

GEOG 513: Professional Renewal (2 credits)
GeoCivics Institute: The Politics and Geographies of America's Electoral System
June 13 – 15, 2022

Instructor of record: Phil Klein
Professor, Department of Geography, GIS, and Sustainability

Three-day summer Educators' Institute for secondary social studies teachers
Funded by *UNC's William E. Hewitt Institute for History and Social Science Education* and the
Department of Geography & Environmental Studies, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs

Course Description

The *GeoCivics Educators' Institute* provides in-depth, hands-on exposure to historical analysis, spatial thinking, and instructional techniques focused on the challenges of creating fair electoral districts and ensuring fair elections. The sessions include timely professional development focused on misunderstood aspects of presidential electoral policy and legal history. These are topics germane to civics and geography curricula, and their importance has been highlighted by events since the 2020 election. Teacher participants will gain insight into how political scientists, geographers, mathematicians, and public officials engage in conversation about representation in a modern democratic republic. As often as possible, we will use Colorado as a case study. The process of drawing electoral districts here is a gateway for discussing geography, demographics, and political systems. It's also an opportunity to introduce secondary social studies students to the importance of geospatial technology and GIS. The focus is on helping teachers consider what it means to teach about the electoral process, as well as to solicit their ideas for ways to make the existing *GeoCivics* resource at UCCS useful through the 2030 census and redistricting cycle (geocivics.uccs.edu).

GEOG 513 will use content lectures, panel discussions with electoral officials, group discussions about teaching political issues using data, and hands-on activities to reinforce teachers' understanding of these concepts. Activities will demonstrate a data-driven, inquiry approach, using GIS tools for visualizing and analyzing redistricting controversies. After the institute, participants will submit two complete lesson plans showing how these analytical skills and controversial topics can be brought into secondary classrooms. Following editing, these lesson plans will be posted to the Hewitt Institute webpage for public access.

Course Objectives

- Develop a critical understanding of essential concepts in political science needed to understand the history and evolution of federal electoral laws as well as associated issues of voting rights.
- Improve skills in using the tools and methods of spatial analysis to investigate topics including electoral redistricting, political fairness, and spatial justice.
- Consider multiple perspectives on these electoral issues and best practices for teaching controversial political issues in the secondary social studies classroom.
- Practice acquiring and organizing geographic data for use in GIS-based classroom activities; incorporate relevant and grade-appropriate math skills into social studies lessons.

- Create inquiry-based lesson plans for the secondary classroom on these topics that meet existing Hewit Institute standards for publication on the website.

Course Requirements

- Daily attendance* and participation in activities and discussions during Institute
- Preparation of two classroom-ready secondary social studies lessons** (due by July 31, 2022)

* We plan to present the workshop in person at UCCS but will pivot to fully online if need be.

** Lessons must align with the standards in the participants' school districts, the state of Colorado, and national geography and civics standards as appropriate.

Reading List and Participant Resources

Special issues of *The Geography Teacher* on presidential elections (2016: volume 13, issue 3) and the U.S. Census (2019: volume 16, issue 3)

Bednarz, S. W. and Bednarz, R. S. (2019). Citizenship education in a spatially enhanced world. In E. E. Shin and S. W. Bednarz (eds.), *Spatial Citizenship Education: Citizenship through Geography*. Routledge: New York, pp. 59-71.

Jackson, J. and Theobald, R. (2021). Redistricting Colorado: What can we learn from how people have been grouped together in voting districts over the past 145 years? *History Colorado*, September 20, 2021, <https://www.historycolorado.org/story/2021/09/20/redistricting-colorado>

Joris, M. and Agirdag, O. (2019). In search of good citizenship education: A normative analysis of the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS). *European Journal of Education, Research, and Development Policy*. 54(2): 287-298. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12331>

Perez, C. (2022). Redistricting Process was Independent and Fair. *The Gazette*. January 23, 2022. https://gazette.com/opinion/guest-column-redistricting-process-was-independent-and-fair/article_17e33394-7acf-11ec-8208-271f415462ac.html

Rakich, N. (2022). Did Redistricting Commissions Live up to their Promise? *FiveThirtyEight*. January 24, 2022. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/did-redistricting-commissions-live-up-to-their-promise/>

Shin, M. (2015). Electoral Geography in the Twenty-First Century. In *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Political Geography*, pp. 281-296. Edited by J. Agnew, V. Mamadouh, A. J. Secor, and J. Sharp. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Theobald, R. (2021). The 2020 vote and beyond: Old situations, new complications. *Political Geography*, September 22, 2021, Virtual Forum, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2021.102501>

Theobald, R. (2019). Redistricting of the people, by the people, and for the people. *TEDxMashpeeED*, Mashpee, Massachusetts, April 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mx9uDXsesg8>

Method of Evaluation

S/U grading, with evaluation based on attendance and participation in activities and discussion and completion of satisfactory lesson plans

Schedule

Monday through Wednesday, June 13-15, 2022, at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs

Total of 24 hours of Institute contact time @ 8 hours per day, based on starting at 8:00 am and finishing at 5:00 pm each day (less ½ hour for breaks and ½ hour for lunch). A tentative schedule is included to show the overall Institute plan, although the sequence and exact titles of presentations are subject to change. The remaining 8 hours to justify 2 graduate credits is from preparing two lesson plans, in consultation with Institute staff, following the completion of the workshop itself.

