POLITICAL PARTIES & ELECTIONS, FALL 2012

# PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OUTCOMES

Wayne chapter 9

Friday, October 26

**Chapter 9 terms**: economic predictors of election outcomes; political variables that predict election outcomes; relationship between incumbent job approval and reelection; problems with polling in the 1930s and 1940s; exit polls, problems with making them accurate; controversies over TV projections of election winners; why personality explains election outcomes in 1952, 1956; why issues take center stage in elections from 1960 through 1972; why performance is the dominant factor from 1976 through 1996; key factors affecting the outcome in 2000, 2004 and 2008; why mandates are imprecise; factors relating to Bush’s mandate (or lack of mandate) in 2004 and Obama’s mandate (or lack thereof) to reform health care; performance expectations, examples of presidents meeting or not meeting expectations

0. Election summaries: [1968 election](https://homepages.gac.edu/~cgilbert/p215/1968sum.pdf) [1980 election](https://homepages.gac.edu/~cgilbert/p215/1980sum.pdf)

1. What factors can affect the accuracy of exit polls?

2. On pp. 306-08 Wayne discusses two overarching models – prospective and retrospective voting – and discusses the interplay among several factors (changes in public mood and issue agendas, perceptions of candidates) – as critical to understanding election outcomes. We have discussed voting behavior models before, too (and perhaps these are worth reviewing again).

Considering these ideas, examine Table 9.3 (pp. 316-319) and for 2000, 2004, and 2008: 1) find evidence supporting prospective or retrospective voting; and 2) find evidence supporting the importance of candidate evaluations, issues, and public mood

3. Why is a newly elected president’s mandate imprecise? Go back to Table 9.3 and find evidence that supports and/or refutes the idea that Bush/Obama had a mandate based on the 2004/2008 election results.

4. Are the skills (personal, political) necessary for being an effective presidential candidate similar to, identical to, or different from the skills necessary for being an effective president? Ponder, discuss.