

# AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AP CONTENT MAP

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## UNIT 1 POLITICAL CULTURE

There are two major questions about government: Who governs? To what ends? This unit will focus on the first question, and will encourage students to develop their own answers to the second question. In order to choose among these theories or to devise new ones, one must examine the kinds of issues that do (and do not) get taken up by the political system and consider how they are resolved by the system. It is not enough to merely describe governmental institutions and processes.

Democratic theory recognizes that the answer to the question “Who governs?” is more complicated than “the people.” Participatory democracy has only been a reality in a limited number of cases. Representative democracy gives rise to an elite. Although Americans value liberty in both the political system and the economy, they believe equality is important principally in the political realm. In economic affairs, while a few people wish to see equality of results, many support equality of opportunity and inequality of results.

Not only is our culture generally supportive of democratic rule, it also has certain distinctive features that make our way of governing different from other democracies. Americans are preoccupied with their rights. This fact, combined with a political system that encourages the vigorous exercise of rights and claims, gives political life in the United States an adversarial character. Unlike the Japanese or the Swedes, Americans do not generally reach political decisions by consensus and we often do not defer to the authority of administrative agencies. United States politics, more than those of many other nations, has protracted conflict at every stage

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## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

After reading and reviewing the material in this chapter the student should be able to do each of the following:

- What are most important questions to be asked about government in any political system?
- What is meant by power, and by political power in particular?
- How can we distinguish between power, authority, and legitimacy?
- What are society's basic goals and how are they prioritized?
- What is the purpose of government?
- When is a government considered legitimate?
- What is the difference between a Unitary, Federal, and Confederal system?
- What is the difference between a Presidential and a Parliamentary system?
- Is there such a concept as American political culture? If so, what are its characteristics?
- What is Political Ideology, and how do you distinguish *right* from *left*?
- What is meant by Efficacy?

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## VOCABULARY

POLITICS  
POWER  
AUTHORITY  
LIBERAL  
PRESIDENTIAL  
PARLIAMENTARY  
DEMOCRACY

REPUBLIC  
AUTHORITARIANISM  
ARISTOCRACY  
OLIGARCHY  
EFFICACY  
GOVERNMENT  
HABEAS CORPUS

LEGITIMACY  
CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS  
POLITICAL CULTURE  
UNITARY  
FEDERAL  
CONFEDERAL  
CONSERVATIVE

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## UNIT 2 The CONSTITUTION and FEDERALISM

The Framers of the Constitution sought to create a government capable of protecting liberty and preserving order. The solution they chose—one without precedent at that time—was a government based on a written constitution which combined the principles of popular consent, separation of powers, and federalism. Popular consent was most evident in the procedure for choosing members of the House of Representatives. However, popular consent was limited by the requirements that senators be elected by their state legislatures and presidents by the Electoral College. Powers were separated among branches that then had to cooperate to effect change. Thus, separation of powers was joined with a system of checks and balances. This, it was hoped, would prevent tyranny, even by a popular majority.

Federalism came to mean a system in which both the national and state governments had independent authority. Allocating powers between these two levels of government and devising means to ensure that neither large nor small states would dominate the national government required the most delicate compromises at the Philadelphia convention. The Framers' decision to protect the institution of slavery was another compromise, which presumably helped to ensure the Constitution's ratification by states engaged in the slave trade. In the drafting of the Constitution and the struggle for its ratification, the positions people took were determined by a variety of factors. In addition to their economic interests, these included profound differences of opinion over whether the state governments or the national government would be the best protector of personal liberty. States participate actively both in determining national policy and in administering national programs. Moreover, they reserve to themselves or to localities within them important powers over such public services as schooling and law enforcement, and such important public decisions as land use. Federalism means that citizens living in different parts of the country will be treated differently. This applies not only to spending programs, but also to legal systems. Federalism also means that there are more opportunities to participate in the decision making. It allows people to influence what is taught in the schools, and to decide where highways and other government projects will be built

