

# POLS 103 A

# Comparative Politics

Class 17:

Electoral systems

# Plan for today

- Electoral systems:
  - District
  - Proportional representation
  - Mixed/hybrid
- Representation
- Executive-legislative relations

# Electoral systems

- District:
  - Single-member district:
    - First-past-the-post
    - Runoff
  - Multi-member district
- Proportional representation:
  - Open-list proportional representation
- Mixed/hybrid:
  - Alternative vote
  - Single transferable vote

# District systems

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  - **Runoff:**
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- **Multi-member district:**
  - *Electoral system in which electoral districts have more than one representative*



# What district system is this?

- In elections to the British House of Commons, the candidate supported by the plurality of voters in a constituency wins the election.
- In elections to the French National Assembly (lower chamber of Parliament), a second round of voting is held if no candidate in a constituency receives the majority of the votes.
- In elections to the Arizona House of Representatives, each electoral district elects two representatives.

# Proportional representation systems

- (Party-list) proportional representation
- Open-list proportional representation

# Proportional representation systems

- (Party-list) proportional representation:
  - *An electoral system in which voters choose a preferred party and seats are allocated to parties according to the percentage of the vote the party wins*
- Open-list proportional representation

# Proportional representation systems

- (Party-list) proportional representation:
  - *Electoral system in which voters choose a preferred party and seats are allocated to parties according to the percentage of the vote the party wins*
- Open-list proportional representation:
  - *Electoral system in which voters choose a candidate but votes are aggregated by political party to determine the allocation of seats across parties*

# What proportional representation system is this?

- In elections to the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies (lower chamber of the National Congress), voters choose individual candidates, but those candidates' votes are combined together with the other members of their party, and then seats are allocated based on the parties' performance.
- In elections to South Africa's National Assembly (lower chamber of Parliament), seats are allocated in ten multi-member constituencies via party lists.

# District vs. PR systems



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTMXaXc7dNc>

# Mixed and hybrid systems

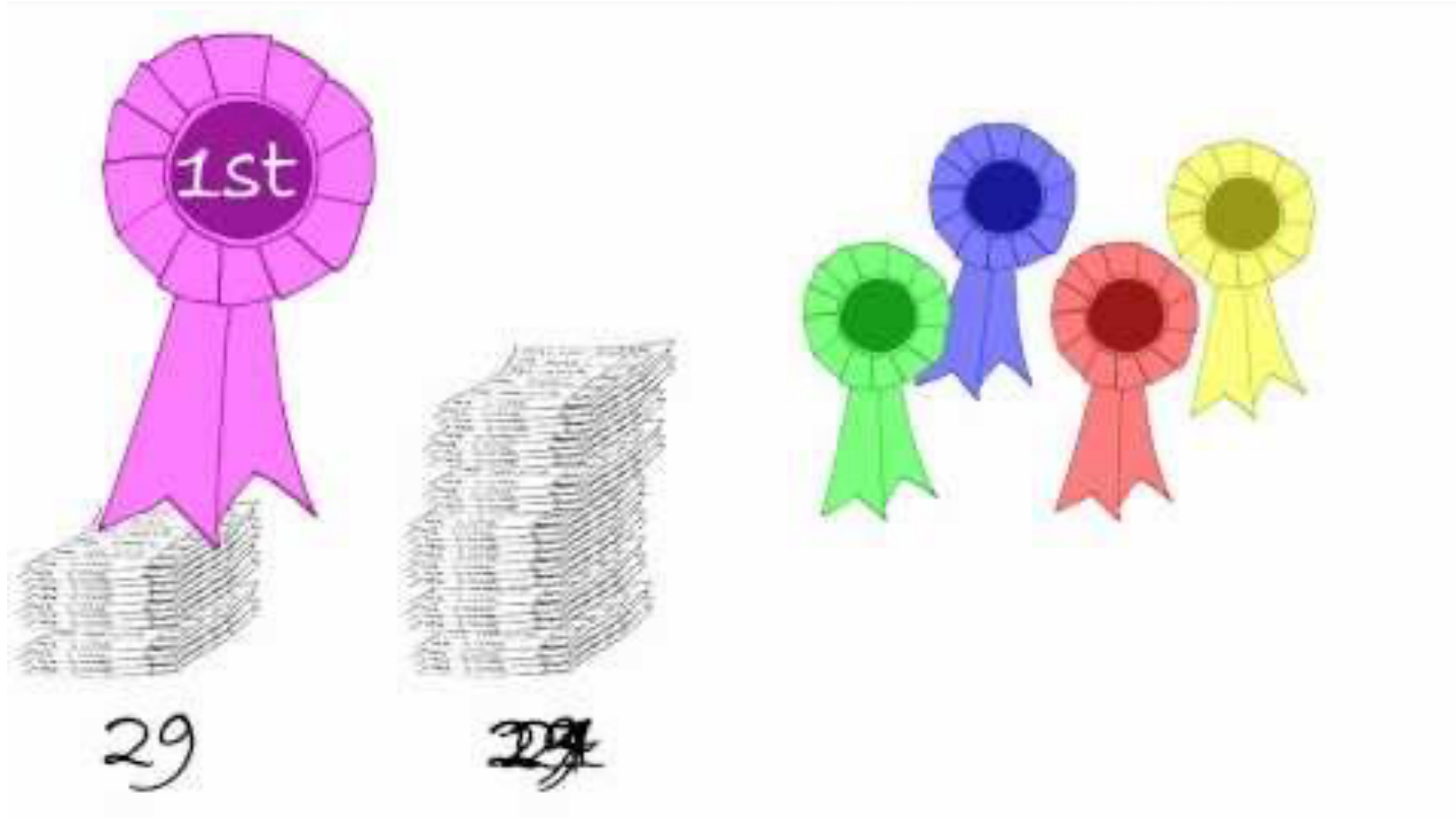
- Alternative vote
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# Mixed and hybrid systems

