

# GOVT 2304 - Research Exercise 1

Due Wednesday, September 16, at the beginning of class.

This document has two (2) pages.

*Read all directions carefully and follow them closely.*

## **Part I: Exploring and understanding variables**

For the first part of the exercise I want you to demonstrate your ability to view and analyze variables within various data sets. First, execute the first three (3) items of the worksheet for the first chapter in the Le Roy text. Do not, however, fill in the blanks on the worksheet to be handed in. Answer the questions and provide the descriptions required in paragraph form as if you were submitting a work of independent political research (typed, double spaced in 12-point font with *exactly* 1" margins and left aligned).

Second, open the *STATES* data set. Select the appropriate variables to analyze the 2008 election and answer the following questions: In which respective states (the top five [5], in order, for each) did nominees Barack Obama and John McCain fare best? What sense can you make regarding why the candidates performed well in the states they did? What regional or cultural, etc. explanations make sense to you? Use your own political knowledge to venture some explanations here.

*Part II is on the following page.*

## **Part II: Formulating hypotheses given existing data**

Perform the following steps and answer in paragraph form once each or both the *GLOBAL* and *NES* data files. Find a pair of variables that you think might be related to each other. What **concepts** are these variables attempting to explain and how are these phenomena **operationalized**? At which **level of measurement** are the data recorded? What is the **range** of possible values of the variables? Finally, explain why you think a relationship exists between these variables and venture a possible direction of causation (be daring).

*After completing your work, reread the assignment to make sure you have followed every direction correctly and answered each question fully.*