POLI 100DA: Voting, Campaigning, and Elections

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Getting to Know Your District

Due: Monday, July 9, 2:00pm
Submit to Turn it In; 5% of Total Grade

Purpose:
The purpose of this assignment is to gain an understanding of the background characteristics of the congressional district for your final project. This assignment, thus, serves the following primary goals:
1. Provide an opportunity to make progress toward your final project
2. Conduct the background research necessary to develop a successful campaign strategy
3. Learn how to use Census data to make inferences about a district and use those inferences to inform campaign decisions
4. Learn how to access and use data from the Secretary of State website to research the electoral history of your district
5. Summarize and concisely communicate information about a district

Assignment:
Your task is to research your assigned congressional district and write a 1-paragraph summary of that information, alongside 2-3 bullet points about how this information might shape your campaign strategy.

Research:
- Use data from the U.S. Census on https://www.socialexplorer.com/ to describe the economic and social characteristics of your district and the nation as a whole. Examine the same characteristics in your district from an earlier year to assess the extent to which your district has changed demographically. You may need to be on UCSD WiFi or logged in to the VPN to access Social Explorer. Instructions here: https://library.ucsd.edu/computing-and-technology/connect-from-off-campus/.
- Use data from the California Secretary of State website (e.g. http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/prior-elections/prior-statewide-elections/ for prior elections; https://vote.sos.ca.gov/contests/district/us-rep for detailed information on a district) to describe the voting patterns in your district. Consider the following questions: What is the level of voter turnout in your district? Did your district vote for the Republican or Democratic presidential candidate in the last election? Is your district consistently represented by a Republican or a Democrat? Are the elections close?

Summary Paragraph:
Write one paragraph that summarizes the background characteristics of your district based on your research. The paragraph should be 150-350 words and should include and address the following:
- Include the name of your district, general location, and major cities
- Describe the demographic composition of your district, using at least three characteristics (e.g. race, gender, income, occupation, education levels, etc.)
- Describe how the demographic composition of your district has changed over time (if at all), using the same three (or more) characteristics
- Describe how the demographic composition of your district compares to the composition of the U.S. as a whole, using the same three (or more) characteristics
- Describe the voting history of your district going back at least two elections

Campaign Strategy

Include 2-3 bullet points speculating about how these demographic characteristics might shape your campaign strategy going forward. Consider whether there seem to be more voters of your party or the opposite party in the district. Consider what issues those in your district might care about and how that might shape what your candidate should emphasize on the campaign trail. Consider the voting patterns of those in the most prominent groups in your district. Simply list these bullet point ideas underneath your paragraph. This is meant to get you brainstorming about how you can strategically tailor your campaign to the district to help ensure a victory for your candidate.

Grading:

	F	D	C	B	A
Research 50%	Summary does not show evidence of research on the district.	Summary shows some evidence of research, but it is substantially incomplete. For example, it does not reference data from Social Explorer or the Secretary of State, it only describes one characteristic, it does not include specific percentages, etc.	Summary shows evidence of some research, but it is incomplete. For example, it uses data from only one of the two sources (Social Explorer or Secretary of State), it does not analyze three different characteristics, it does not make comparisons over time or to the nation as a whole, etc.	Summary shows evidence of research, but some of the comparisons are missing or the discussion of the results are vague (e.g. missing specific percentages). For example, the summary is missing a comparison over time or comparison with the nation as a whole. The summary includes at least three different characteristics.	Summary shows evidence of research and is complete. The summary includes all comparisons (over time, to nation as a whole), assesses at least three characteristics, and uses information from the Social Explorer and Secretary of State. The results are specific, including examples using percentages.
Summary 25%	Writing does not meet the length requirement; includes severe grammar or spelling errors	Writing is close to the length requirement; includes many grammar or spelling errors	Writing meets the length requirement but includes many grammar or spelling errors	Writing meets the length requirement, may include some grammar or spelling errors, but is generally clear	Writing meets the length requirement, is free of grammar or spelling errors, and is clearly written
Strategy 25%	Strategy bullet points are missing	Only one strategy bullet point is included	2-3 strategy bullet points are included, but they are very similar to one another and do not match the research presented	2-3 strategy bullet points are included, they match the research presented, but they lack originality or thoughtfulness	2-3 strategy bullet points are included, they match the research presented, and they reflect originality and thoughtfulness