Class 9a:
Political Geography II

- Reapportionment and redistricting
- Gerrymandering
- Local politics
Proportional representation

• VA Plan vs. NJ Plan $\rightarrow$ Great Compromise
• Large states wanted proportional repr.
• Small states wanted equal repr.
• 3/5 Compromise on slaves
Proportional representation

• 100 Senators, 435 Representatives
• Basis for Electoral College
• All votes are not equal
  – Minimum representation
  – Winner-take-all
Reapportionment

- Population changes with migration
- Need to reapportion seats
- Based on Census
- Every state keeps at least one Representative
- Method of equal proportions
Redistricting

• Redrawing district boundaries based on reapportionment
• In most states, done by legislature
• Meant to maintain equality of votes
• Can be manipulated
Gerrymandering

- Discriminatory redistricting
- Consolidating power
- Diluting opponents’ power
Gerrymandering

• Racist gerrymandering after Civil War
  – Put all minorities in one district
  – Dilute them among all districts

• 1982 Voting Rights Act
  – Majority-minority districts
  – Constitutional issues
Gerrymandering and democracy

• Preserves incumbents
  – In 1992, 61% of races won by >20%
  – In 2002, 80% of races won by > 20%; average margin of victory 39%
  – 1 of 53 seats in CA competitive
Gerrymandering and democracy

• Removes decision-making from voters
• “Candidates choose the voters”
• More polarized Congress
Local politics

- Hierarchy of jurisdictions
- Special-purpose districts
- Local governments and urban sprawl
Hierarchy of jurisdictions

• First order divisions
  – Largest units within a state
  – Provinces, states, oblasts, prefectures
  – Unitary vs. federal
Hierarchy of jurisdictions

• Second order divisions
  – Counties, townships, parishes, boroughs
  – 3000 in US; from 24 to 20,000 miles$^2$ and from 100 to 8 million residents

• Functions depend on the state
  – Law enforcement, highways, taxes, statistics, welfare, elections
Hierarchy of jurisdictions

• Minor civil divisions
  – Townships, cities, villages
• Land use and zoning
• Growth by annexation
Special purpose districts

- Consequence of federal system
- Territory and organization for one purpose
- Fire, water, flood control, mosquito control, irrigation, etc.
- Over 35,000 in 2002
School districts

• Land granted to new territories (1 section per township)
• Land grant colleges
• Historically, little federal input
• Over 15,000 in 2002
• Funding depends on local tax income
Urban sprawl

• Too much local decision-making
• Each MCD acts in its own interests
  – Maximize tax revenue
  – Minimize need for services
• Reluctance for regional government