Gerrymandering

Jonathan Mattingly swings his legs up onto his desk, presses a key on his laptop and changes the results of the 2012 elections in North Carolina.

On the screen, flickering lines and dots outline a map of the state's 13 congressional districts, each of which chooses one person to the US House of Representatives. By tweaking the borders of those election districts, but not changing a single vote, Mattingly's maps show candidates from the Democratic Party winning six, seven or even eight seats in the race. In reality, they won only four — despite earning a majority of votes overall.