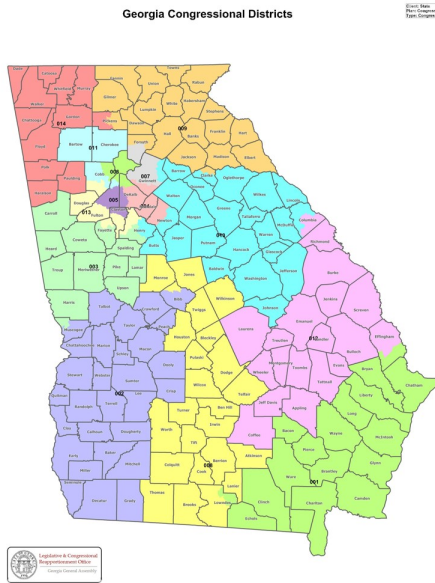


CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT ELECTION PROJECT

Understanding the Role Linkage Institutions Play in Campaigns



Project description: This project seeks to help students develop their understanding of the political concepts and processes related to elections and linkage institutions [Disciplinary Practice 1]. The project will develop students understanding of the ways through which widely held political ideologies shape policy debates and choices in American policies [PMI-4]. The project will also aid students in understanding how political parties and interest groups provide opportunities for participation and influence how people relate to government and policy makers [PMI-5]. The project will help students understand how the various forms of media provide citizens with political information and influence the ways in which people participate politically [PRD-3].

Students will engage in extensive research to develop their understanding of the demographic characteristics and voting trends of their Congressional District. Students will research the congressional candidates vying for their district's congressional seat, and they will research how the different linkage institutions aid the candidates in their campaigns and link these candidates to the voters. This will include: identifying ways through which the political parties are supporting the candidates' campaigns, tracking polling data on the candidates as provided by both media and national polling organizations, analyzing local news media reports on the candidates, identifying and evaluating the significance of the endorsements the candidates receive, and identifying the ways in which two interest groups are attempting to influence the electorate with regard to this election and why. The central elements of the research components of this project include: students will analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in charts, graphs, maps, and infographics [Disciplinary Practice 3], and students will also read, analyze, and interpret text-based and visual sources [Disciplinary Practice 4]. This project will culminate in the student production of a non-partisan video designed to educate prospective voters about the congressional election process and to help prospective voters make an informed decision on Nov. 6th.

Research Components:

1. Understanding your congressional district
 - Identify and describe your Congressional District
 - o If your congressional district has a candidate who is running unopposed, you will complete this project using the gubernatorial election
 - Describe the demographic characteristics of your district

- Explain the political history of your district since 2008: voter turnout rates in general elections (analyze at this data by total district population and by race and gender), which parties typically win the district (look at both presidential and congressional performance)

Draft due on: Sept. 21st

2. Understanding the congressional candidates

- Who are the candidates running for your district's congressional seat?
- Is this an open election or is an incumbent facing a challenge for his / her seat?
 - o Is this district generally a safe or competitive district?
- What issues are at the heart of each candidate's campaign? What is the candidate's stance on these issues?
- Chart the support using polling data for each candidate between Sept. 15 – Oct. 30

Draft due on: Oct. 5th

3. Understanding the campaign process

- In what ways has the political party supported each candidate? – endorsements, attended rallies, provided campaign funds, etc.
- How are the political parties mobilizing their voters?
- From where have the candidates received the most campaign funds? What does this tell you about those who support each candidate?
- How has the candidate promoted him / herself?
 - o Websites, social media, rallies, postcards, interviews, etc.?
- What has local (and if available national) media said about the candidates?
 - o Summarize the media coverage of the candidates
 - Has the coverage been routine or critical?
 - o Has the local media endorsed a particular candidate?
- Do a deep dive into two issues that matter to you as a potential voter and on which a candidate's stance would influence your vote
 - o Provide a brief presentation of each issue and explain why the issue matters to you
 - What is the policy stance of each of the candidates with the regards to these issues?
 - If the candidate has previously held office, what is his / her voting record on these issues?
 - o For each issue, identify two interest groups that support your policy perspective
 - How does the interest group feel about each of the candidates?
 - What actions has the interest group engaged in to influence the candidates' actions?

Draft due on: Oct. 25th

Research synthesis:

- What did you learn about the ways in which the different linkage institutions act upon the congressional (or gubernatorial) election process?
- What did you learn about the influence the linkage institutions have on voters?
- In what ways did this project alter your understanding of the citizen's role in the election process?
- Based upon your examination of the political process, do you believe the political process is consistent with the Framers intent for our government?
 - o Link your argument to at least two of the required foundational documents

Project Presentation:

Students will develop a video presentation that synthesizes their research findings. This video should be framed as a non-partisan voter education video that will help a prospective voter gain a deep understanding of the congressional election process so that the prospective voter can make an informed decision on Election Day. Within the video, students will include appropriate data tables / graphs as well as visual examples of the source material acquired during the research process. The presentations should include a minimum of 3 data charts / infographics or visuals per research section.

