

Course Syllabus

PSCI 4344 Race and Redistricting
Spring 2013
MW 1:00-2:15
JO 4.614

Professor Tom Brunell
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Green Hall 2.246 (office hours - drop in or by appointment)

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

None

Course Description

Examines the politics and process of redrawing congressional and state legislative district lines, notably how this process is influenced by politics as well as by important principles and laws. Reviews the history of redistricting in the U.S. House of Representatives and considers recent redistricting and the role of race in this process.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

At the end of this course a student will be able to:

1. Describe the process and principles of redistricting for Congressional and state legislative electoral boundaries in the United States.
 2. Describe the role that race plays in the redistricting and electoral process in the U.S.
 3. Understand the role that courts and legislatures play in this process and appreciate the inherent difficulties in redistricting.
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Required Textbooks and Materials

3 books:

Brunell, Thomas. "Redistricting and Representation: Why Competitive Elections are Bad for America"

Bullock, Charles. "Redistricting: The Most Political Activity in America"

Lublin, David. "The Paradox of Representation"

We will also be reading a number of academic articles and decisions from the Supreme Court. I have posted pdf files for all the articles in the discussion section of elearning for you to download. Links to the Supreme Court decisions are below.

Suggested Course Materials

Read a daily newspaper

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Jan 14 – Introduction and Syllabus

Jan 16 – One person, One vote. Read Bullock Ch 1-2 and
Reynolds v. Sims, majority opinion
<http://laws.findlaw.com/us/377/533.html>

Jan 21 – MLK Day, No class

Jan 23 – Traditional redistricting principles
Read Altman article

Jan 28 Gerrymandering – read *Davis v. Bandemer*

Jan 30 read *Vieth v. Jubilerer*, read all opinions, not just plurality

Feb 4 read ch 5 Bullock

Feb 6 read ch 6 Bullock

Feb 11 read *Anatomy of a Gerrymander*, Rush article on gerrymandering

Feb 13 – Are competitive elections bad?
Read first half of Brunell book

Feb 18 – Competition cont. Read second half of Brunell book ch 4-6

Feb 20 – watch film gerrymandering at home
www.snagfilms.com/films/title/gerrymandering

Feb 25 – Midterm exam

Feb 27 – Race and redistricting
Read *Thornburg v. Gingles*

March 4 – Lublin pg. 3-54

March 6 – Lublin pg. 55-97

March 11-13 NO CLASS, spring break

March 18 Read *Georgia v. Ashcroft*, Bullock ch 3

March 20 Read Lublin 98-133, Bullock, ch 4

March 25 Read Desposato & Petrocik article; Overby & Cosgrove article

March 27 Read *Bartlett v. Strickland*

April 1 Read *NAMUDNO v. Holder*

April 3 – Read Canon's article on electoral systems and minority interests

April 8 – Lab day, work on paper, meet in computer lab

April 10 – Lab day, work on paper, meet in computer lab

April 15 Read Garand

April 17 Read Lublin respons to Epstein, read Epstein reponse to Lublin

April 22 – read Carson & Crespin

April 24 – read Desposato

April 29 – finish papers

May 1 – last day of class, paper due

May 10 – FINAL EXAM 11:00 am to 12:30 pm JO 4.614

Grading Policy

There are three components of your grade:

Midterm exam 35%

Paper 30%

Final exam 35%

Course & Instructor Policies

With a verified medical excuse, you can take a make-up midterm exam during the last week of classes. There are no make-ups for the final exam.

There will be several current events questions on both exams to earn extra credit.

You will be penalized 10 percent per day (or fraction thereof) for a late paper. Weekends do count toward the penalty as well.

Class attendance is required. We will be addressing important political topics and you should feel free to express yourself, though we will remain civil with one another at all times.

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.