Law and the Political Process

Professor Guinier

3 Classroom Credits 41350-21 Winter
2 Clinical Credits

This course will consider regulation of the right to vote and to participate in the political process. We will examine constitutional constraints on legislative apportionment and districting and on access to the ballot. We will explore the relationship between democratic principles and the electoral participation of racial, language, and political minorities. We will study in depth the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, to understand how the law both shapes and has been shaped by social science research, political theory, historical forces, and practical considerations. We shall also briefly take up issues of media and the dialogue of democracy, referenda and initiatives, alternative election systems and the role of women in politics.

Constitutional Law is strongly recommended as a prerequisite for this course.

There will be a take-home examination. In addition to the exam, class participation will count in grading. Class formats will include lecture, Socratic dialogue, small-group participation, and student facilitation. There is an optional clinical component to this course.

A limited number of clinical placements will be available for this course. Students who wish to enroll in the class with a clinical component must do so through the Office of Clinical Programs. Please refer to the Clinical course section for drop/add deadlines and rules for all clinical courses.