



Unit 4

Political Parties, Ideology, and Elections

“Elections”

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Notes #4



Federal Elections

- Constitution says that elections will take place
“...on the first Tuesday after the First Monday of November in even numbered years”
 - Every seat in the House of Representatives is up for election
 - Presidents are chosen every other election
 - 1/3 of the seats in the Senate are up for election each two years
- 17th Amendment
 - Senators are now elected directly by the people instead of by State Legislatures



State Elections

- Many states hold elections at the same time as federal elections to save money
 - Governor
 - State Legislature
 - State Treasurer
 - Attorney General
 - Secretary of the State
- Local Elections and Primary elections will differ state to state



Incumbent Advantage

- Incumbent
 - Person running for an office that they already hold
- Incumbent Advantage
 - Applies to members of Congress who run for reelection
 - One of the most important factors in determining the outcome of congressional elections
 - They win 90% of the time
 - More of an advantage for members in the House of Reps. than for members of the Senate
 - Smaller areas to run in
 - Election every 2 years versus 6 years



Franking Privilege

- Definition
 - Members of Congress can mail newsletters and emails free of charge (government pays for it)
 - Includes making and sending pre-recorded phone calls



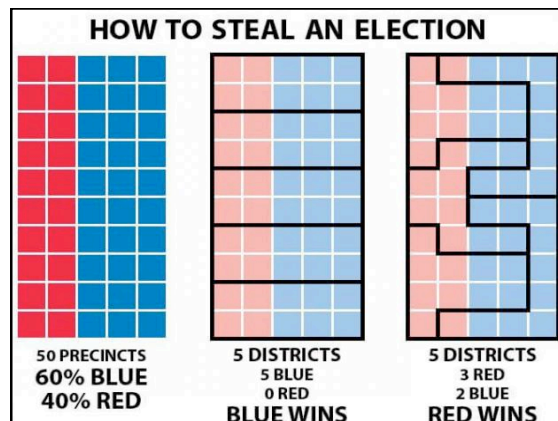
Census and Apportionment

- A Census is taken every 10 years to determine a states population
- The 435 seats in the House of Reps. are apportioned based on a states population
 - Each state is given a minimum of one Representative
 - There are 7 states that have the minimum
 - Members of the House represent an average of 715,000 people per state.
 - Each 10 years the number of seats in each state may change
 - States have to redraw their district lines to accommodate these changes

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Gerrymandering

- **Definition**
 - Partisan redrawing of Congressional district boundaries to benefit one party over another
- District lines need to be redrawn after each Census, even if the number of Representative stays the same.
 - Who has the power or authority to make those changes?
 - What system can be put into place to make sure gerrymandering doesn't happen?



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Primary Elections

- Used by all states to select party nominees for legislative and state offices
 - 39 states have primary elections to select the Presidential nominees for each party
 - These have weakened the parties control over the nomination process
- Primary Voters tend to be party activists who are older and more affluent than general electorate

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Front Loading

Describe what is going on here.

Why would states be interested in moving up on the primary calendar?

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Type of Primaries

- **Closed Primary (Most Common)**
 - Voting is restricted to registered members of a political party who can only vote for candidates from their party
- **Open Primary**
 - Voters get to choose which party's primary to vote in
- **Blanket Primary (used only in AK and WA)**
 - Voters vote for one candidate per office of either party
- **Run-Off Primary**
 - Occurs in states that require a minimum percentage of votes in the primary election

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Special and Run-Off Elections

- Special Elections are sometimes held to fill a vacant seat in Government.
- **Special/Run-Off Election Case Study**
 - South Carolina (1st District) House of Reps.
 - Tim Scott is appointed to the Senate by S.C. Gov.
 - A special election is scheduled for 2013 to fill seat
 - Very few Democrats run.
 - » Elizabeth Colbert-Busch Wins the Primary
 - Lots of Republicans run.
 - » So many that no one wins the primary and a run-off election is held between the top two Republicans.
 - » <http://thecolbertreport.cc.com/videos/3ci6sy/-morning-joe-vs--the-colbert-report>



General Election

- Election that will determine the final winner and decide who will hold the office.
- General Elections for all Federal Offices and most State offices are always on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in even numbered years
 - November 2nd – 8th