

J642 Short paper #2

**This paper should be no longer than 2 pages double-spaced. It's due Friday, Feb. 16 by 3 p.m. If you need to cite one of the texts or an article on reserve, you can do it in a shorthand approach, say, Wimmer & Dominic, p. 200.**

Background: U.S. newspapers, television news organizations and news magazines have been criticized since 1990\* for paying too much attention to what is called the "horse race" aspect of presidential political campaigns, or who is ahead at the moment and what strategy and tactics candidates use to win. They have been criticized for not paying enough attention to important issues, such as the economy, immigration, international affairs, etc. Every time this criticism is made, news executives promise to do a better job of covering issues.

**Assume you want to examine the following research question:**

Do news organizations now focus more on the issues instead of the "horse race" aspect of the presidential campaign? In other words, have they kept their promise to do a better job?

For simplicity, assume that you can categorize news stories by one dominant theme and that you can reliably assign stories to one of two categories ("horse race" or "issues"). Also, assume that the presidential campaign season runs from about May through the end of October every four years (2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016).

1. Discuss how you might select a good sample for the study. You can limit your analysis to one of the following: Daily newspapers, network TV news programs or news magazines. You don't have unlimited funds.

2. Show what the key results table would look like. Label the columns and rows and mention what statistical test or tests you would use for the data.

\* The criticisms have been made long before 1990 and they continue to be made today, but assume we're most interested in the period from 2000 to 2016.