

## **Sections of American Government:** Voting, Theory of Democracy, Elections, Jim Crow section of Civil Rights

### **Summary**

This activity simulates voting and can be done in 1 or 2 class periods. Students role play characters with different life circumstances related to whether a person votes, including employment, student, parental (whether they have kids or take care of elderly parents), voter registration, and citizenship status, as well as transportation ability. Participants encounter obstacles related to their character's life circumstances. I have posted 3 versions of the simulation. They simulate different types of elections:

1. a contemporary general election in a state without same day voter registration
2. a contemporary primary election in a state that uses closed primaries
3. an election in 1900 in the Jim Crow South

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

- I. Describe the role of voter registration in the voting process
- II. Explain how the voting process works
- III. Identify obstacles individuals face when voting
- IV. Develop strategies to overcome obstacles individuals face when voting
- V. Understand the pros and cons of Closed Primary Elections (version 2)
- VI. Understand the effects of the Jim Crow System and Sharecropping on voter participation (version 3)

### **Resources**

The voter profiles and outcomes in this folder.

### **Pre-Activity Student Work**

The simulations can be done with no student preparation.

### **Activity Description**

While any method of distributing the y and Voting Outcomes works, we print them on card stock and number the back of the Voting Outcomes and hand them out. An instructional Designer can probably figure out how to do it in the quiz/survey feature if you want it to do it online.

### **Profiles**

Students are randomly given a numbered profile containing characteristics related to whether a person votes, including employment, student, parental (whether they have kids or take care of

elderly parents), voter registration, and citizenship status, as well as transportation ability. See the “Profiles” files in the version of the simulation you want to use.

#### Voting Simulation

Students go to the instructor (best if seated at a table), show her/him their Profile, and receive a Voting Outcome based on their Profile (profiles are numbered so that they are linked to outcomes). The Voting Outcome explains whether or not they were able to vote and why they were not able to do so if they were not. See the “Voting Outcome” files in the version of the simulation you want to use.

#### **Reflection or debrief**

In small groups (5 or 6), instructors should have students discuss their characters’ experiences and brainstorm ideas about ways voting processes could be changed to minimize the obstacles they experienced to voting. From that instructors can have a class wide discussion about the ways students brainstormed to overcome the obstacles. For the contemporary primary and general election, issues such as mail-in voting, same day registration, election day as a holiday, early in person voting, open primaries, etc. would be good topics to discuss. For the Jim Crow simulation the instructor could focus on the later actions that were put in place to eliminate these barriers: 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment, Voting Rights Act, *Smith v. Allwright*, etc.