Essentially your job on this assignment is to perform your own analysis of data, to test your own hypothesis.

Here are the steps that will get you where you need to go on this assignment (Please contact me for help along the way!):

1. Open up some data and get to know it.
   - The data can be either the GSS or NES data from either edition of the text. Whatever it is get to know it! What are the units of analysis? How are the variables coded, and do you understand what these variables tells you? What kinds of questions are these data meant to help you answer?

2. Pick a dependent variable.
   - Think about a concept that the data set might help you measure empirically that is also of interest to you.
   - Write a conceptual definition of this variable—this will serve as your dependent variable.
   - Now identify a variable or variables in the data set that will help you operationalize this concept.
     - Stay away from demographic variables here.
     - Stay within the realm of political sciencey sorts of questions.

3. Pick an independent variable:
   - Come up with an explanation as to why your dependent variable varies in value. Try to avoid the most obvious explanations.
   - Think about a concept that, again, this data set might help you measure, which may reasonably help you explain the variance in your dependent variable. This will serve as your independent variable.
   - Write a conceptual definition of this variable.
   - Now identify a variable or variables in the data set that will help you operationalize this concept.

4. Make sure you have a good (plausible) causal theory about why changing values of X might be changing values Y and write it down.
   - If you cannot do this, find another independent variable.

5. Operationalize the variables that you will use for your analysis.
   - Produce frequency tables or tables of descriptive statistics (as necessary) and describe the variables you are going to use to help you operationalize your X and your Y.
   - Now describe what you will have to do in order to operationalize your X and your Y.
     - Will you produce an additive index? Will you recode the variables? What will you do and why are you going to do this?
   - Find multiple ways of measuring X and Y if necessary (and you’ll want to test both too).
• Test your hypothesis.
  o Produce either a cross tabulation or a comparison of means that will help you
determine whether or not X is causing Y and interpret this table.
  o Then graph it, and interpret the graph.
• Identify potential “Z” factors.
  o Try to imagine what else might be causing variation in values of Y. (You
should identify at least three.)
  o Write a conceptual definition of these factors.
• Operationalize your Z variables.
  o Now identify a variable or variables in the data set that will help you
operationalize these concepts.
  o Produce frequency tables or tables of descriptive statistics (as necessary) and
describe the variables you are going to use to help you operationalize your Z
variables.
  o Now describe what you will have to do in order to operationalize your Z
variables.
    ▪ Will you produce an additive index? Will you recode the variables?
      What will you do and why are you going to do this?
• Test your Z variables.
  o Make controlled comparisons that allow you to determine the controlled or
partial effects of your original X and your Z variables.
  o Interpret the tables that you have produced.
• Write up your findings and conclusions.

Essential notes notes:
• Be sure to use appropriate language in describing your findings.
• Be sure to discuss controlled and partial effects.
• Be sure to include tests of statistical significance and describe them
appropriately.
• Be sure to appropriately identify the relationship between X and Y as
spurious, interactive, or additive once you’ve controlled for your Z variables.
• Be sure to paste in your syntax every step of the way, and include an
appendix that includes all of the syntax that you used to produce your
analysis so that someone can reproduce your research.
• Be sure to include all the relevant tables.
• Be sure to do a good job interpreting your tables and statistics so that they
have meaning.
• Be sure to write in complete sentences that make sense to people who have
not taken this class—bring your findings to life.

Checklist of Tables and Figures:
• Table describing your Y (and any variables you used to construct Y)
• Table describing your X (and any variable you used to construct X)
• Table describing your zero order relationship (including test of significance).
• Figure that presents your zero order relationship
• Tables describing your Z variables
• Table describing the controlled and partial effects of Z1 (including test of significance).
• Figure that presents the controlled effect of Z1
• Table describing the controlled and partial effects of Z2 (including test of significance).
• Figure that presents the controlled effect of Z2
• Table describing the controlled and partial effects of Z3 (including test of significance).
• Figure that presents the controlled effect of Z3