



American Government: Institutions and Policies, 17e

Chapter 1: The Study of American Government

Ice Breaker: Rules of Inclusive Engagement

How can we include everyone when we discuss course material?

What are examples of inclusive language?

How should we handle disagreeing with someone else?

What is the difference between disagreeing and being offensive?

How can we ensure discussions are *productive*, as well as inclusive?

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

LO 1-1: Explain how politics drives democracy.

LO 1-2: Discuss five views of how political power is distributed in the United States.

LO 1-3: Explain why “who governs?” and “to what ends? ” are fundamental questions in American politics.

LO 1-4: Summarize the key concepts for classifying the politics of different policy issues.

Why Does Government Matter to Me?

How does the government maintain social order?

How does the government provide for general welfare



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Politics and Democracy

Politics

The activity by which an issue is agitated or settled

Power

The ability of one person to get another person to act in accordance with the first person's intentions.

Authority

The right to use power.

Defining Democracy

Types of Democracy

- Legitimacy
- What gives American democracy legitimacy?

Democracy: The rule of the many

Political authority conferred by law or by a state or national constitution.

Politics and Democracy: Let's Discuss!

Should the federal government do more to ensure protests are peaceful?

- Who decides the role or response of the government?
- How is the government's response decided?
- Does everyone share equal influence in decision making?

Should the federal government take on more responsibility to prevent public health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic?

- How much responsibility is too much?
- Who or what decides how much responsibility the government has?
- Do we share equal influence?

Political Power in America: Five Views (1 of 2)

Class View

View that the government is dominated by capitalists

Power Elite View

View that the government is dominated by a few top leaders, most of whom are outside of government.

Bureaucratic View

View that the government is dominated by appointed officials.

With which view do you most align?

Political Power in America: Five Views (2 of 2)



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Pluralist View

Competition among all affected interests will shape public policy

Creedal Passion View

Morally impassioned elites drive important political changes

Word Cloud Activity: What is the most important political issue to you?



Evelyn Hockstein/The Washington Post/Getty Images

Who Governs? To What End?

Which groups shape the government and drive policymaking in the United States?

- Interest groups
- Voters
- Political Parties
- Corporations

Political Agenda: Issues that people believe require governmental action.

Does our political agenda reflect a particular group?

What Influences Our Political Agenda?

- Shared political values
- The weight of custom and tradition
- The importance of events—wars, terrorist attacks
- Terms of debate

How did these factors shape the political agenda we developed as a class?

Self-Assessment: Who or What Else Influences the Political Agenda?

1. Groups
2. Government Institutions
3. Media
4. Actions by States

The Politics of Different Policy Issues



Ryan Rahman/Alamy Stock Photo

Let's Think About the Federal Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

What factors influenced the politics around this issue?

- The Cost
 - Human lives
 - The Economy
 - Health of Adults and Children
- The Benefit
 - Lives saved
 - Jobs Saved
 - Businesses Saved

Four Types of Politics

Type	Description	Perceived Costs	Perceived Benefits
Majoritarian Politics	The influence of the majority	Distributed	Distributed
Interest Group Politics	The influence of a particular group	Concentrated	Concentrated
Client Politics	The influence of a particular group	Distributed	Concentrated
Entrepreneurial Politics	The influence of a particular group or person	Concentrated	Distributed

Policy Dynamics: Inside/Outside the Box

What issues fall outside the box?

- Legalization of marijuana
- Policies involving reproductive health?
- Others?

Why Does Government Matter to Me? Let's Revisit!



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Self Assessment: Let's Review

- What type of democracy is the United States?
- What are the five views of American politics?
- Why were the framers skeptical of direct democracy?
- Who or what influences the political agenda?
- What are the four types of politics?

Summary

Now that the lesson has ended, you should be able to:

- Explain how politics drives democracy.
- Discuss five views of how political power is distributed in the United States.
- Explain why “who governs?” and “to what ends? ” are fundamental questions in American politics.
- Summarize the key concepts for classifying the politics of different policy issues.