SUMMARY
The Voting Rights Act (VRA) is one of the most significant and controversial acts in American history. We will examine the history of voting rights in America and the specific environment that led to its introduction, as well as the legislative process, executive implementation, and the political ramifications and subsequent state government and court decisions.

CONTACT INFORMATION
Professor Nathan Fletcher
Email: nfletcher@ucsd.edu
Office: SSB 377

Teaching Assistants:
Stan Oklobdzija Jason Wu
soklobdz@ucsd.edu jasonwu@ucsd.edu

CLASS INFORMATION:
Lecture: Thursdays 5pm - 7:50pm
Location: CENTR 109
Final: Friday, December 11 7:00pm – 10:00pm
Location: TBD
Office Hours: Professor Fletcher: Thursdays 2:00 to 4:00
(This time is subject to change and will be confirmed weekly)
(Reserve times via weekly Doodle posted on the TED site)

The slides for each class will be posted on the course TED site and each lecture will be podcast*. The course TED site will also include course announcements, volunteer/internship opportunities, study guides, and any other class materials.

*Podcasting will be done provided the system works properly, and many guest speakers opt not to podcast their discussion. There should be no expectation or guarantee that lectures or presentations will be podcast.

READING:
Required:


COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:
› 10% Assignment #1 DUE: Wednesday, September 30th 5:00 PM
› 15% Assignment #2 DUE: Wednesday, October 14th 5:00 PM
› 10% Assignment #3 DUE: Wednesday, November 4th 5:00 PM
› 20% Assignment #4 DUE: Wednesday, December 2nd 5:00 PM
› 40% Final DUE: Friday, December 11 7:00pm – 10:00pm
› 5% Class Participation
Assignment #1:
Biographical paper about a “hero” and a “villain” from the movie Selma
Details will be presented at the end of the first class—Thursday, September 24th.

Assignment #2:
Write a paper on the pros and cons of one major election reform idea
Details to be provided Thursday, October 1st.

Assignment #3:
Biographical paper about a judicial “hero” and a “villain” and an “elected” hero or “villain” from the period between 1966 to 2015
Details to be provided Thursday, October 15th.

Assignment #4:
Write a vote recommendation memo to a US Senator on a hypothetical extension of the Voting Rights Act
Details to be provided Thursday, November 5th.

All assignments will be graded on both substance and style. Each student must do his or her own work, adhering to university regulations prohibiting plagiarism and cheating.

Final Exam
The final will take place on Friday, December 11th from 7:00pm to 10:00pm. It will be an in class, comprehensive exam covering all lectures, assigned readings, assignments, and content of guest speakers. For students who have a documented finals conflict with another course we will offer an alternative final exam time. The final will be closed book, and composed of identifications, short answers, and an essay. The final will be comprehensive of the materials presented and assigned readings for the entire course.

Students will be required to use Turnitin to submit both written assignments. Turnitin is an Internet-based plagiarism prevention service, which will be used to ensure academic integrity. The portal can be accessed directly through the course website. Hard copies of assignments will not be accepted. Professor Fletcher and the Teaching Assistants will provide additional information on the proper way to upload these assignments in subsequent class meetings.

Class Participation
For the panel discussion on Thursday, December 3rd and any other classes with previously announced guest speakers, a sign in sheet will be circulated during class. To get full participation credit you must be present in class.

Extra Credit
During the course, opportunities to intern or volunteer with a government office or political campaign will be made available to students. Any student who does eight hours of documented work for an elected official, government office, political candidate, or organization that advocates for public policy/political change will have one point added to the final course score. (Example: if your writing projects, class participation, and final give you an 89, your final score for the course will be a 90).

While opportunities will be provided in class, students are not bound to only those presented through the course. Students should feel free to contact officials or organizations and request volunteer opportunities. However, the hours worked must be documented by date and time, along with a signed letter by a representative from that organization. Additionally, a written explanation of the work done and what was learned must be submitted. This summary and signed hours form MUST be submitted before the final exam begins to be eligible for extra credit. Again, for the extra point to be counted, students must submit a written memo that includes:
--Name of official or organization
--Total hours worked (minimum of 8, but no maximum)
-- Nature of work performed
-- Signature and title by verifying person at the office of official or organization
-- The student's take on volunteer opportunity/internship. This can be attached separately or below the signature of person verifying if the student would rather them not see overall comments. But this section should still include what was learned, observed, overall feelings, and anything that relates back to the class.

