

Politics 295: Redistricting and Minority Voting Rights
Profs. Blackburn and Rush

MW DEF—Huntley Hall 301

Course Description and Goals

Politics 295 is a unique offering of technological instruction in the context of an important political phenomenon: the redistricting process.

As a **final project**, students will work with current census and electoral data to develop a new State Senate district map for Virginia. Along the way, we will learn how to use the ArcView GIS technology package to draw and edit district maps. As well, we will engage in some basic analysis using Microsoft Excel. In addition to the lab aspects of the course, we will also conduct a seminar in which we read and discuss political science literature on voting, representation and the redistricting process in the United States.

Grading:

Assignments	15%
Virginia Research Paper	15%
Paper on your redistricting plan	20%
Redistricting Plan and Presentation	50%

The Assignments will be made throughout the semester and are designed to familiarize you with the use of ArcView.

Short Research Paper: Develop a profile of the Virginia House and Senate. Who are the minority and women members? What is the partisan and racial breakdown of the two houses of the legislature? What (and how many) districts are represented by women and minorities? What were the key issues and controversies that arose in the 2001 redistricting session?

Your final presentation will be a **group project**. You can see what previous year's students produced on the [course website](#).

Syllabus

Date	Class Topics and Assignments
17 April (M)	<p>Introduction. (10-11)</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monmonier intro, chapter 6 • “Redistricting Disputes.” <i>Congressional Quarterly Researcher</i> 12 March 2004 (Blackboard) • NCSL “Redistricting Law 2000”: (put the cursor on the title and hit ctrl-click. You will be taken to the site). Read chapter 1
Session 2	<p>Intro to ArcGIS</p> <p>Opening ArcView. Saving Projects Accessing the Virginia Census Data Review ESRI Census assignment</p>
19 April (W)	<p>ArcGIS Lab and Redistricting Software</p> <p>Readings: Minority Voting Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monmonier, chapters 2, 3, 4 • “Redistricting: Are Minority Groups Fairly Represented in Congress?” <i>Congressional Quarterly Researcher</i> 16 February 2001 (Blackboard) • NCSL “Redistricting Law 2000”: (put the cursor on the title and hit ctrl-click. You will be taken to the site). Read chapters 3, 4.
21 April (F)	<p>The Legal and Political Context: Contemporary Voting Rights Law and Gerrymandering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Congressional Apportionment--Historical Perspective from the Bureau of the Census (put the cursor on the title and hit ctrl-click. You will be taken to the site). • "Computing Apportionment" from the Bureau of the Census (put the cursor on the title and hit ctrl-click. You will be taken to the site). • Sam Hirsch, "Unpacking Page v. Bartels: A Fresh Redistricting Paradigm Emerges in New Jersey," 1 <i>Election Law Journal</i> 7 (2000) (reserve) • <i>Hunt v. Cromartie</i> (2001) (blackboard) • Recommended: • Sam Hirsch, "The United States House of Unrepresentatives: What Went Wrong in the Latest Round of Redistricting." 2 <i>Election Law Journal</i> 179-216 (2003). (reserve) • US Department of Commerce v. Montana (1992) • Georgia v. Ashcroft

	<p>Use Excel to construct the reapportionment order of the House of representatives for the 2000 census.</p>
24 April (M)	<p>Virginia Politics and Redistricting I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virginia Redistricting News from Center for Voting and Democracy. (put the cursor on the title and hit ctrl-click. You will be taken to the site). Click on the Virginia link in the left hand column to go to the summary of Virginia districting news. You will need to prepare an 8-10 page paper on the principal issues in Virginia Redistricting (See the syllabus introduction). It is due on the blackboard website on 1 May • “Drawing the Line II” (blackboard) • West v. Gilmore • Wilkins v. West <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Drawing the Line I” (blackboard)
Session 2	<p>ArcView Lab Assignment: Cut out the Rockbridge County data and produce a map of the Supervisors Districts</p>
26 April (W)	<p>Virginia Politics and Redistricting II Visit by Kent Stigall, Geographic Information Specialist, Virginia Division of Legislative Services</p>
1 May (M)	<p>Compactness and Traditional Districting Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCSL Seminar on Redistricting (this is a powerpoint presentation on compactness from a 200 NCSL seminar) • Monmonier chapter 5 <p>Additional (recommended but not required) Readings:</p> <p>Richard G. Niemi, Bernard Grofman, Carl Carlucci, Thomas Hofeller “Measuring Compactness and the Role of a Compactness Standard in a Test for Partisan and Racial Gerrymandering” <i>The Journal of Politics</i>, Vol. 52, No. 4. (Nov., 1990), pp. 1155-1181 (Available on Blackboard)</p> <p>Richard H. Pildes and Richard G. Niemi (1993) “Expressive Harms, “Bizarre Districts” and Voting Rights: Evaluating Election District Appearances after Shaw v. Reno. <i>Michigan Law Review</i> 92:483-587.</p>
	<p>ArcView Lab Paper due on Virginia Redistricting Politics</p>

3 May (W)	<p>Alternative Electoral Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Program for Representative Government” (Center for Voting and Democracy). On this page, you’ll see a series of links on the left hand side. Please read through each one. • NCSL “Redistricting Law 2000”: (put the cursor on the title and hit ctrl-click. You will be taken to the site). Read chapter 5. • Visit by Rob Richie, Executive Director, Center for Voting and Democracy
8 May (M)	<p>ArcView Lab</p>
10 May (W)	<p>Additional Concerns (or more ArcView time)</p> <p>Mark Rush, “Redistricting and Partisan Fluidity: Do we Know a Gerrymander When We See One?” 19 <i>Political Geography</i> 249 (2000) (this is an adobe acrobat document)</p>
15 May (M)	<p>Visit by Hon. Creigh Deeds, Senate of Virginia</p>
17 May (W)	<p>Open Lab</p>
22 May (M)	<p>Student Presentations</p> <p>Visit by Bruce Cain, Director, Institute for Governmental Studies, UC Berkeley and UC Center in Washington</p>
24 May (W)	<p>Student Presentations</p>