

Political Science 220
Legislative Redistricting: The Geography of Politics
Spring Semester 2011
Clark University

BP 220

Tuesday and Friday, 12-1:15

Professors:

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Office Hours:

Boatright: Fridays 9:30 – 11:30

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Description

Every ten years, following the completion of the U.S. Census, the borders of all but seven of the United States' 435 congressional districts are redrawn. The only major rules governing congressional districts' shapes are that they must be very close to equal in population and they must be contiguous. The redrawing of district lines was once an activity that took place behind closed doors; members of Congress conferred with party leaders and state legislators and sought to develop congressional maps that benefitted them. Today, however, any American citizen has the ability to think about the ideal shapes of congressional districts. Since the early 1990s, computer technology has revolutionized the redistricting process; it is both a more technical process and a more participatory process than it once was.

This course is designed to be taught at the same time as the Massachusetts state legislature is considering how to draw the lines for Massachusetts's nine congressional districts, as well as its own state legislative districts. We will consider the history of congressional districting (and of geographical districts in general), some of the normative claims about what districts should look like, and legal conflicts over who should be represented. Because much of the scholarship of the past decade has been about the ways in which redistricting can advance or hinder the representation of racial minorities, we will devote a substantial amount of attention to the relationship between redistricting and the U. S. Constitution and the federal Voting Rights Act. For the most part, however, the readings in this course are aimed at emphasizing the uneasy relationship between the self-interest of the politicians who draw district lines and the interest the American public has in having fair representation.

Congressional redistricting may strike some students as a rather arcane or specialized topic. It provides a lens, however, for understanding much about contemporary American politics. Redistricting has been blamed, at various times, for heightened political polarization in Congress, for limiting electoral competition and protecting congressional incumbents, for

limiting the representation of minorities, for thwarting the public will, or simply for allowing backroom deals to rig our elections. This course will provide you with the tools you will need to evaluate these sorts of claims. Along the way, you will learn much about basic issues in political science such as voting behavior, congressional politics and procedure, the role of the courts in American politics, and the ways in which political theorists think about representation.

This course is being taught in conjunction with Clark's Mosakowski Institute for Public Enterprise. One of the goals of the Mosakowski Institute is to use university research to help government address social concerns. This means that you will get the chance to make a difference in debates within Massachusetts about redistricting. As part of the course, you will develop and defend your own district maps of the state, and we will seek to provide a forum for students to talk with Massachusetts legislators about redistricting priorities.

Readings

Bullock, Charles. 2010. *Redistricting: The Most Political Activity in America*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Monmonier, Mark. 2001. *Bushmanders and Bullwinkles*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Brunell, Thomas L. 2008. *Redistricting and Representation: Why Competitive Elections are Bad for America*. New York: Routledge.

Coursepack (available at the Political Science Department Office, Jefferson 301)

Requirements and Grading

Class Participation: The most important requirement for this class is your attendance and participation. In order to succeed in this class, you must show up for class, and you should come prepared to discuss the readings. We hope to lecture less than half of the time; we will present the main arguments of the readings and seek to provide context for them, but *the goal of this class is for you to develop your own ideas about the representations and the drawing of districts*. At times, we will ask you to send us e-mails before class outlining your own thoughts and questions on the materials we have covered; other times, we will expect you to be enthusiastic participants in class discussions of the issues. We also expect you to be willing to ask questions of your fellow students when they make presentations. All of these factors, along with your attendance, will go into your participation grade.

Feel free to ask questions about aspects of the readings you do not understand. The level of the readings varies quite a bit; most require little background knowledge, but a few presume knowledge of statistics or of particular aspects of American political history. You do not need to have a thorough understanding of everything in the readings, and we do not expect you to understand the more complex statistical work we will encounter, but we will expect you to understand the main points in the readings and to ask about aspects you do not understand. Class attendance and participation will comprise 10 percent of your final grade.

Essay: During the first half of the semester, you will write a brief essay analyzing a particular subject discussed in the court cases considering redistricting. You will be expected to discuss your paper in class. We will provide more details when the assignment is made. This essay will comprise twenty percent of your grade.

