

POLSC 10: US Government & Politics
Assignment: Polling Assignment

Due Date: At the beginning of class on **the date listed in the Syllabus**. Late assignments can receive only 80% of total points. No assignments will be accepted more than 7 days late.

The Pew Research Center for People and the Press
Real Clear Politics
The Gallup Poll

<http://people-press.org/>
<http://www.realclearpolitics.com/>
<https://news.gallup.com/home.aspx>

1) Go to the Real Clear Politics web site, at the top of the page on the left scroll over the button labeled “Election 2020” and click on the dropdown labeled “National Polls vs. 2016.”

a) On the graph labeled “National Polls: Trump vs. Biden” with 0 days left to the election what did the “RCP Poll Average” indicate that Biden was likely to win by? _____ .

b) By how much did Biden win the popular vote by? _____

c) On the graph labeled “National Polls: Trump vs. Clinton” with 0 days left to the election what did the “RCP Poll Average” indicate that Clinton was likely to win the national popular vote by? _____ .

d) By how much did Clinton win the popular vote? _____

e) Almost 137 million voted in the 2016 election, and more than 156 million voted in 2020; most of the polls included in “RCP’s Poll Average” interviewed between 800 and 2,000 people? Does it surprise you that polls that spoke to only around 1,000 people can so accurately predict how 137 or 156 million will vote? Why/Why not?

2) Go to The Pew Research Center for People and the Press. At the top of the page click the “Methods” button. Then on right of that page, (scroll down a bit) click on the “US Survey Research” button, then click Sampling which is on the right of the page, or use the hyper link provided here.

a) Briefly explain the survey methods used.

b) Click on the link and watch the video “How can a survey of 1,000 people tell you what the whole U.S. thinks?”

c) Based on the video briefly explain how random sampling works.

c) From the “Sampling” Click the Frequently Asked Questions Link on the right. View two questions answered on this page.

1) What questions did you view? And what did you learn?

3) Go to Gallup Website Homepage. On the top left of the screen scroll over “Politics” and select “View All Politics” from the drop-down menu. Click on one of the stories that interest you.

a) Explain what this story is about and what the numbers tell you? Provide details about demographic differences in things such as race, party, gender, and age.

b) Explain some of the survey methods used for that story. You may have to search for this a bit, but there should be a survey methods tab near the bottom of the page that you can expand. There should also be a link labeled “View complete question responses and trends (PDF download)” that will allow you to see more about the poll.

c) **Go to** Gallup Website Homepage. On the top left of the screen scroll over “Presidential Job Approval” and from the drop-down menu. Once you have clicked on the Job Approval Center, scroll down and select the current and 5 most recent presidents so they all end up on the same graph.

How does President Trump’s Job approval rating compare with the approval ratings of President Obama, President Bush, President Clinton, and President and George H.W. Bush over the same time-period? Try to interpret the data and explain the trends. Where are there peaks and valleys in their approval, what events might explain these? If you need help using this tool please contact me ASAP.

4) Read the article “U.S. Support for Gay Marriage Stable, at 63%” on the Gallup Website.
<https://news.gallup.com/poll/257705/support-gay-marriage-stable.aspx>

Interpret the information provided. Explain the methodology used, make note of differences of opinion in age, gender, and party affiliation. Also, explain changing trends over time. Why would it matter if the Gallup poll talked to too many Republicans or Democrats if they were trying to get an accurate poll? Provide lots of detail