



American Government

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Politics Today



Ford ★ Bardes ★ Schmidt ★ Shelley

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American Government and Politics Today

Nineteenth Edition

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A Letter to Instructors

Dear American Politics Instructors

Americans are cynical about our current national politics but remain strongly invested in our democratic ideals and values. College students are turned off by a government that they perceive is stuck in neutral, but they are activated by ideals of justice, service, and community. From school strikes to campus food pantries, students today are taking action. This edition of *American Government and Politics Today* will help you move your students from the sidelines of politics to full engagement by equipping them with the knowledge and analytical skills needed to shape political decisions at the local, state, and national levels. Based on review feedback, we include a strong emphasis on the power of social media to engage and connect people and to organize action. The solid content on institutions and the processes of government included in previous editions remains. The features in each chapter have been updated to help you bring contemporary politics to life in your classroom while demonstrating to students why politics matters. Each chapter includes the most recent data available; figures and tables are meant to be studied and linked to concepts introduced in the text. Throughout the book, images and political cartoons include long-form captions to promote critical thinking and application of key concepts.

We believe that part of America's cynicism stems from a divided America in which not everyone enjoys equal access to the opportunities promised by the American Dream. The pandemic exposed economic inequities in access to jobs, health care, food, shelter, and education. A spring spent in lockdown gave way to a summer of mass protests for racial justice and against police brutality. Climate change brought fires, strong storms, flooding, and drought across the United States. More than ever, states looked to the federal government for assistance, making the 2020 presidential election a referendum of sorts on the role, size, and scope of government. The vote became an opportunity to exercise a degree of control for many people, even as the pandemic made how to cast a vote less clear.

Knowledge is power, but engaged citizens also require a skill-set to preserve democracy and the disposition to do so. In this edition, we have integrated content and skill building within the context of compelling current issues. Each chapter begins with a "What if...?" feature presenting students with hypothetical scenarios just close enough to reality to be convincing. The "Politics in Practice" feature highlights the ways people engage in politics to make change. "Beyond Our Borders" offers a comparative look at an element of government, policy, or practice in another area of the world. These active learning opportunities bring to life the issues facing our nation and communities and give students the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills.

New to This Edition

- This edition has been substantially revised and updated to include the most recent data, issues, and engaging examples of politics, politicians, and

policies. Following the 2020 presidential election, the text has been updated to include issues and examples from the new administration. In response to reviewers, we have created more points of connection between chapters to present a more coherent understanding of American government.

- The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on daily life in America, political decisions, government actions, the economy, and foreign affairs are woven throughout every chapter. For example, Chapter 3 on Federalism analyzes the challenge of coordinating a national response when states and cities independently exercised their police powers to issue “stay at home” orders more quickly and effectively. Chapter 4 on Civil Liberties explores the place of individual rights during a public health crisis where the interest of the community to limit transmission of the virus requires individual sacrifice.
- The features in each chapter have been revised to include the most pressing contemporary issues including climate activism, immigration and border control, the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong, Black Lives Matter protests, Brexit, gender equality and pay equity, state-based voter suppression strategies, and demands for diversity, equity, and inclusion on college campuses.
- An “Election 2020” box in each chapter guides students to think about the ways an election can change American politics or reinforce the status quo. Issues germane to the chapter are highlighted within the context of the most recent national election.
- The outcome of the 2016 presidential election motivated scores of people to enter politics as first-time candidates in the 2018 midterm elections, resulting in a younger, more diverse group of elected officials at all levels, particularly in the U.S. Congress. Women were especially motivated to seek public office to work for pay equity and improve access to health care. Images and examples throughout the book intentionally reflect this growing diversity in American politics.
- Recent court decisions on gerrymandering, immigration, DACA, transgender employment rights, abortion, executive power, religion and schools, the census, and the Electoral College are included in each chapter as appropriate.

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Seeing students actively engage with the topics addressed in this book and witnessing an eagerness to learn more about the issues currently facing our nation are exciting for any faculty member, particularly when many students will only take one undergraduate course in political science. We hope

that this text will be an effective tool in your efforts to reach students, encourage their curiosity and motivate them to engage with their communities and our nation's politics.

Sincerely,

Lynne E. Ford (FordL@cofc.edu)

Barbara A. Bardes

Steffen W. Schmidt

Mack C. Shelley, II

A Letter to Students

Dear Students

Whether you are a political science major, an international affairs major, or are simply taking this course to fulfill a general requirement, we hope that you will enjoy this book and all of its features. *American Government and Politics Today* includes the most recent results of national elections, global events and foreign policy, and Supreme Court decisions that affect your life. In every chapter, resources are included to help you go online or use social media to investigate the issues that capture your interest. American politics is dynamic, and it is our goal to provide you with clear discussions of the institutions of national government and the political processes so that you can be informed and understand the issues as you participate in our political system.

