

Election Project

As you know from reading the syllabus, 12% of the course grade will be comprised of a project. Since this is an election year, the project will be different from usual. **The project deadlines and descriptions on the syllabus will be replaced by those in this document.**

The project will be broken into two phases, each representing 6% of your final course grade, and Phase Two will be discussed at a later time.

1 Phase One: Election Prediction

The American Statistical Association (ASA) is running a national Election Prediction Contest, which you will be required to enter. You may get into groups of **no more than five** for this phase of the project, and each group will be required to submit one report to the ASA's contest. Details about the contest such as how to enter and how it is scored, are provided on a separate handout, and you may visit the ASA's web site, <http://thisisstatistics.org/electionprediction2016>, to see additional information such as the prizes to be offered to the winning group.

On the ASA's contest description, it is stated that entrants will have the option of submitting their predictions of how five demographic groups will vote. For you, the demographic group predictions are **compulsory (not optional)**. You must include them with your submission.

1.1 Group Work

Until October 24, each Friday (September 30, October 14, and October 21—October 7 is missing because of Exam 1) will have time for discussing the methods you have chosen to employ in your predictions. As required by the contest, **these methods must be statistical in nature**. You have, in fact, already done some statistical analysis of real election data in Homework 4. You will be devising your own methods of poll aggregation in the coming weeks, and the due-on-Monday homework assignments will be designed to stimulate your thinking about this topic.

1.2 Deliverables

As stated above, your group must submit its report to the ASA by uploading it to the appropriate place on the ASA web page (be aware that there will be a submission form, available starting October 1). Your group must provide evidence of your submission by uploading a copy of your report, along with the ASA's message confirming receipt of your submission, to the appropriate place on Canvas.

Your group must also write a longer report, with introduction, methods, research, data, and conclusion, describing your project in full. You will write this report for a generally educated audience who hasn't heard of the project and is only generally familiar with statistics, and it should fully explain your methods and the statistical concepts behind them. This report is to be submitted on Canvas.

In addition to that, you must individually provide a statement about the division of work in your group (who did what). This statement must include specific reference to the sections of your ASA report, in addition to explaining which predictions were tabulated by whom. Each individual statement **must be distinct from the others in the group**. You will be awarded zero credit for your "individual grade" if you submit a statement identical to someone else's.

1.3 Deadlines

The deadline for submission of your report to ASA is 5:00 p.m. on Monday, October 24. The deadline for submission of all project materials (the group's ASA report and its longer report, the confirmation from ASA that they received your entry, and each person's individual statement) on Canvas is 11:59 p.m. on Friday, October 28.

1.4 Presentations

On Monday, October 24 (the day of the deadline for submission), all groups will be invited to give voluntary 10–15 minute presentations about their work (length of presentation to be determined by the number of volunteers). If your group elects to give a presentation, then your project grade will reflect your extra effort. Please let me know on or before Friday, October 21 whether you intend to present.

1.5 Writing Advice

For writing feedback and support, visit MCLA's Writing Studio in Murdock 120. There you will find trained Writing Associates who can help you at any stage of the writing process: from understanding assignments and brainstorming ideas to planning, revising and polishing final drafts. The Writing Associates are available Monday through Thursday, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. For more information and to make an appointment, go to the Writing Studio website at www.mcla.edu/writingstudio.

1.6 Grading

You will be graded on the quality of your work, on the methods you used to arrive at your conclusion, and on the quality of your collaboration among teammates. Your grade will have two components: the group grade, and the individual grade. Each is discussed on a separate page with its corresponding rubric.

1.6.1 Group Grade

The group project report will be graded according to the following rubric:

Category	9–12 points	4–8 points	0–3 points
Report Format	Project report is submitted as a formal paper in paragraph form with full sentences, and is typed and well formatted	Project report is submitted as a formal paper, but with minor issues (e.g., poor or inconsistent formatting, or not typed)	Project report is not submitted as a formal paper OR Final report is written in Excel or other program with no paragraph formatting
Writing and Readability	Report is exceptionally well organized and well written, with all charts and tables embedded in report	Report is reasonably organized and readable with few writing errors; all charts and tables are embedded in report	Report is poorly organized and hard to follow; charts and tables not embedded in report; many writing errors, awkward sentences
Overview of Research	The poll aggregation methodology is stated clearly and the rationale is explained well using correct mathematical terminology	Either the methods are stated clearly or the rationale is explained (but not both)	Methods are not stated clearly and rationale is not explained, or explanations rely on unscientific and non-mathematical language
Data Sources	Data sources are explained fully, including: 1) The sources of ALL data are identified and web links are provided; 2) Sound measures are taken to ensure that the data used comes from a scientific poll; 3) A copy of the original polling methodology, procedure, or other specific data collection procedures is provided for ALL data used	Two of the three criteria at left are satisfied	Unscientific polls are used OR methods used are ill-suited to the data used
Data Representation: Tables, Charts, Graphs	Report does not use sufficient charts or graphs to display data	Most charts and tables are present, but some are missing OR All charts are present but contain minor flaws	All research variables are represented with appropriate charts and tables for EACH data set
Raw Polling Data	Raw polling data are not provided	Raw data are provided, but presentation is incomplete or disorganized	All raw data are included in table(s) in an appendix
Conclusion and Discussion	Implications of results not discussed; no attempt to explain findings. Report draws unwarranted conclusions	Adequate discussion of results; reasonable explanation of findings; no unwarranted conclusions	Discussions of results is insightful and adds meaning to the report; no unwarranted conclusions

1.6.2 Individual Grade

In addition, each individual will have the last twelve points of his or her grade determined according to the following group work rubric. I will determine where you fall on this rubric by observing your group work during the Friday sessions, and by reading your individual submission on Canvas.

Category	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
Contributions	Routinely provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussions. I think and talk like an expert and support my ideas with examples from primary sources. A definite leader who contributes a lot of effort.	Usually provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A strong group member who tries hard!	Sometimes provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A satisfactory group member who does what is required.	Rarely provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. May refuse to participate.
Focus on the task	Consistently stays focused on the task and on what needs to be done. I build on comments and connect my ideas. Highly self-directed and motivated.	Focuses on the task and on what needs to be done most of the time. I make an attempt to connect ideas most of the time. Other group members can usually count on this person.	Focuses on the task and what needs to be done some of the time. Other group members must sometimes nag, prod, and remind to keep this person on task.	Rarely focuses on the task and what needs to be done. Lets others do the work.
Quality of work	Provides work of the highest quality. Work is checked and corrected for mistakes, and shows a high level of effort.	Provides high quality work. Some small errors that do not interfere with meaning.	Provides work that occasionally needs to be checked/redone by other group members to ensure quality.	Provides work that usually needs to be checked/redone by others to ensure quality.
Working with others	Almost always listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Tries to keep people working well together. I paraphrase partner ideas to clarify more deeply. I actively listen and take turns.	Usually listens to, share with, and supports the efforts of others. Does not create “waves” in the group. I am usually respectful and listening actively.	Often listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others, but sometimes is not a good team member. Sometimes I take turns talking and listening.	Rarely listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Often is not a good team player. I show little eye contact when listening, and I interrupt or dominate the conversation.