NO SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED ONCE THE FINAL EXAM BEGINS.

CLASS MEETINGS:
Each class meeting will consist of a lecture and then a discussion section where a particular question related to the lecture will be addressed via group discussion.

Occasionally, we will have guest speakers. You may be tested on the content covered in their lectures and question and answers. While their content may or may not be on the test, you should learn from their presentation and work in specific examples cited by guests in your short answer and essays and in class assignments to demonstrate an understanding of the practical realities of topics presented. In addition, use guest speakers as your chance to ask relevant questions about the state of American politics and voting rights today.

OFFICE HOURS:
Office hours will vary week by week but will generally be Thursdays from 2 to 4pm. During each class, Professor Fletcher's office hours for the following week will be announced. A Doodle schedule will be posted on the course TED site each week. Please reserve a 15 minute block on this doodle during the weekly office hours. The TAs will also conduct weekly office hours and make those times and location available. It is suggested you email TAs if you plan to attend their office hours so they can be best prepared to answer your questions.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION:
Professor Fletcher will consider requests for letters of recommendation on a case by case basis. To be considered, please email Professor Fletcher the following information in ONE email:
-- Reason for request (law school, UCDC, Capitol Fellows, job, etc.)
-- Where potential letter should be sent/submitted
-- Classes taken with Professor Fletcher and grade(s) obtained
-- Extracurricular activities and anything else of value
-- Political/government activism
-- Work experience
-- A complete draft of a letter from Professor Fletcher on your behalf

After this has been submitted, then make an appointment to meet with Professor Fletcher to discuss the letter during office hours.

GRADE CHANGES AND EXTENSIONS:
All requests for grade changes must be made in writing, to Professor Fletcher, within a week of receiving the graded assignment. Requests must be typed and double-spaced and provide an explanation for the request and justification. Please note that a Professor review of a grade assigned by a TA may result in either a higher or lower grade (or the grade could stay the same). There are no re-grades for the final.

Extensions on assignments and make-up exams will only be granted in cases of documented illness or family medical emergencies. Please contact Professor Fletcher as soon as possible if you need to request one. Appropriate contact for Professor is email—not a tweet, facebook message, or note slipped under his office door.

Note: We will NOT grant any extensions because stolen or damaged computers. This does happen, so you should be in the habit of using the free Dropbox program to automatically back up all of your work on the cloud whenever you save it so that you never lose it.
LATE ASSIGNMENTS:
--3% if not submitted by the time class begins but submitted by the end of that day
--5% for the next calendar day
--5% for each business day after that
--Students will max out at a 20% reduction
--No papers will be accepted once the final exam begins!
*I have never seen a paper improve at a rate greater than the one at which you lose points

ACCOMODATIONS:
Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to Faculty (please make arrangements to contact me privately) and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged.
Contact the OSD for further information:
858.534.4382 (phone)
osd@ucsd.edu
http://disabilities.ucsd.edu/
Course Schedule

1. **Thursday September 24th**
   Course Introduction/Class Overview  
   Special Presentation  
   Assignment #1 Details released

Reading:
Preface, Richard Valelly in *The Voting Rights Act.*  
New York Times Magazine, “A Dream Undone,” Inside the 50-year campaign to roll back the Voting Rights Act  

**Section One: Defining Voting Rights during Reconstruction**

2. **Thursday, October 1st: 1865-1873 Post Civil War Progress in Voting Rights**
Reading:
Chapter 1: Gary May, “Planting the First Seed” in *Bending Towards Justice: The Voting Rights Act and the Transformation of American Democracy.*

Documents available online or in *The Voting Rights Act* text:  
Reconstruction Act, 1867-1868  
Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution July 9, 1868  
Fifteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, February 3, 1870  
Enforcement Act, May 31, 1870

**Section Two: Disenfranchising African Americans**

3. **Thursday, October 8th: 1874-1909 A Movement stopped: The end of an era of progress**
Reading:
Chapter 3: Michael Klarman, “The Supreme Court and Black Disenfranchisement” in *The Voting Rights Act.*  