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

After reading and reviewing the material in this chapter the student should be able to do each of the following:

- Why did the colonists feel they were entitled to “natural rights”?
- What were the flaws of the Articles of Confederation?
- Which was a better plan for union? Virginia or New Jersey? Why?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the “Great Compromise”?
- Why is the separation of powers and federalism key parts of the Constitution?
- Was a bill of rights really necessary to include in the Constitution? Why was it added?
- What is the most important constitutional reform advocated today? Why?
- How have national and state powers been interpreted by the courts?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of federal grants-in-aid to the states?
- What is the difference between categorical grants or block grants?
- Do you support devolution of powers to state governments? Explain.

### VOCABULARY

NECESSARY AND PROPER  
AMENDMENT  
ANTI-FEDERALISTS  
BILL OF RIGHTS  
CHECKS AND BALANCES  
CONCURRENT POWERS  
ENUMERATED POWERS  
EX POST FACTO LAW  
FACTION  
FEDERALISTS  
ELASTIC CLAUSE  
GREAT COMPROMISE  
INALIENABLE  
LINE-ITEM VETO

NEW JERSEY PLAN  
RESERVED POWERS  
SEPARATION OF POWERS  
SHAY'S REBELLION  
VIRGINIA PLAN  
BLOCK GRANT  
CONDITIONS OF AID  
DEVOLUTION  
DUAL FEDERALISM  
HABEAS CORPUS  
GRANTS-IN-AID  
INITIATIVE  
MANDATES  
NULLIFICATION

POLICE POWER  
RECALL  
REFERENDUM  
BLOCK GRANT  
SPECIAL-ACT CHARTER  
GENERAL-ACT CHARTER  
DILLON'S RULE  
HOME-RULE CHARTER  
ORDINANCE  
STATE SOVEREIGNTY  
CATEGORICAL GRANTS  
REVENUE SHARING  
MUNICIPAL CHARTER  
*McCULLOCH v MARYLAND*

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## UNIT 3 CONGRESS and SPECIAL INTERESTS

Congress is a collection of individual representatives from state districts who are expected to serve the interests of their constituents, their personal political views, and the demands of party leaders. In serving those interests, members of necessity rely on investigating, negotiating, and compromise, all of which may annoy voters who want Congress to be “decisive.” The unpopularity of Congress is made worse by the recent tendency of its members to become ideologically more polarized.

The House has evolved through three stages. First, the House was dominated by powerful committee chairs and the Speaker. In the second stage, the House adopted rules that made it difficult for senior members to pass laws without public scrutiny, and even junior members could make their mark on legislation, so there was no need to defer to powerful party leaders. More floor amendments were offered and passed; in the Senate, filibusters became more common. The third stage was an effort to strengthen and centralize party leadership by allowing the Speaker to issue more restrictive rules and control bill referral to committees.

Meanwhile, the Senate remains as individualistic as ever—a place it has always been difficult to exercise strong leadership. Although Congress still remains primarily male and white, one of the most important changes is the increased ability of incumbents to get re-elected. This reflects the growth of constituent service, name recognition, and the weakening of party loyalties among voters.

Congress has always been jealous of its constitutional authority and independence. It has passed laws giving it a greater voice in the use of American forces abroad, and denied the president the right to refuse to spend money appropriated by Congress. These helped set the stage for sharper conflicts between Congress and the President.

The goals and tactics of interest groups reflect the interests of their members, the size of the groups, and the incentives with which they attract supporters. Because of the difficulty of organizing large numbers of people, groups often have to provide material benefits to members. The chief source of interest group influence is information, public support, and money. The right to lobby is protected by the Constitution, but the tax and campaign finance laws impose significant restrictions on how money may be used.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

After reading and reviewing the material in this chapter the student should be able to do each of the following:

- Is congress a more effective legislative body than parliament?
- Is congress accomplishing the goals the Framers set for them? Why or why not?
- How has Congress changed over the past 100 years? Is it more or less effective than in the past?
- What are the characteristics of members of Congress? Are they truly representative of America?
- Is the process for electing members of Congress fair? Is it representative?
- How does a bill becomes a law?
- What determines how a Congressman votes?
- How do interest groups form and what kinds of organizations Americans are most likely to join?
- What are the methods that interest groups use to formulate and carry out their political objectives?
- Why have courts have become an important forum for public-interest groups?