- Alternative vote:
  - *Voting system in which voters rank candidates and the votes of low-ranking candidates are reallocated until a winner is determined*
- Single transferable vote



# Alternative vote



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FstA45lxgFs>

# Mixed and hybrid systems

- Alternative vote:
  - *Electoral system in which voters rank candidates and the votes of low-ranking candidates are reallocated until a winner is determined*
- Single transferable vote:
  - *Electoral system in which voters rank candidates and the winners' surplus votes are reallocated to other, lower-ranking candidates until a slate of representatives is chosen*

# Single transferable vote



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P38Y4VG1Ibo>

# What mixed / hybrid system is this?

- In elections to the Australian Senate (upper chamber of Parliament), each voter has a single vote that is initially allocated to their most preferred candidate. If that candidate obtains the number of votes required to win a seat, the vote is transferred to other candidates.
- In elections to the Australian House of Representatives (lower chamber of Parliament), each voter ranks candidates and the votes of low-ranking candidates are reallocated until a winner is determined.

# Representation

- Apportionment
- Districting
- Gerrymandering
- Malapportionment

# Representation

- Apportionment:
  - *The process by which legislative seats are distributed among electoral districts*
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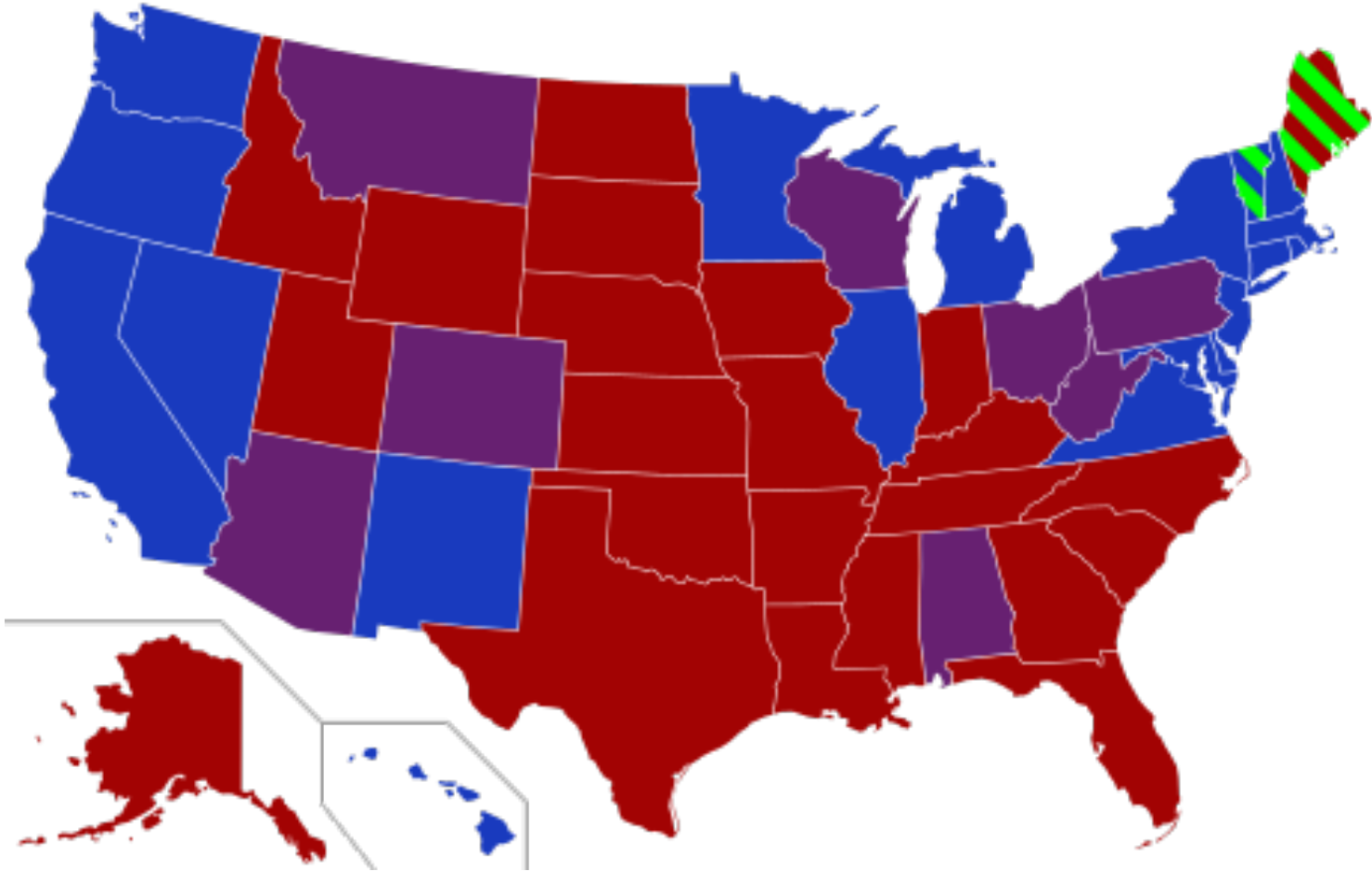
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  - *Creation of districts to achieve a desired political result*
- Malapportionment



