

# *POSC 149 Lab 1*

*Instructor: Sono Shah*

*2017-08-08*

## *Introduction*

THE LAB ASSIGNMENTS IN THIS CLASS are designed to get you to investigate the 2016 election from different perspectives. As we move forward, the lab assignments will take closer and closer looks at different aspects of the presidential election. This assignment will be a multi-part lab where you work with county-level election data from the 2012 and 2016 election and demographic data from the Census. Your assignment is as follows:

County Level election data comes from The Guardian and Townhall, scraped by Tony McGovern.

### *Part I: Working with the Data*

1. In 2016, how many votes did the Republican candidate receive in *Seminole County, FL*?
2. Summary Statistics
  - A. What is average number of votes the Other Party candidate received in 2016?
  - B. What is the most amount of votes cast for the Democratic Candidate in 2016?
  - C. What is the name of that county?
3. Group Statistics
  - A. Identify the 3 states with the *largest average vote total* for the Republican Candidate in 2012
  - B. Identify the 3 states that had the *largest total number of votes* for the Republican Candidate
  - C. Which states cast more than 6 million total votes in 2012?

### *Part II: Identifying the Counties that changed the most*

ONE OF THE MANY WAYS PUNDITS AND SCHOLARS have tried to explain the 2016 is by taking a broad look at the areas of the United States that Trump won. Some have argued that Trump voters were more likely to live in economically distressed areas, others point

out to areas that are vulnerable to the expansion of international trade. Others argue that it was none of those things.<sup>1</sup> In Today's lab you will begin to take a closer look at this data yourself, beginning with identifying counties that experienced significant amounts of change from the 2012 to 2016 Presidential Election.

<sup>1</sup> An example is Rothwell & Diego-Rosell 2016

1. Use the county-level election returns to identify the 3 counties in the US that saw the largest decline in *Democratic Votes* from the 2012 to 2016 election.<sup>2</sup>
2. Use the county-level election returns to identify the 3 counties in the US that saw the largest decline in *Republican Votes* from the 2012 to 2016 election.

<sup>2</sup> See POSC 149 Lab 1 Guide

### *Part III: What about population size?*

ALTHOUGH YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED WHICH counties lost the most number of votes for each party, this doesn't really get at how big of a deal this change was. Looking at what percent each party got is a better way to account for counties of different populations.

Pro-Tip think about the partisan narratives explaining the 2016 election

1. Use the county-level election returns to identify the 3 counties in the US that saw the largest decline in **Democratic Vote share** from the 2012 to 2016 election.
2. Use the county-level election returns to identify the 3 counties in the US that saw the largest decline in **Republican Vote Share** from the 2012 to 2016 election.

### *Part IV: What's so special about these counties?*

1. Using the names of the counties you identified Part III, use <https://censusreporter.org/> to look up a demographic profile of each county. Do you notice any differences between counties that lost a lot of Democratic votes to those that lost a lot of Republican votes? Use the data from those profiles to write a brief report that compares these sets of counties, be sure to include comparisons for at least 5 demographic characteristics. Write no more than 5 pages in your response.