

# Decision Processes Colloquia

---

**Monday, February 2, 2015**

Where: 245 JMHH

When: 12:00 – 1:15 pm

**Marc Meredith**

Associate Professor of Political Science, Business Economics and Public Policy, University of Pennsylvania

## What Can Voting Behavior Teach Us About Order-Effects

**ABSTRACT:** Many electoral jurisdictions randomize or rotate the names that candidates are listed on ballots to reduce the influence of ballot ordering on election outcomes. We present three studies, each which illuminates a novel element about ballot order effects. The first study explores how ballot positions affect the outcomes of California local elections. We show candidates listed first win more often than candidate listed second, even in races where voters have more than one vote. This suggests that ballot order effects don't result from voters "running out of votes". Study two explores the effect of ballot positions in Ohio local elections. We show that both positional and list effects are present in these elections. Specifically, we show that a candidate's vote share is negatively related to the quality of the candidate listed in the previous ballot position. Study three explores the duration of ballot order effects in the 2012 Ohio primary. Candidates listed first perform worse in a subsequent election, despite receiving more votes in the initial election. This finding highlights the difficulty in satisfying an assumption necessary to use an encouragement design to study sequential decision making.