## VOCABULARY

CONGRESS  
BICAMERAL  
UNICAMERAL  
FILIBUSTER  
MARGINAL DISTRICT  
SAFE DISTRICT  
GERRYMANDER  
POLARIZATION  
PUBLIC BILL  
PRIVATE BILL  
DEMOCRAT  
TABLE  
REPUBLICAN  
COALITION  
REPRESENTATIONAL

COMMITTEES  
PETITION  
ORGANIZATIONAL  
ATTITUDINAL  
CIVILITY  
MAJORITY LEADER  
MINORITY LEADER  
WHIP  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE  
CAUCUS  
RESOLUTION  
REFERRAL  
MARK UP  
STEERING COMMITTEE

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE  
SELECT COMMITTEE  
JOINT COMMITTEE  
OVERRIDE  
QUORUM  
IDEOLOGY  
INTEREST GROUP  
MATERIAL INCENTIVE  
POLITICAL CUE  
LOBBYIST  
PURPOSIVE INCENTIVE  
RATINGS SYSTEM  
SOCIAL MOVEMENT  
PAC  
SOLIDARITY INCENTIVE

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## UNIT 4 PRESIDENT and POLICY

A president, chosen by the people and with powers derived from a written constitution, has less power than does a prime minister. The separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches, the distinguishing feature of the political system in the United States, means that the president must compete with Congress in setting policy.

Presidential power, though still sharply limited, has grown from its constitutional origins as a result of congressional delegation, the increased importance of foreign affairs, and public expectations. But while the presidential office has more power today, the president also faces higher expectations. Public opinion and congressional support are extremely important; and the president's primary power is the power to persuade.

Though the president seemingly controls a vast executive branch apparatus, only a small proportion of executive branch personnel are presidential appointees or nominees. In dealing with Congress, the president may be able to rely somewhat on party loyalty, but public support, high at the beginning of any new presidency, usually declines as the term proceeds. An independent judiciary with the power of judicial review can also be a potent political force. Every president must also cajole, award favors, and threaten vetoes to influence legislation. And consequently, each president must conserve and concentrate his resources to deal with a few matters of major importance.

Policy-making involves two stages—placing an issue on the governmental agenda and deciding what to do about that issue once it is on the agenda. The agenda steadily expands as the result of historical crises, interest-group activity, the competition for votes, and the operation of key institutions, especially the courts, the bureaucracy, and the mass media. Decision-making requires that a majority coalition be formed. The kinds of coalitions that form will depend in large measure on the nature of the issue, especially the perceived distribution of costs and benefits. We have identified four kinds of coalitions, or four distinctive political processes: majoritarian, client, interest-group, and entrepreneurial. The outcome of these political struggles will depend not only on who gains and who loses but also on the perceptions, beliefs, and values of key political actors.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

After reading and reviewing the material in this chapter the student should be able to do each of the following:

- What are the differences between the positions of president and prime minister?
- How did the Founders regard executive power?
- Sketch the evolution of the presidency from 1789 to the present.
- What are the various offices that make up the executive branch?
- How does presidential character relate to the achievements in office of various presidents?
- What are the formal and informal aspects of presidential power?
- How are issues placed on the political agenda for action?
- What are the four types of politics: majoritarian, client, interest group, and entrepreneurial?
- What are the roles of perceptions, beliefs, interests, and values in public policy formation?