Students will submit a work-cited sheet in APA format to document the sources from which students acquired their research.

Final project due on Nov. 5th**Project Grade:**

- Section drafts (3): 25 points each
- Final project: 100 points

Video- Preproduction: Candidate Comparison Project

CATEGORY	6	5-4	3-2	1-0
Research	Content of the script indicates that the group members consulted multiple reference sources, developed the script and storyboard based on their sources, and correctly cited their sources.	The script indicate that the group members consulted at least 3 sources and developed their script and storyboard based on their sources, and correctly cited their sources.	The script indicates that the group members consulted at least 2 reference sources, developed a their script and storyboard based on their sources, and correctly cited their sources.	There are fewer than two sources. Source may not be cited correctly.

Script	Script is complete and it is clear what each team member will say and do. Entries and exits are scripted as are important movements. Script is quite professional.	Script is mostly complete. It is clear what each team member will say and do. Script is shows planning.	Script has a few major flaws. It is not always clear what the team members are to say and do. Script shows an attempt at planning, but seems incomplete.	There is no script. Team members are expected to invent what they say and do as they go along.
Storyboard	Storyboard is complete with sketches for each section of the presentation, detailed notes on titles, transitions, and visuals to be included, etc. Storyboard reflects outstanding planning and organization for the visuals in the video.	Storyboard is relatively complete with sketches for most sections of the presentation, and notes on titles, transitions, and visuals etc. Storyboard reflects effective planning and organization for the visuals in the video.	Storyboard has glaring omissions in section planning. There are some sketches, and notes on titles, transitions, and visuals etc. Storyboard reflects attempts at planning and organization for the visuals in the video.	Storyboard is not done or is so incomplete that it could not be used even as a general guide. Storyboard reflects very little planning of the visuals.
Teamwork	Students meet and discuss regularly. All students contribute to the discussion and all are listened to respectfully. All team members contribute a fair share of the work.	Students meet and discuss regularly. Most students contribute to the discussion and are listened to respectfully. All team members contribute a fair share of the work.	A couple of team meetings are held. Most students contribute to the discussion and are listened to respectfully. All team members contribute a fair share of the work.	Meetings are not held AND/OR some team members do not contribute a fair share of the work.

Final Video Project: Candidate Comparison Project

CATEGORY	10-9	8-7	6-5	4 or fewer
Content – 40 points	Covers topic in-depth with details and examples. Subject knowledge is excellent. Reflects significant reflection and revisions made based upon the drafting process.	Includes essential knowledge about the topic. Subject knowledge appears to be good. Reflects some reflection and revisions made based upon the drafting process.	Includes essential information about the topic but there are 1-2 factual errors. Reflects limited revisions based upon the drafting process.	Content is minimal OR there are several factual errors. Does not reflect revisions based upon the drafting process.

Originality – 25 points	Product shows a large amount of original thought. Ideas are creative and inventive.	Product shows some original thought. Work shows new ideas and insights.	Uses other people's ideas (giving them credit), but there is little evidence of original thinking.	Uses other people's ideas, but does not give them credit.
Oral Presentation - 20 points	Interesting, well-rehearsed with smooth delivery that holds audience attention.	Relatively interesting, rehearsed with a fairly smooth delivery that usually holds audience attention.	Delivery not smooth, but able to hold audience attention most of the time.	Delivery not smooth and audience attention lost.
Sources – 15 points	Source information collected for all graphics, facts and quotes. All documented in desired format.	Source information collected for all graphics, facts and quotes. Most documented in desired format.	Source information collected for graphics, facts and quotes, but not documented in desired format.	Very little or no source information was collected.

Research starting place:

What district do I live in? Georgia My Voter Page:

<https://www.mvp.sos.ga.gov/MVP/mvp.do>

Congressional District demographic information: Statistical Atlas:

<https://statisticalatlas.com/United-States/Overview>

Congressional District demographic and election information: Ballotpedia -

<https://ballotpedia.org/>

Georgia Election Information: <http://sos.ga.gov/index.php/elections>

- The results and stats tab is useful for finding voter information by demographic.

Georgia Democratic Party: <https://www.georgiademocrat.org>

Georgia Republican Party: <https://gagop.org>

Campaign Finance Information: OpenSecrets: <https://www.opensecrets.org>

Information on Congressional incumbents: Govtrack: <https://www.govtrack.us>

Congressional Voting Records: VoteSmart: https://votesmart.org/officials/GA/C/georgia-congressional#.WzU_LS2ZM3E

Election Polls:

- 270toWin: <https://www.270towin.com/2018-house-election/>
- Real Clear Politics: https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2018/house/2018_elections_house_map.html

Local Media Coverage:

The Atlanta Journal Constitution: <https://www.ajc.com>

-- AJC Politics Blog: <https://politics.myajc.com/voices/politics-blog/>

The Reporter Newspapers: <https://www.reporternewspapers.net>