Term Project: The central task for this class will be the development of a set of maps showing possible redistricting scenarios for Massachusetts in 2012. You will work collaboratively in groups of three or four students to develop these maps. The project will be segmented. First, you will draw maps that exemplify different scenarios (for instance, an incumbent protection map, a map that maximizes minority group influence, a map that maximizes the change of electing Republicans, and/or a map that embodies “good government” principles). As a class, we will discuss the appropriateness of different scenarios. Your first attempt to do this will be required to show your intent, but it will not be required to comply rigorously with equal representation specifications. The second segment of the project will use redistricting software to develop maps that will stand up to legal scrutiny. After completing the second segment, you will have a week to rethink what you have done before presenting it to the class. The software for this will be available on campus computers, and we will spend some time figuring out how to use it. As part of each mapping exercise, you will write a brief statement of what you have done and of the considerations involved in drawing your map. The term project will comprise forty percent of your grade, and the final presentation of your map will comprise another ten percent. Advisory grades will be given for each of the two segments.

Final Paper: Each student will write a final paper (suggested length: 5-7 pages) in which (s)he will analyze and discuss a significant normative issue related to the politics of redistricting. Your professors will provide a list of possible topics; you may also, with their approval, write on a different one. The paper will give you the opportunity to think analytically and critically about material presented in the course, as well as to write about it in an organized and convincing manner.

Summary: Class Requirements and Percent Contribution to Final Grade

Requirement	Percent Contribution to Grade	Objective
Class participation	10%	Enriching your understanding of course material and that of your classmates and professors
Essay	20%	Understanding of redistricting law
Term Project	40% (advisory grade will be given for each segment)	Ability to apply concepts of redistricting
Term Project Presentation	10%	Ability to defend your work
Final Paper	20%	Ability to consider normative issues in redistricting

Academic Honesty

Finally, as you should be aware by now, the work you do in this course must be entirely your own. To be sure we all have the same understanding of academic integrity as it pertains to this course, here is what the Academic Advising *Blue Book* (p. 22) has to say on the subject:

Academic integrity is highly valued at Clark. Research, scholarship and teaching are possible only in an environment characterized by honesty and mutual trust. Academic integrity requires that your work be your own. Because of the damage that violations of academic integrity do to the intellectual climate of the University, they must be treated with the utmost seriousness and appropriate sanctions must be imposed. The maintenance of high standards of academic integrity is the concern of every member of the University community.

Plagiarism refers to the presentation of someone else's work as one's own, without proper citation of references and sources, whether or not the work has been previously published. Submitting work obtained from a professional term paper writer or company is plagiarism. Claims of ignorance about the rules of attribution, or of unintentional error are not a defense against a finding of plagiarism.

Suspected plagiarism cases will be referred to the Dean's office. If you are in doubt about whether you have provided adequate citation or used others' work properly, please talk with us before handing your paper in!

Web Resources

There should be many news articles regarding the 2012 redistricting, in Massachusetts and elsewhere. We will expect you to peruse the on line editions of the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and the *Boston Globe* for articles related to redistricting, and we will call your attention to any news coverage we discover. We also encourage you to inform us about pertinent articles or columns you come across.

In addition, there are several web sites that will be of interest, both in terms of their general coverage of election politics and in terms of specific discussions of redistricting. Here are a few of these:

a) General political coverage:

Politico (www.politico.com): One of the better on line newspapers covering congressional politics and elections.

Swing State Project (<http://www.swingstateproject.com/>): A left-leaning blog that takes a particular interest in redistricting.

Real Clear Politics (www.realclearpolitics.com): A somewhat right-leaning compendium of current political news.

For Massachusetts politics specifically, these sites may be useful as redistricting issues generate activist citizen discussion and argument:

Blue Mass Group (www.bluemassgroup.com): A site primarily for Democratic party bloggers in Massachusetts.

Red Mass Group (www.redmassgroup.com): Like Blue Mass Group, only for Republicans.