## VOCABULARY

AD HOC STRUCTURE  
BULLY PULPIT  
CABINET  
CIRCULAR STRUCTURE  
DIVIDED GOVERNMENT  
ELECTORAL COLLEGE  
GRIDLOCK  
IMPEACHMENT

LAME DUCK  
LINE ITEM VETO  
POCKET VETO  
PYRAMID STRUCTURE  
UNIFIED GOVERNMENT  
VETO  
CLIENT POLITICS  
EXECUTIVE PRIVILEGE

ENTREPRENEURIAL  
POLITICS  
INTEREST GROUP POLITICS  
LOGROLLING  
MAJORITARIAN POLITICS  
POLITICAL AGENDA  
PORK BARREL  
PROCESS REGULATION

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## UNIT 5 PARTIES and ELECTIONS

A political party exists in three arenas: among the voters who psychologically identify with it, as a grassroots organization staffed and led by activists, and as a group of elected officials who seek to act upon its ideals. American parties are weak coalitions of local interests, and are becoming even weaker as voters no longer strongly identify with one of the major parties. The spread of the direct primary has made it harder for parties to control who is nominated for elective office, thus making it harder for the parties to influence the behavior of officeholders they once elected. Delegate selection rules, especially in the Democratic Party, have contributed to shifting the center of power away from officeholders and party regulars, and toward the parties' more ideological wings.

The two-party system is maintained by winner-take-all, plurality elections which makes voters fear that voting for a minor party will “waste” their vote. Minor parties have only affected the outcome of presidential elections when they have represented a splinter group within one of the major parties.

Political campaigns have become increasingly personalized, with little or no connection to formal party organizations. Party influence has decayed as a result of the widespread adoption of the direct primary, the increasing influence of the media, and the workings of campaign finance law. Today, candidates face the problem of creating a temporary organization that can raise money from large numbers of small donors and mobilize enthusiastic supporters; they must win the nomination by appealing to the party faithful, while not losing their ability to recruit moderate and independent voters in the general election.

Election outcomes can have important effects on public policy, especially during critical or “realigning” elections. On these occasions, new voters are coming into the electorate in large numbers, old party loyalties are weakening, and/or a major issue is splitting the majority party.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

After reading and reviewing the material in this chapter the student should be able to do each of the following:

- What is a political party?
- What is the difference in the structures of European and American parties?
- What are the four periods of party development in the United States?
- Why have political parties been in decline since the New Deal?
- What distinguishes major from minor parties?
- What are the major differences between the two main political parties in the United States?
- What are the differences between the party-oriented campaigns of the nineteenth century and the candidate-oriented ones of today?
- What are the major elements of successful campaigns?
- How important is campaign funding to election outcomes?
- What the major sources of funding are under current laws?.
- What are the processes for electing presidents and members of Congress, and do the two types of contests shape who runs and how it affects campaign strategy?
- What do Democrats and Republicans have to do to put together a successful national coalition to win an election?

## VOCABULARY

CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE  
REALIGNMENT  
IDEOLOGICAL PARTY  
PROGRESSIVES  
PARTY CHAIRMAN  
NATIONAL CONVENTION  
PERSONAL FOLLOWING  
PLURALITY SYSTEM  
POLITICAL MACHINE

POLITICAL PARTY  
SPLIT TICKET  
527 ORGANIZATIONS  
BLANKET PRIMARY  
ELCTORAL CAUCUS  
CLOSED PRIMARY  
COATTAILS  
GENERAL ELECTION  
OPEN PRIMARY

POSITION ISSUE  
PRIMARY ELECTION  
PROSPECTIVE VOTING  
RETROSPECTIVE VOTING  
RUNOFF PRIMARY  
SOFT MONEY  
VALENCE ISSUE

# AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AP CONTENT MAP



## UNIT 6 JUDICIARY and CIVIL RIGHTS & LIBERTIES

The Supreme Court originally focused on the establishment of national supremacy, but the scope of the courts' political influence has increasingly widened as various groups and interests have acquired access to the courts, as the judges have developed a more activist stance, and as Congress has passed more laws containing vague or equivocal language. Still, the Supreme Court controls its own workload and grants certiorari to a very small percentage of appellate cases. As a result, although the Supreme Court is the pinnacle of the federal judiciary, most decisions are made by the twelve circuit courts of appeals and the ninety-four federal district courts.

