

17.251
Fall 2016
Redistricting Exercise

Presentation date: October 26, 2016

Assignment summary

You will be assigned to teams of three to draw congressional districts of states that meet certain criteria. Some of these criteria will be “nice” and others will be “mean.” You will use Dave’s Redistricting App to draw and maps, making presentations on October 26.

Assignment details

You have been assigned into groups of three to draw a congressional district map of a state that strives to achieve an assigned goal. In all cases, your districts should obey the equal population constraint, with no district deviating more or less than 1% from perfect equality. The districts must also be contiguous. Otherwise, do what you need to do to reach your goal.

You will use Dave’s Redistricting App (DRA) to draw the districts (<http://gardow.com/davebradlee/redistricting/launchapp.html>). Note that the app will not run on the Chrome browser, but should still work on Firefox, Safari, and IE. You will need to download the Silverlight plugin for the app to work.

You will be assigned a state and a scenario for that state. The task is to draw as many congressional districts as that state was assigned after the 2010 district that satisfies the scenario. When you are finished, you should save three files and e-mail them to me by 5:00 p.m. on October 25. The three files are a “DRF” file (which saves the boundaries), the congressional district data as a CSV file, and a picture of the districting plan as a JPG file.¹ Name the files using the following convention: stateabbrv_scenario.ext. (For instance, if you are assigned the “compact” scenario for North Carolina, the DRF file will be named nc_compact.drf and the CSV file will be named nc_compact.csv.) If you have multiple plans that meet the criteria number them sequentially (e.g., nc_compact1.csv, nc_compact2.csv, etc.)

¹ Note that you can save your work as you go along by using the DRF files. This will be a useful way to share your work with your teammates if you do your work individually.

Senario	Team
North Carolina compact	Anthony Badea Wick Egan Nchinda Nchinda
North Carolina gerrymander	Evan Brown Druck Green Van Phu
Massachusetts compact	Evan Crane Jon Morrell Christopher Sanfilippo
Massachusetts gerrymander	Elizabeth Dougherty Alexander Moss Kristina Schmidt

Scenario definitions:

Compact: the districts should be compact and adhere as much as possible to county (North Carolina) or municipal (Massachusetts) boundaries. Unfortunately, the redistricting app doesn't have a way to calculate compactness measures, so you'll need to do this by eye.

Gerrymander: draw the districts to elect as many Republicans as possible in Massachusetts and as many Democrats as possible in North Carolina.