We may find it useful to post on these sites from time to time to generate discussion about issues related to Massachusetts congressional redistricting.

b) Sites specific to redistricting

The Redistricting Game (<http://redistrictinggame.org/>): One of several online exercises in redistricting. This one was developed by the Annenberg Center at the University of Southern California; it allows you to draw districts for fictitious states with different population distributions. A fun way to get used to how mapping works.

Dave's Redistricting (<http://davesredistricting.blogspot.com/>): A more sophisticated redistricting game, developed by Dave Bradlee, a liberal blogger and Microsoft computer scientist. This is an excellent way to try out your skills on actual states, although it is harder to use than the Annenberg site.

Redistricting the Nation (<http://www.redistrictingthenation.com/>): Another program that uses actual states, developed by Azavea, a GIS software firm. This one comes with a blog discussing current news stories related to redistricting.

CSU Pomona Redistricting Project (<http://www.csupomona.edu/~jlkorey/321/redist.html>): Website set up by a class similar to ours at California Polytechnical Institute. Fun to look at, but not as user friendly as some of the above.

You should familiarize yourself with these sites; we will let you know if we find anything else of interest, and you should do the same.

Schedule

(Note: We will have a few guest speakers during the semester and may adjust the readings accordingly. The due dates for the assignments, however, will not change.)

I. Introduction

Tuesday, January 18: Introduction to the Course

➔ Introductory (ungraded) exercise:

Stewart, Charles. 2001. *Analyzing Congress*. New York: W.W. Norton, p. 234.

Friday, January 21: Redistricting and Congressional Politics

Smith, Steven, Jason Roberts, and Ryan Vander Wielen. 2009. *The American Congress*, 6th ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, ch. 2-3 (pp. 27-85)

Bullock, ch. 1

Tuesday, January 25 and Friday January 28: Theories of Representation

Pitkin, Hanna Fenichel. 1967. *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Ch. 10 (“Political Representation”), pp. 209-240.

Thompson, Dennis. 2002. *Just Elections: Creating a Fair Electoral Process in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Ch. 1 (“Equal Respect”), pp. 19-64.

Rehfeld, Andrew. 2001. “Silence of the Land: On the Historical Irrelevance of Territory to Congressional Districting and Political Representation in the United States.” *Studies in American Political Development* 15 (1): 53-87.

Swain, Carol. 1993. *Black Faces, Black Interests*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Ch. 1, 9, pp. 3-19, 193-206.

II. The Legal Context

Tuesday, February 1: A Brief History of Redistricting Law

Cox, Gary W., and Jonathan Katz. 2002. *Elbridge Gerry’s Salamander*. New York: Cambridge University Press, ch. 2 (pp. 12-28).

U.S. Constitution provisions relating to representation and voting

Bullock, ch. 2

Friday, February 4: Redistricting and the U.S. Constitution: Equal Protection

Excerpts from U.S. Sup. Ct. cases (Colegrove v. Green; Baker v. Carr; Wesberry v. Sanders; Reynolds v. Sims)

Tuesday, February 8: Redistricting and the U.S. Constitution: Race
Caro, *Master of the Senate*, pp. 685-692.
Selections from the Voting Rights Act of 1965
Excerpts from *Shaw v. Reno*; *Miller v. Johnson*

Friday, February 11: Other factors in redistricting: Partisanship and Incumbency
Excerpts from *Davis v. Bandemer*; *Vieth v. Jubelirer*
Persily, "Judicial Review of the Redistricting Process," in Mann and Cain *Party Lines*,
pp. 75-91.

III. The Political Context

Tuesday, February 15 : What the Courts Wrought: The 1982 and 1992 Redistrictings

Lublin, David. 1997. *The Paradox of Representation: Racial Gerrymandering and Minority Interests in Congress*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Ch. 6 ("Racial Redistricting and Public Policy"), pp. 98-119.

Canon, David. 1999. *Race, Redistricting, and Representation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Ch. 3 ("The Supply-Side Theory of Redistricting"), pp. 93-142.