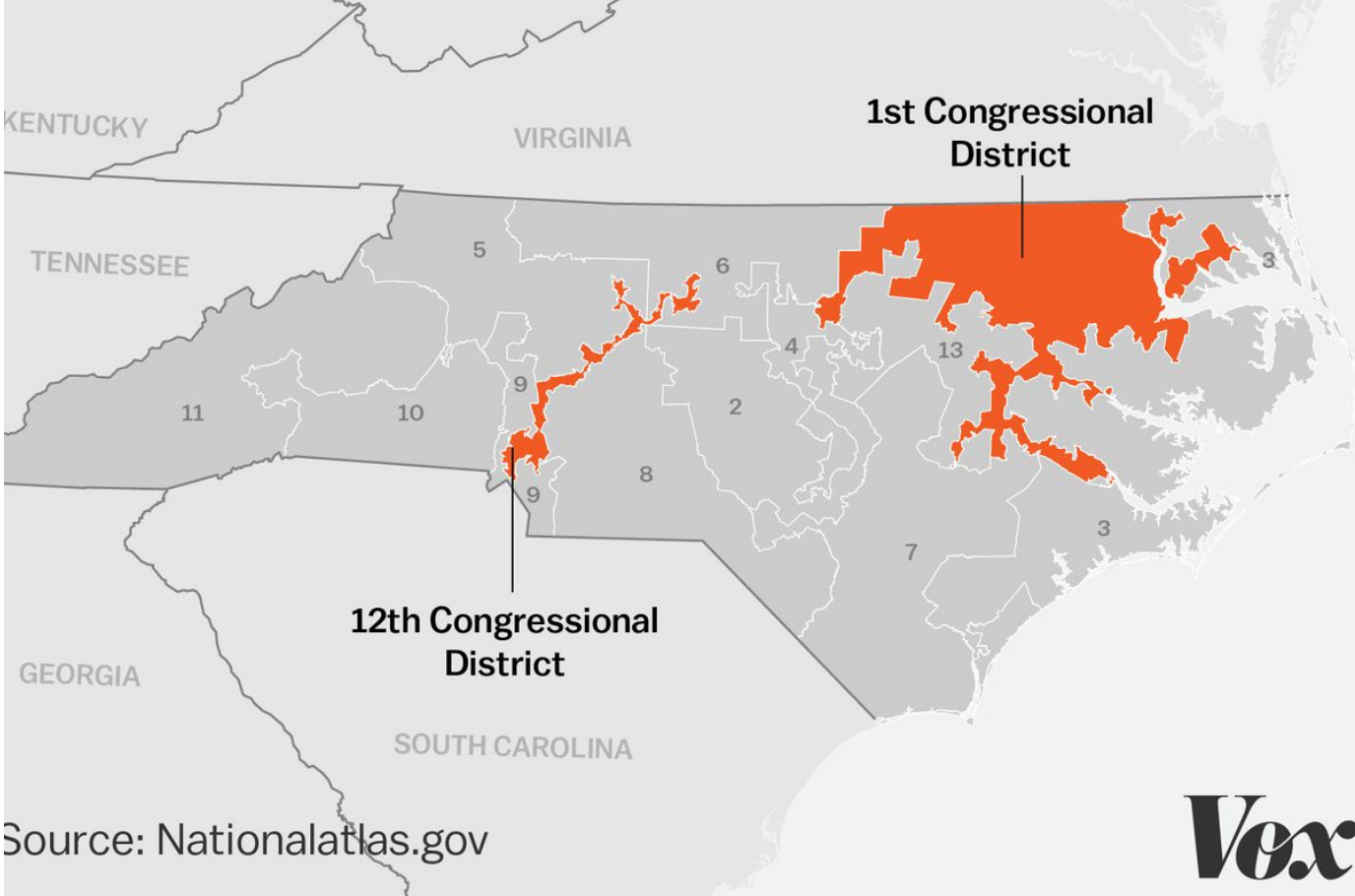
# Representation

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  - *The process by which districts or other geographic constituencies are created for elections*
- Gerrymandering:
  - *Creation of districts to achieve a desired political result*
- Malapportionment:
  - *Apportionment in which voters are unequally represented in a legislature*

Are these districts gerrymandered or malapportioned?



# Are these districts gerrymandered or malapportioned?



# Executive-legislative relations

- Officeholder selection
- Oversight
- Loss of confidence
- Impeachment

Why does this matter?

# Why electoral systems matter

- Representation → who is represented in government
- Party systems → who controls government:
  - Duverger's law

How do elected members of legislatures gain control over government?

# Next week

- Coalitions and coalition-building:
  - Minimum winning and grand coalitions
  - Winner-take-all vs. consociationalism
- Executives:
  - Heads of state and government
  - Executive structures
  - Executive functions and powers
  - Executives in Nigeria, Russia, and the United Kingdom



# Takeaways

- Electoral systems:
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  - Proportional representation
  - Mixed/hybrid
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