**Informed Consent Form**

Project Title: Political Ideology and Voting Preference

Principal Investigator: Brier Gallihugh, B.A. Eastern Michigan University  
Faculty Advisor: Stephen Jefferson, Ph.D., Eastern Michigan University

Thank you for your interest in this study! Your participation is greatly appreciated. To participate you must be a student at Eastern Michigan University and be able to read prompts fluently in English as well as respond fluently in English. Participation in research is voluntary and you may pull out of this study at any time (**including after starting the study**). Please feel free to ask any questions you have about participation in this study.  
   
**Study Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to examine an individual’s voting patterns, as well as their attitudes and thoughts about their vote after assessing candidates individual characteristics and policy positions.

**Basic Study Procedure**  
   
Participants will be recruited to take place in this online study through the SONA program at Eastern Michigan University.  Upon reading a consent form, individuals will be redirected to the Qualtrics program which will contain the primary study materials. Participants will be asked to first complete a demographic survey. After completion of the demographic survey, participants will be asked to self identify with a political ideology as well as complete an assessment looking at each participant’s position on various policy issues. Participants will then be shown candidate profiles. After looking at each profile, participants will be asked a series of questions about their feelings concerning the candidate among many things. Lastly, the study will conclude with one final question regarding whether students wish to receive credit for their participation. The study will take approximately 25-30 minutes to complete.  
   
**Type of Data Collected**  
   
Participants may be asked to provide data that they find to be sensitive including sex, racial identity and personal political ideology. All data will be kept confidential.   
   
**Risk of Study Participation**  
   
There is no expected risk to participation in this study outside of what a student may face while taking a college examination or listening to a college lecture. However, participants may at times potentially experience stress while reading or answering any of the study materials especially any related directly to the participant. As such, should participants feel stress they cannot handle, they are free to withdraw from the study and are encouraged to do so immediately. Participants should be aware that they have access to EMU Counseling and Psychological Services. If they need to see an appropriate counseling professional, EMU Counseling and Psychological Services can be found and reached at the following address, phone number and email address:  
 

EMU Counseling and Psychological Services  
313 Snow Health Center  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197  
Phone: (734) 487-1118  
Email: [counseling.services@emich.edu](mailto:counseling.services@emich.edu)

**Important:** Please write the EMU Counseling and Psychological Services contact information down in case you need it during the study. If you do need the services, please contact them immediately and cease participation in the study. You will still be granted full credit.

**Benefits of Study Participation**  
   
There are no anticipated benefits to participants for taking part in this study. Study results may however be used as a basis for potential publications, posters or presentations at conferences or symposiums.  
   
**Data Storage Procedures**  
   
Data for this study will be kept on the Qualtrics server. Upon completion of the data analysis the data set will be downloaded from Qualtrics and promptly deleted.  
   
**Alternative Task**  
   
There is no alternative study to partake in. Participants, should they choose to not partake in the study will just be free to not participate.  
   
**Personal Information Confidentiality**  
   
We plan to publish the results of this study. We will not publish any information that can identify you. We will make every effort to keep your information confidential, however, we cannot guarantee confidentiality. Other groups may have access to your research information for quality control or safety purposes. These groups include the University Human Subjects Review Committee, the Office of Research Development, the sponsor of the research, or federal and state agencies that oversee the review of research, including the Office for Human Research Protections and the Food and Drug Administration. The University Human Subjects Review Committee reviews research for the safety and protection of people who participate in research studies.

You do not need to provide any identifying information to participate in this study. However, if you wish to receive research credit, once you have anonymously completed the main questionnaires of the study, you will then be asked if you wish to receive course credit for participating in this research. If you answer "Yes" to this question, you will be automatically linked to a completely separate survey that will ask for your name. Because the data from these two surveys are never linked, the only way a researcher will know that you have completed the relevant questionnaires of the anonymous portion of this study is to ask for your name with this completely separate, new survey. Completing this second survey will allow the researchers to know to whom they should grant credit in SONA (i.e., if you do not complete this "exit" survey, you will not receive SONA credit). Your instructors will not know which study you have participated in unless you tell them. Also, the researcher will not know what your specific responses were to any items of the surveys you completed (i.e., they will only know that you participated, but not what you reported in your responses)."

**Data Storage For Future Use**  
   
We will not store your information to study in the future. We may share your information with other researchers without asking for your permission, but the shared information will never contain information that could identify you.  
   
**Cost to Participant**  
   
Participation will not cost you anything.  
   
   
**Participation Compensation**  
   
You will not be paid to participate in this research study.  
   