Bullock, ch. 3

➔ Assignment #1 Due

Friday, February 18 What the Courts Wrought: The 1982 and 1992 Redistrictings, continued

Tuesday, February 22: State Laws Regarding Redistricting; Getting Acquainted with Redistricting Software

Bullock, ch. 4

Massachusetts statutes on legislative districts

Materials on Redistricting software TBA

(Note: Sometime around this week we will be showing the film, "Gerrymandering: The Movie," which you will be expected to attend.)

Friday, February 25: The 2010 Census, the 2010 Election and Redistricting

A selection of recent redistricting news articles (will be distributed during week of February 14)

➔ Term Project Assignment Distributed

Tuesday, March 1 and Friday March 4: Principles of Districting

Young, H. Peyton. 1988. "Measuring the Compactness of Legislative Districts."

Legislative Studies Quarterly 13: 105-115.

Monmonier, Mark. 2001. *Bushmanders and Bullwinkles*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, ch. 1-5.

Week of March 8: Spring Break

Tuesday, March 15 and Friday, March 18: Stakeholders in the Redistricting Process

Bullock, ch. 5

Monmonier, ch. 6-9

Boatright, Robert G. 2004. "Static Ambition: Legislators' Preparations for Redistricting." *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 4 (4): 436-54.

Altman, Micah, Karin MacDonald, and Michael McDonald. 2005. "Pushbutton Gerrymandering? How Computing has Changed Redistricting." In Thomas E. Mann and Bruce E. Cain, eds., *Party Lines: Competition, Partisanship, and Congressional Redistricting*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, pp. 51-66.

Tuesday, March 22: Term Project Workshop

➔ **Term Project segment #1 due**

Friday March 25: Redistricting and Distributive Benefits

Ansolabehere, Stephen, and James M. Snyder. 2008. *The End of Inequality*. New York: W. W. Norton. Ch. 9-10 (pp. 187-240).

Tuesday, March 29: Mapping Other States

Kousser, J. Morgan. 1997 "Ironies of California Redistricting, 1971-2001," in Jerry Lubenow and Bruce E. Cain, *Governing the Golden State: Politics, Government, and Public Policy in California*. (Berkeley, CA: IGS Press, 137-55.

Reading on 2003 Texas redistricting TBA

Friday, April 1: **Guest Speaker on State Redistricting**

Tuesday, April 5: How Other Countries Draw Districts

Courtney, John C. 2008. "From Gerrymandering to Independence: District Boundary Readjustment in Canada." In Lisa Handley and Bernard Grofman, eds., *Redistricting in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 11-26.

Handley, Lisa. 2008. "Delimiting Electoral Boundaries in Post-Conflict Settings." In Lisa Handley and Bernard Grofman, eds., *Redistricting in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 191-204.

Handley, Lisa. 2008. "A Comparative Survey of Structures and Criteria for Boundary Delimitation." In Lisa Handley and Bernard Grofman, eds., *Redistricting in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 265-284.

Friday, April 8: Term Project Workshop

→ *Term project segment #2 due*

Tuesday, April 12 and Friday, April 15:

→ *Term Project Presentations*

IV. What it all Means

Tuesday, April 19 and Friday, April 22: How Much Does Districting Matter?

Final Paper Topics Distributed on Tuesday, April 19

Mann, Thomas. 2006. "Polarizing the House of Representatives: How Much Does Gerrymandering Matter?" and Gary Jacobson, "Why Other Sources of Polarization Matter More." In *Red and Blue Nation*, Vol. 1, ed. Pietro Nivola and David Brady. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, pp. 263-300.

McDonald, Michael. 2006. "Redistricting and Competitive Districts." In *The Marketplace of Democracy*, ed. Michael McDonald and John Samples. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, pp. 222-244.

Brunell, Thomas. 2008. *Redistricting and Representation*. New York: Routledge.

Ely, John Hart. 1998. "Gerrymanders: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly." *Stanford Law Review* 50 (3): 607-641.

Tuesday, April 26 and Friday, April 29: Redistricting Reform: What is it, and is it Necessary?

Hirsch, Sam. 2003. "The United States House of Unrepresentatives: What Went Wrong in the Latest Round of Congressional Redistricting." *Election Law Journal* 2: 179-216.

