



For immediate release

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If you liked what *Moneyball* did for baseball you're going to love what **THE GAMBLE** does for presidential campaigns.

Political scientists John Sides and Lynn Vavreck offer a data-driven analysis of the 2012 election in two free e-chapters from forthcoming book **THE GAMBLE**:

## **THE GAMBLE: *The Hand You're Dealt***

## **THE GAMBLE: *Random, or Romney?***

Political pundits are everywhere, but their analysis of this election is often either based on anecdotes and personal experience or biased toward one political party's views. This is all the more reason we need objective, scholarly analysis by accomplished political scientists. This is what **THE GAMBLE** provides.

A typical political science book about the 2012 election might appear two to three years from now, well after interest in the election has faded.

"Political scientists have much to offer all of us in understanding how voters make choices, what impact campaigns have on elections, the role of big money, and the role of political parties and interest groups in elections, among other issues. And yet nearly all the work is published years after the elections take place," notes Chuck Myers, Executive Editor and Group Publisher of the Social Sciences at Princeton University Press

But authors Lynn Vavreck and John Sides are writing **THE GAMBLE** now. *Using extensive data on media coverage, campaign ads, and voters, they are writing and releasing chapters of this book as the election unfolds.* Their goal is to provide scientific analysis in real-time and to inject a dose of reality into a discourse too often dominated by speculation and folklore.

"**THE GAMBLE** gives political science a voice in the ongoing conversation about this campaign," says Sides. "It brings hard data to bear and casts doubt on a lot of commentary and conventional wisdom."

"If you want to understand what's happening in this election, you have to understand the data," explains Vavreck. "We have great partners in YouGov and General Sentiment providing us with mountains of data that we can analyze to help readers understand what really mattered and what did not."

The first two e-chapters of **THE GAMBLE**—"The Hand You're Dealt" and "Random or Romney"—begin to tell the story of the 2012 presidential election.

### **THE GAMBLE: "The Hand You're Dealt"**

John Sides & Lynn Vavreck  
eBook Preview | ISBN: 9781400845682  
53 pp. | 5 line illus. 7 tables.

<http://press.princeton.edu/titles/9920.html>

Available now

### **THE GAMBLE: "Random, or Romney?"**

John Sides & Lynn Vavreck  
eBook Preview | ISBN: 9781400845699  
56 pp. | 10 line illus. 1 tables

<http://press.princeton.edu/titles/9921.html>

Available August 24, 2012

<http://thegamble2012.com/>



“**The Hand You’re Dealt**” describes the lay of the land at the end of 2011, as we enter into the election year. Sides and Vavreck explain why President Obama may be better positioned than a weak economy would typically predict.

“Sixty years of economic and election data tell us this should be a close election for President Obama, but his general likability and the public’s inclination to blame his predecessor for the economic downturn are making him more popular than we might expect given the slowly growing economy,” explains Vavreck. “People just generally like President Obama, and in a close election, that could make all the difference.”

“**Random or Romney**” challenges the “anyone but Romney” myth. It demonstrates that, despite the surges of candidates like Rick Perry, Herman Cain, and Newt Gingrich during the fall of 2011, by the eve of the Iowa caucus Mitt Romney was well-positioned to win. And in contrast to commentators who emphasized Romney’s problems with conservatives, Sides and Vavreck show that conservative Republicans had more favorable views of Romney than did moderate Republicans—suggesting that he would ultimately be able to unite the party, as in fact he has.

“What most people don’t understand is that Romney went into the primaries popular and stayed popular. He was already a familiar candidate to the media, so they tended to pay more attention to the other candidates whenever they did something noteworthy. The news coverage helped the other candidates surge in the polls, but their temporary surges didn’t mean Romney was disliked within the party,” says Sides. “Another myth is that Romney needed help in mobilizing the base. The data tell us that this is not really true.”

“**The Hand You’re Dealt**” and “**Random or Romney**” are now available at Princeton University Press’s website and through online retailers. Additional chapters that discuss the rest of the GOP primary, the summer campaign, the selection of Paul Ryan as Romney’s running mate, and the conventions will be available closer to the election. In total, four chapters from **THE GAMBLE** will be released prior to the publication of the physical book in September 2013, and Sides and Vavreck hope that this early material starts a dialogue with readers.

Myers expands on this novel publishing program, saying, “We hope that the finished book will benefit from the comments of our readers, taking advantage of ‘the cloud’ to improve the analysis and the presentation of the story of the 2012 presidential election.”

The book’s web site: <http://thegamble2012.com/>

### **About the Authors:**

**Lynn Vavreck** and **John Sides** are authoritative voices on voting behavior and campaign effects in political science. **Vavreck** ([lvavreck@ucla.edu](mailto:lvavreck@ucla.edu), @vavreck) is Associate Professor of Political Science and Communication Studies at UCLA and is author of *The Message Matters* and co-author of *Campaign Reform: Insights and Evidence*, & *The Logic of American Politics*. In 2003, she helped start an online survey research company that became YouGov/America, and in 2010 she co-founded [Model Politics](#), a political blog dedicated to bringing data to bear on contemporary questions. She has been interviewed in the media on campaigns, elections, and media research.

**Sides** ([jsides@gwu.edu](mailto:jsides@gwu.edu), @monkeycageblog), an Associate Professor of Political Science at George Washington University, is a leading authority on public opinion and voting behavior in the United States and abroad. He is co-author of *Campaigns and Elections: Rules, Reality, Strategy, Choice* and is co-founder of and contributor to [The Monkey Cage](#), an award-winning blog about politics and political science. He is also an occasional contributor to the [538 Blog](#) at the *New York Times* and [Wonkblog](#) at the *Washington Post*. His writing has appeared at the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Boston Review*, *Salon*, the *New York Daily News*, *Al Jazeera*, the *Washington Monthly*, the *American Prospect*, and *Bloomberg View* and he has been interviewed in the media numerous times in recent years.

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