the race is being portrayed in the media. Give an idea for what you will argue in your essay. 500 words maximum.

Tuesday, October 16, midnight to Sakai.

Version 1. This is a complete and polished essay. Your thesis statement should be clear with evidence to back it up.

Tuesday, October 23, midnight to Sakai.

¹Thanks to Vin De Silva, David Menefee-Libey, and Kara Wittman for their ideas and suggestions for the essay prompt.

Peer review. Groups of three. Same format as before.

Thursday, October 25.

Essay conference. Please arrange to meet with me or with Candice Wang to discuss your essay. If you didn't meet me for Essay 1 then you are required to meet me for Essay 2; if you didn't meet with Candice for Essay 1, then you are required to meet with Candice for Essay 2. You may also arrange to meet me or Candice at other times in the process, depending on our schedules.

Monday, October 29 - Wednesday, October 31.

Version 2. This is a complete and polished essay. The thesis statement should be clear and well argued.

Sunday, November 4, midnight to Sakai.

ANNOYING FORMATTING DETAILS

Really annoying requirements that will again make it easier to read many papers:

- Identify your overall thesis (the core argument around which the entire essay is organized) **and bold-face it.**
- Identify the topic sentence of each paragraph and underline or *italicize* it.
- Name the file you upload to Sakai like this: Paper#.LastName.doc, as in Paper2.Gallup.doc.
- Be sure that your name, title of the paper, and date are on the manuscript itself.
- Double-spaced with 12 point type and at least 1 inch margins to write comments in.
- Any reference / citation formatting is fine, but please be consistent.
- Print a word-count at the end of your paper.