Bullock, ch. 7

Monmonier, ch. 10-11

Final Paper Due Last Day of Final Exams

Coursepack:

- Smith, Steven, Jason Roberts, and Ryan Vander Wielen. 2009. *The American Congress*, 6th ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, ch. 2-3 (pp. 27-85)
- Pitkin, Hanna Fenichel. 1967. *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Ch. 10 (“Political Representation”), pp. 209-240.
- Thompson, Dennis. 2002. *Just Elections: Creating a Fair Electoral Process in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Ch. 1 (“Equal Respect”), pp. 19-64.
- Rehfeld, Andrew. 2001. “Silence of the Land: On the Historical Irrelevance of Territory to Congressional Districting and Political Representation in the United States.” *Studies in American Political Development* 15 (1): 53-87.
- Swain, Carol. 1993. *Black Faces, Black Interests*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Ch. 1, 9, pp. 3-19, 193-206.
- Cox, Gary W., and Jonathan Katz. 2002. *Elbridge Gerry’s Salamander*. New York: Cambridge University Press, ch. 2 (pp. 12-28).
- Redistricting Case Law excerpts from U.S. Sup. Ct. cases***
- Caro, Master of the Senate, pp. 685-692.***
- Selections from the Voting Rights Act of 1965***
- Persily, “Judicial Review of the Redistricting Process,” in Mann and Cain, *Party Lines*, pp. 75-91.
- Young, H. Peyton. 1988. “Measuring the Compactness of Legislative Districts.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 13: 105-115.
- Lublin, David. 1997. *The Paradox of Representation: Racial Gerrymandering and Minority Interests in Congress*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Ch. 6 (“Racial Redistricting and Public Policy”), pp. 98-119.
- Kousser, J. Morgan. 1997. “Ironies of California Redistricting, 1971-2001,” in Jerry Lubenow and Bruce E. Cain, *Governing the Golden State: Politics, Government, and Public Policy in California*. (Berkeley, CA: IGS Press, 137-55.
- Canon, David. 1999. *Race, Redistricting, and Representation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Ch. 3 (“The Supply-Side Theory of Redistricting”), pp. 93-142.
- Massachusetts statutes on legislative districts
- Boatright, Robert G. 2004. “Static Ambition: Legislators’ Preparations for Redistricting.” *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 4 (4): 436-54.
- Altman, Micah, Karin MacDonald, and Michael McDonald. 2005. “Pushbutton Gerrymandering? How Computing has Changed Redistricting.” In Thomas E. Mann and Bruce E. Cain, eds., *Party Lines: Competition, Partisanship, and Congressional Redistricting*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, pp. 51-66.
- Ansolabehere, Stephen, and James M. Snyder. 2008. *The End of Inequality*. New York: W. W. Norton. Ch. 9-10 (pp. 187-240).
- Courtney, John C. 2008. “From Gerrymandering to Independence: District Boundary Readjustment in Canada.” In Lisa Handley and Bernard Grofman, eds., *Redistricting in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 11-26.

- Handley, Lisa. 2008. "Delimiting Electoral Boundaries in Post-Conflict Settings." In Lisa Handley and Bernard Grofman, eds., *Redistricting in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 191-204.
- Handley, Lisa. 2008. "A Comparative Survey of Structures and Criteria for Boundary Delimitation." In Lisa Handley and Bernard Grofman, eds., *Redistricting in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 265-284.
- McDonald, Michael. 2006. "Redistricting and Competitive Districts." In *The Marketplace of Democracy*, ed. Michael McDonald and John Samples. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, pp. 222-244.
- Hirsch, Sam. 2003. "The United States House of Unrepresentatives: What Went Wrong in the Latest Round of Congressional Redistricting." *Election Law Journal* 2: 179-216.
- Ely, John Hart. 1998. "Gerrymanders: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly." *Stanford Law Review* 50 (3): 607-641.
- Mann, Thomas. 2006. "Polarizing the House of Representatives: How Much Does Gerrymandering Matter?" and Gary Jacobson, "Why Other Sources of Polarization Matter More." In *Red and Blue Nation*, Vol. 1, ed. Pietro Nivola and David Brady. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, pp. 263-300.