Political Science 102G: The Laws of Politics: 
Term Limits, Campaign Finance, Blanket Primaries, and Redistricting

Prof. Thad Kousser    Summer Session II, 2013
tkousser@ucsd.edu       Tu/Th 11am-1:50pm
(858) 534-3239         HSS-2150

Required Reading

› All readings are either included in the course reader or (if noted) posted online at http://pscourses.ucsd.edu/102g/. The reader may be purchased from A.S. Soft Reserves.
› Office Hours: Thursdays 9:30-11am, SSB 369.

This class studies the intersection of election law, politics, and academia. We will look at major policy changes that affect the way that politics works, the legal decisions that govern them, and the academic research aimed at influencing policymakers and judges. Our four areas of focus will be campaign finance, redistricting, nominating primaries, and term limits. Students will make presentations summarizing cases and research, prepare legal briefs of their own, and argue their cases before a mock Supreme Court.

Course Assignments

› 20% of your grade will be based on your class attendance and participation.
› 25% will come from a 5-page legal brief due on Tuesday, August 20th.
› 20% is based on your presentation of one reading and discussion questions.
› 10% will come from your two-page reaction to “The Redistricting Game,” due on Tuesday, September 3rd.
› 25% comes from the oral argument that you will make on a fictional case before our mock Supreme Court on Thursday, September 5th.
› This class has no final exam.

Course Outline

Tuesday, August 6th. Introduction to the course and Campaign Finance Simulation.

Thursday, August 8th. The History of Campaign Finance Through the FECA 1974, Buckley v. Valeo and the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act


iii. The Buying Time Controversy. (Packet of press articles in Reader)

Tuesday, August 13th. McConnell v. FEC, Citizens United and the Future of Campaign Finance Reform


Thursday, August 15th. The Term Limits Movement and the Anti-Term Limits Drive.


iii. Court filing in Rippon, Bergeson, and Johnston v McPherson and McCormack (Reader).

iv. Read about the California initiatives Prop. 93 (http://igs.berkeley.edu/library/elections/proposition-93) and Prop. 28 (http://californiachioes.org/ballot-measures/proposition-28)

v. Reference Reading for Oral Arguments:

Tuesday, August 20th. The Role of the Government in Primaries and Proposition 198.


Thursday, August 22nd. The Top-Two Primary: Promise and Practice

i. Read about California Initiative Prop. 14 (http://californiachioices.org/ballot-measures/proposition-14)


Tuesday, August 27th. One-Person, One-Vote and Gerrymandering


Thursday, August 29th. In-class meetings to plan your Supreme Court Oral Argument

Tuesday, September 3rd. Minority Voting Rights.


iii. Shelby County v. Holder, Opinion of the Court (Chief Justice Roberts),
    pages 5-28 of http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/12pdf/12-96_6k47.pdf
iv. Shelby County v. Holder, Dissent (Justice Ginsberg), pages 29-68,
    http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/12pdf/12-96_6k47.pdf
v. J. Morgan Kousser, “Gutting the Landmark Civil Rights Legislation,”
    http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2013/06/26/gutting-the-landmark-
    civil-rights-legislation/.

Thursday, September 5th. Mock Supreme Court Oral Arguments.