In the present era, the judiciary has deliberated about personal liberties. Civil liberties are fundamental to political beliefs and political culture in the United States. Among the most important protections are those in the First Amendment freedoms of Speech, Religion, and Assembly. Also important has been the struggle to strike a balance between the right of society to protect itself and the right of all people to be free from unreasonable searches and coerced confessions. The resolution of these issues by the courts is political in the sense that there are competing opinions about what is right or desirable.

Through action in the courts and in the Congress, the Civil Rights movement profoundly changed the nature of Americans' political participation. As revealed by the massive resistance to the early school desegregation decisions, Courts can accomplish little without strong political allies. However, they can accomplish a great deal, even in the face of adverse public opinion, when they have organized allies. The women's movement has somewhat paralleled the organizational and tactical aspects of the African American civil rights movement. However, the women's movement sought to repeal or reverse laws and court rulings that were allegedly designed to protect them. Abortion, affirmative action, and gay rights remain among the most divisive civil rights issues in United States politics today.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

After reading and reviewing the material in this chapter the student should be able to do each of the following:

- Discuss the tension between majority rule and minority rights.
- Explain how the structure of the federal system affects the application of the Bill of Rights.
- Describe how the Supreme Court has used the Fourteenth Amendment to expand Civil Liberties.
- Describe the test used by the Court to decide when freedom of expression may be qualified.
- How does *Miranda v. Arizona* illustrate the expansion of due process?
- Describe the strategies used by Civil Rights leaders.
- Discuss the NAACP strategy of litigation, and indicate why it was suited to the political circumstances
- Compare the results of *Brown v. Board of Education* with *Plessy v. Ferguson*.
- Describe the differences between the African American civil rights movement and the women's movement.
- Explain what is meant by "affirmative action,"
- What is meant by "gay rights"? Discuss the role of the states in the gay rights movement.

### VOCABULARY

WALL-OF-SEPARATION  
EXCLUSIONARY RULE  
SEARCH WARRANT  
PROBABLE CAUSE  
GOOD-FAITH EXCEPTION  
ESTABLISHMENT CLAUSE  
LIBEL  
OBSCENITY  
IMMINENT DANGER  
LEAST RESTRICTIVE MEANS  
SYMBOLIC SPEECH  
DUE PROCESS  
EQUAL PROTECTION  
INCORPORATION  
PRIOR RESTRAINT  
CLEAR & PRESENT DANGER

SUSPECT CLASSIFICATION  
STRICT SCRUTINY  
SEPARATE BUT EQUAL  
DE JURE SEGREGATION  
DE FACTO SEGREGATION  
*PLESSY V FERGUSON*  
*BROWN V BOARD*  
CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE  
13TH AMENDMENT  
SEXUAL HARASSMENT  
QUID PRO QUO  
*GRISWOLD V CONNECTICUT*  
*ROE V WADE*  
*SCHENK v US*  
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION  
COMPENSATORY ACTION

REVERSE DISCRIMINATION  
*REGENTS V BAKKE*  
*LAWRENCE V TEXAS*  
DEFENSE OF MARRIAGE ACT  
*GITLOW V NEW YORK*  
*CANTWELL V CONNECTICUT*  
*EVERSON V BOARD*  
*GIDEON V WAINWRIGHT*  
*MIRANDA V ARIZONA*  
*TIMES V SULLIVAN*  
*MILLER V CALIFORNIA*  
*TINKER V DESMOINES*  
*HAZEL V KUHLMIEER*  
*LEMON V KURTZMAN*  
*MAPP v OHIO*  
*US v LOPEZ*