Documents available online or in *The Voting Rights Act* text:  
*Slaughterhouse Cases* 1873 (https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/83/36/case.html)  
Brief of the United States in *United States v. Cruikshank,* 1875  
*United States v. Cruikshank,* Decided March 27, 1876  
*Ex Parte Yarbrough,* Decided March 3, 1884  
Speech of Hon. George H. White of North Carolina in the U.S. House of Representatives, January 29, 1901  
Alabama Constitution, Ratified November 28, 1901  
Supreme Court Decisions Upholding Disenfranchisement: *Williams v. Mississippi, Giles v. Harris,* and *James v. Bowman,* 1898-1903  
Inaugural Address of President William Howard Taft, March 4, 1909

**Section Three: Restoring Voting Rights**
4. Thursday, October 15th: 1910-1964: Setting the Stage for the Voting Rights Act

Reading:

Documents available online or in The Voting Rights Act text:
Guinn v. United States, Decided June 21, 1915
Response to 19th Amendment: “Negro Women in South Hasten to Register Names,” St. Louis Dispatch, October 10, 1920
Letters to the NAACP about Voter Registration, 1936-1939
Smith v. Allwright, Decided April 3, 1944
To Secure These Rights: The Report of the President’s Committee on Civil Rights, October 29, 1947
The Negro Voter in the South, September 1957
Civil Rights Act of 1957 and 1960
Testimony of Rev. John Scott before the United States Commission on Civil Rights, September 27, 1960
Robert Moses Memoir on the Black Voter Registration Campaign in Mississippi: “Mississippi: 1961-1962”

5. Thursday, October 22nd: 1965—the Voting Rights Act

Reading:
Chapter 5: Stephen Tuck, “Making the Voting Rights Act” in The Voting Rights Act

Documents available online or in The Voting Rights Act text:
President Lyndon B. Johnson’s Special Message to Congress: “The American Promise,” March 15, 1965
Speech by Rev. Martin Luther King Jr: “Our God is Marching On,” March 25, 1965
Joint Statement of the Senate Judiciary Committee Supporting Adoption of the Voting Rights Act, April 21, 1965
Voting Rights Act, August 6, 1965


Reading:

Documents available online or in The Voting Rights Act text:
Implementation of the Voting Rights Act: Selections from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and the Lawyers Constitutional Defense Committee
South Carolina v. Katzenbach, Decided March 7, 1966
Memo from Dolly Hamby to Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-SC about Appeals to Race in South Carolina Elections, November 6, 1970

7. Thursday, November 5th: The California Voting Rights Act

Background on California Voting Rights Act and Special Guest Speaker
Reading:

Section Four: Recent Actions

8. **Thursday, November 12th (1990-2010) Extensions of Voting Rights Act and Recent Actions**

Reading:
Chapter 8: Pei-te Lien, “The Voting Rights Act and Its Implications for Three Nonblack Minorities” in *The Voting Rights Act.*

Documents available online or in *The Voting Rights Act* text:
- Voting Rights Act Extension, June 22, 1970
- Congressional Testimony of Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights J. Stanley Pottinger on the 1975 Extension of the Voting Rights Act, March 5, 1975
- Voting Rights Act Extension, August 6, 1975
- *Beer v. United States,* Decided March 30, 1976
- Voting Rights Act Extension, June 29, 1982
- Voting Rights Language Assistance Act and Its Enforcement, 1992-2004
- *Shaw v. Reno,* Decided June 28, 1993
- *United States v. Charleston County, South Carolina,* Decided April 29, 2004
- Table on Geographic Extension of the Voting Rights Act, 2004
- Complaint against Georgia Photo ID Amendment, September 19, 2005

9. **Thursday, November 19th: 2010-Present: The Voting Rights Act impact and future**

Reading:

*SHELBY COUNTY, ALABAMA v. HOLDER, ATTORNEY GENERAL, ET AL.*
[http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/12pdf/12-96_6k47.pdf](http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/12pdf/12-96_6k47.pdf)

**Thursday, November 26th** NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Holiday

10. **Thursday, December 3rd**

Special Panel discussion

**Final Exam: Friday, December 11th**