You will receive .5 hours of SONA credit if you complete this study. If you do not complete this study, course credit will be reduced to .25 hours of SONA credit.  
   
**Study Contact Information**  
   
If you have any questions about the research, you can contact the Principal Investigator, Brier Gallihugh, at bgallihu@emich.edu or by phone at (989)-423-6118.  
   
You can also contact Brier Gallihugh’s faculty adviser, Dr. Stephen Jefferson, at xxxx@emich.edu or by phone at xxx.xxx.xxxx.  
   
For questions about your rights as a research subject, contact the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee at human.subjects@emich.edu or by phone at 734-487-3090.  
   
   
**Voluntary participation**  
   
Participation in this research study is your *choice*. You may refuse to participate at any time, even after signing this form, without repercussion. You may choose to ***leave the study at any time without repercussion***. If you leave the study, the information you provided will be kept confidential. You may request, in writing, that your identifiable information be destroyed. However, we cannot destroy any information that has already been published. Should counseling services be needed, please refer to the above contact information for EMU Counseling and Psychological Services.  
   
**Statement of Consent**  
   
I have read this form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and am satisfied with the answers I received. I give my consent to participate in this research study.

**Study Debrief**

Thank you for participating in this study!  We hope you enjoyed the experience.  This form provides background about our research to help you learn more about why we are doing this study. Please feel free to ask any questions or to comment on any aspect of the study.  
   
At the beginning of this study, you were informed that the purpose of this study was to examine an individual’s voting patterns, as well as their attitudes and thoughts about their vote, after assessing the candidate qualifications of different individuals. To do this you were asked to fill out a demographic survey as well as self identify with a political affiliation and answer a series of policy related questions. You were then asked to assess the degree to which you identify as either liberal or conservative based on your self-identified political affiliation. You then were asked to read political candidate profile that included both policy positions and personal life events. As a participant you were asked to read over the profiles carefully and then asked to answer a series of questions pertaining to those profiles among a wide variety of other questions.  
   
As you may know, some studies use deception in situations where there is no other way to conduct the experiment without a level of bias. We are very sorry to say that the current study did involve deception. Unfortunately, it was necessary to use deception because, had participants know the true nature of the study, responses would have been likely to change.  
   
The actual purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of personal political ideology on character judgements and sexual misconduct acceptability among both conservatives and liberals when sexual harassment claims were involved. The potential candidate choices involved one of the following potential candidates:

1. A Democrat being accused and denying a single instance of accused sexual harassment.   
​2. A Republican being accused and denying a single instance of accused sexual harassment.  
​3. A Democrat having a history of multiple accusations of accused sexual harassment.  
​4. A Republican having a history of multiple accusations of accused sexual harassment.

Each participant was only assigned to one of the four possible candidates. The presentation of each pairing was randomized. We are unsure of how political ideology may or may not influence character assessments among both parties when sexual harassment is involved. However, we are hopeful that this work will extend work on in group and out group dynamics to include political affiliation as well as to shed some light on how candidates are perceived when they have been accused of sexual misconduct. Applications for this work might include furthering ways to more fairly assess candidates for more than just their party affiliation. For a political landscape that is becoming more and more polarized this would be an important endeavor.  
   
In this study we asked you to self identify with a political affiliation. You were then asked a series of policy questions that you had to choose between and asked to assess how liberal or conservative (based on your self-identification) that you thought you were. Following this, you were presented with one of four possible candidate profiles (i.e. Democrat candidate with a single harassment accusation, Republican candidate with single harassment accusation, Democrat with multiple harassment accusations OR a Republican with multiple harassment accusations). Participants were asked the same questions after seeing one of the two candidate profiles. Finally, participant were asked whether or not they wished to receive credit for completion of the survey in which case you were directed to a second study that gave us your name for the purposes of granting course credit.  
    
The data from this study will be presented in groups in research journals, however we want to assure you that no identifying information will be used. All data will be kept secure, only to be analyzed by trained researchers. Nonetheless, if you feel uncomfortable with this study, your participation in this is still voluntary. If you wish, you may withdraw after reading this debriefing form, at which point all records of your participation will be destroyed. You will not be penalized if you withdraw. You can also feel free to contact the investigator with any further questions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Investigator | Contact Number | Email |
| Brier Gallihugh | 989.423.6118 | bgallihu@emich.edu |
| Stephen Jefferson | xxx.xxx.xxxx | xxxx@emich.edu |

If you want more information about your rights as a participant or want to report a research-related harm, you may contact the Institutional Review Board at (734) 487-3090.