

Political Science 205
Paper (35%)

Due: Thursday, March 8
Hard copy due at the beginning of the last day of class

This final project is intended to call on all of the concepts we have learned in this class: from our discussion of research methodology all the way through regression analysis. It will be helpful for you to review the reading and lecture notes appropriate for each element of this project.

Objective. Your assignment is to conduct original research based on the midterm dataset we have been using in this course. Construct your own study to examine something of interest to you, which is testable using the data at your disposal.

Formatting. Your final paper should follow these formatting guidelines:

- 10-12 pages including tables and graphs
- Double-spaced
- 12 pt. Times New Roman font
- 1" margins

Structure. Your paper should be divided into five sections with the following subheadings. It is up to you how long each of these individual sections are, it will vary from student to student.

- I. **Theoretical Overview:** In this section, provide an overview of your research project that explains what you plan to study and what the interesting potential implications of your research are. What is the question that you began your inquiry with? What is the general argument you hope to make? If you would like, you may call on outside resources here to demonstrate where your research fits into existing scholarship. If you choose to do so, you should limit yourself to 3-4 academic/scholarly references.
- II. **Research Methodology:** This section describes the research and null hypotheses you will test, and the method and data that you will employ to test your hypotheses. Be sure to address at least the following:
 - a. List the *research hypotheses* that you plan to evaluate in the paper. With each hypothesis you propose, state the null.¹
 - b. The *causal mechanism* for each of your individual hypotheses. Remember, the causal mechanism is the logic in which you expect your independent variable(s) to interact with your dependent variable(s).
 - c. The *methodology* of research that your study uses, including details about sampling and data. Please note that this is the American National Election Study (see the

¹ There is no minimum or maximum number of hypotheses to include in your project, but the scope of your inquiry needs to be sufficiently significant. For example, simply looking at how party ID correlates with vote choice is too narrow; instead you might think about how party ID is correlated with political participation measured by 2-3 different measures of participation.

footnote below). You need to look at the Research Design lectures to decipher which type of method ANES uses. In addition, talk about how the ANES was gathered, how many observations are in the dataset, how many variables, and when the data was collected.²

- d. Detail about your *sample*. Look up the following variables: age, gender, education, income, race, and party identification. In prose, describe what the average respondent looks like in your sample. This necessitates doing descriptive statistics and talking about the average age, the spread of men versus women, how educated the sample is, etc.,
- e. The *statistical models* that you will use to ultimately test each of your hypotheses. With each hypothesis, tell me how you will evaluate the hypothesis with the use of z-scores, t-tests, ANOVA, chi-square, correlation, or regression.

- III. **Measures:** In this section, describe *all* the variables that you will use to test each of your hypotheses. This needs to be very organized. Typically, most people will identify the independent and dependent variable, but then use descriptive statistics to report the values of central tendency and variability. If you elect to include bar graphs or histograms of the variables, place them here.
- IV. **Statistical Analysis:** This section contains the statistical evaluation of your hypotheses; you can employ a number of different statistical tests here, determined by the variables you choose to work with. Evaluate each hypothesis. Include SPSS output, but the most sophisticated papers will re-format SPSS output into professional-looking tables. Be sure to *correctly interpret the output as well*. This is where you will address the question and argument you originally began with.
- V. **Discussion:** The big *so what?* What did you find? Evaluate the external validity or generalizability of your results. What does this mean for your causal theory (addressed in Section 1 of your paper) and/or the study of political science generally? If you had unlimited resources or time, what could you do to improve this study?

² Check out the link:

http://www.electionstudies.org/studypages/anes_pilot_2016/anes_pilot_2016_CodebookUserGuide.pdf