Participants

Participation will be limited to 20 secondary-level teachers and pre-service students. Applications (via a Google form) are being solicited through local social studies educators' list-serves, especially targeting the Front Range, Pikes Peak, and Eastern Colorado regions. The registration deadline is April 15, 2022. Participants will pay \$130 each to UNC if they want to earn graduate credit, or they can complete the Institute without earning graduate credit. The Hewitt grant funding covers the cost of faculty stipends and provides breakfasts and lunches for each day, along with incidental expenses. Participants will receive a stipend from the Hewitt Institute upon satisfactory completion of the GeoCivics Educators' Institute and their required follow-up lesson plans.

Institute Staff

- Dr. Gregory Williams, Dept. of Political Science & Int'l. Affairs, Univ. of Northern Colorado
- Dr. Rebecca Theobald, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, UCCS
- Dr. Beth Malmskog, Department of Mathematics, Colorado College
- Dr. Phil Klein, Department of Geography, GIS, and Sustainability, Univ. of Northern Colorado
- Mr. Chris Elnicki, Executive Director, Colorado Center for Civic Learning & Engagement
- Mr. Matt Gottfried, Geospatial Technology Specialist, Univ. of Colorado, Colorado Springs
- *Guest speaker:* Mr. Carlos Perez, Chair, Colorado Independent Legislative Commission
- *Guest speaker:* Mr. Anton Schulzki, social studies teacher, Palmer HS and President, NCSS
- *Plus* policymakers, government officials, and community members (TBD)

Outline of Course Content (*sequence of presentations to be determined*)

- Teaching government functions and geographic perspectives in the secondary classroom
- Constitutional guidelines and historical changes to redistricting and electoral law
- Reapportionment after 2020 in Colorado and states without independent commissions
- Gerrymandering: race, partisanship, and the role of the judicial system
- Colorado demographics and 2020 Census data
- Cross-disciplinary ideas for teaching elections and government
- Guidelines for teaching contentious issues

- STEM connection: seeing electoral districts as a mathematical problem
- GIS in education, Esri GeoInquiries, and National Geographic Geo-Inquiry Process
- Introduction and practice with *GeoCivics* activities and resources
- Guidelines for lesson plans and time to begin lesson-plan creation
- Panel discussions with people from CO redistricting commission and local agencies

Statements

For the full list of all UNC syllabus statements, please see [here](#).

For the University of Colorado system's Land Recognition statement, please see mosaic.uccs.edu.

Proposed Institute Schedule

Breakfast and lunch will be offered to participants and speakers each day to provide three full 8-hour contact days of in-person professional development. To reach the four contact days to allow for 2 credit hours, participants will work with Institute staff afterward to develop their required lesson submissions.

Monday, June 13

7:30 am	Breakfast
8:00 am	Introduction and Welcome
8:30 am	History of Elections in the United States – Part 1, Greg Williams
9:45 am	Break
10:00 am	History of Elections in the United States – Part 2, Greg Williams
11:30 am	Debriefing and discussion: bringing electoral history into the classroom, Chris Elnicki
12:00 pm	Lunch
12:30 pm	Guest speaker from the Colorado Legislative Redistricting Commission, Carlos Perez
1:00 pm	When is drawing electoral districts a mathematical problem?, Beth Malmskog
2:45 pm	Break
3:00 pm	The Red-Blue Map and Geographic Sorting, Phil Klein
4:45 pm	Exit ticket and announcements
5:00 pm	Adjourn for the day
Evening	Assignment: One hour to outline idea for including these concepts in their classrooms

Tuesday, June 14

7:30 am	Breakfast
8:00 am	Overview of the Hewitt Institute and Guidelines for Lesson Creation, Phil Klein
9:45 am	Break
10:00 am	History of the Constitution's Role in Elections, Greg Williams
11:30 am	Debriefing and discussion: bringing electoral history into the classroom, Chris Elnicki
12:00 pm	Lunch
12:30 pm	Guest speaker from with direct experience with electoral districts (TBD)
1:00 pm	Exploring GeoCivics Activities and Resources - Part 1, Rebecca Theobald
2:45 pm	Break
3:00 pm	Exploring GeoCivics Activities and Resources - Part 2, Rebecca Theobald
4:45 pm	Exit ticket and announcements
5:00 pm	Adjourn for the day
Evening	Assignment: One hour using ArcGIS Online or another redistricting program to divide a state other than Colorado into electoral districts

Wednesday, June 15

- 7:30 am Breakfast
- 8:00 am Standards & cross-disciplinary ideas for teaching about elections, Chris Elnicki
- 9:45 am Break
- 10:00 am Intro to Esri and National Geographic Geo-Inquiries materials, Rebecca Theobald
- 11:30 am Debriefing and discussion: bringing electoral history into the classroom, Chris Elnicki
- 12:00 pm Lunch
- 12:30 pm Panel representing “communities of interest”* in Colorado Springs
- 1:30 pm Time for lesson planning and questions on
- 2:45 pm Break
- 3:00 pm Discussion: Challenges of teaching these topics, Anton Schulzki, facilitator
- 4:30 pm Complete exit survey
- 5:00 pm Institute adjourns

* “Communities of interest” is one of the traditional redistricting criteria. Others include equal population, compactness, contiguity, competitiveness, incumbent protection, minority protection, party advantage, and county/municipal splits.