**Project #1:** You are expected to complete two projects this quarter in which you examine and evaluate current political events and realities. **Please work with at least one partner from our class** to read, research and develop answers. Then, write your own answers on your own. Your draft or final written answers will form the bases for our class discussion of elections and voting on Wednesday, October 27. (50 points).

**What?** For your first project you will examine and elaborate on several aspects of elections in the U.S. The foundation reading for this project is from the Primis Reader, Abramowitz, *The Strategic Environment of Elections.***

**How?** There are four topics listed below. In each case the primary reading is listed first----additional readings and sources are listed below in descending order of importance. **Pick two topics for investigation and summarize in approximately 2-3 typewritten pages each.** (25 points each)

1. **Drawing Lines:** In addition to Abramowitz, use the on-line article entitled, *The Great Election Grab,* plus the hand-out entitled, *Packing, Cracking, and Kidnapping.* **Explain** why drawing lines is so important in electoral politics. How is the current redistricting process affecting the politics of elections (who gets what, how, and when) in the US. Use examples. **Comment** on redistricting and gerrymandering.

2. **Registering, voting, counting:** In addition to Abramowitz, use the on-line material collected by the N.Y. Times, *Making Votes Count,* to explore the **obstacles** to registering and voting and the **issues** involved in how ballots are cast and counted. Explore and explain the controversies in general or pick one piece of this topic and prepare a summary and analysis. What are the controversies? What reforms have been made or suggested? **Comment** on the obstacles and issues.

3. **The Electoral College:** US voters do not elect the president of the US!!! Electors do! Why? With what consequences? Does the electoral college system reflect *liberal* or *democratic* values? **Should** something be done to revise or reform this system? Why? How? To answer these questions, focus on the hand-out article by Rakove, *The E-College in the E-Age,* and pursue the issue further through the listed links.

4. **Campaign Finance:** In addition to Abramowitz, use the on-line site for the Center for Public Integrity: *The Buying of the President, 2004.* Look through the brief summaries entitled:

   "Millionaires Raising Millions"
   "Lobbyists Bankrolling Politics"
   "Kerry’s Fundraising Shows Large Corporate Donations"
   "Big Oil Protects Its Interests"
How and Why is campaign financing a significant issue in US politics? How does it reveal the tension between liberalism and democracy? Use examples from the list above. Finally, what do you think about this information? Comment on the significance of this to the political process in the US.

When? Projects are due in class Monday, November 1