The federal government may seem remote from your daily life as a student, but that could not be further from the truth! The issues facing the nation today are serious and require your attention. Decisions made in Washington, DC, and in your state capital can determine, for example, the rate of interest that you will pay on student loans, who must serve in the military, or the level of investment in higher education relative to sustaining pensions and Medicare. The COVID-19 pandemic may have interrupted your education or required you to access your classes virtually; you or a family member may have lost a job when businesses closed to prevent community spread of the virus. The pandemic made economic, social, racial, and political inequities more visible. The murder of George Floyd by white police officers in Minneapolis led to renewed demands for an end to race discrimination and white supremacy. Mass protests in cities across the nation and around the world galvanized people of all ages and races to fight for the rights of all people to enjoy the opportunities promised by the American Dream. Black Lives Matter moved from the margins to the center of our national reckoning with race. Is it still possible for everyone to achieve the American Dream? How did President Trump's election as president reflect a sense that some Americans have been left behind? Will Congress take up climate issues, address the nation's crumbling infrastructure, and take steps to rebuild an economy decimated by COVID-19? These are just a few of the questions raised by this text. The promise of America is very much alive, but our future is far from certain. Understanding how politics works and knowing your rights as a citizen are critical to shaping the nation's future. Political questions rarely have simple answers. Political issues invite multiple perspectives shaped as much by gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation as by political party or ideology. Throughout this text, we will try to equip you with what you need to develop your own political identity and perspective so that you can fully engage in the national conversation about our shared future.

This edition's interactive features will help you succeed in your coursework as well as to understand the role of politics in the modern world:

- **Learning Objectives:** These objectives begin each chapter and serve as your "take-aways," highlighting the most important content, concepts, and skills.

This will make it easy to check your own learning as you work through each chapter.

- **Margin Definitions:** These make it easy to double-check your understanding of key terms within the chapters.
- **What If:** This chapter-opening feature will get you thinking about why politics and government matter to you and your community using hypothetical cases.
- **Politics in Practice:** This feature will help you see politics and popular culture in a new way. In each chapter you will find examples of people using politics to make a change. For example, Chapter 1 features Greta Thunberg and climate activism, Chapter 5 explores demands for diversity, equity, and inclusion on college campuses, while Chapter 7 highlights campus-based sustainability initiatives.
- **Chapter Summaries:** Revised for this edition, the end-of-chapter summaries link back to a Learning Objective to better test your understanding of the topics at hand and help you prepare for assignments and exams.
- In each chapter, images, figures, tables, and political cartoons have been carefully selected to reflect the diversity of American politics and to aid you in applying the concepts you are learning in your class.
- **Print, Media, and Online Resources:** Each chapter offers a brief list of additional resources, including podcasts and movies, that will allow you to explore further the topics that interest you.

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Information is power: when you are well informed, you can participate in discussion with your friends, family, and colleagues and debate ideas with confidence. You can influence events rather than watching as a passive bystander. The future of our Republic depends on your full engagement. You are the next generation of leaders, and we wish you well.

Sincerely,

Lynne E. Ford (FordL@cofc.edu)

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As an instructor, MindTap is here to simplify your workload, organize and immediately grade your students' assignments, and allow you to customize your course with current events videos and news sources as you see fit. Through deep-seated integration with your learning management system (LMS), grades are easily exported, and analytics are pulled with the click of a button. MindTap can be used fully online with its interactive eBook for *American Government and Politics Today*, or in conjunction with the printed text.

Instructor Companion Website for Ford/Bardes/ Schmidt/Shelley, *American Government and Politics Today*, Nineteenth Edition

ISBN: 9780357458907

This Instructor Companion Website is an all-in-one resource for class preparation, presentation, and testing. Accessible through Cengage.com/login with your faculty account, you will find available for download: book-specific Microsoft® PowerPoint® presentations, a Test Bank compatible with multiple learning management systems (LMSs), an Instructor Manual, and more.

The Test Bank, offered in Blackboard, Moodle, Desire2Learn, and Canvas formats, contains learning objective-specific multiple-choice and essay questions for each chapter. Import the test bank into your LMS to edit and manage questions, and to create tests.

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In preparing this edition of *American Government and Politics Today*, we have received superb guidance and cooperation from a team of publishers and editors at Cengage. We have greatly appreciated the collaboration and encouragement given by Product Manager Lauren Gerrish. Content Manager David Martinson deserves our thanks for keeping us moving toward deadlines and for his well-considered suggestions for improvement. We are also indebted to Tessa Ditonto and David Andersen, of Durham University, for their contributions to revising the later chapters.

Any errors remain our own. We welcome comments and suggestions from instructors and students alike who are using the book. Their suggestions have helped to strengthen the book and make it more helpful to students and faculty in the changing world of higher education.

Reviewers

We would also like to thank the instructors who have contributed their valuable feedback through reviews of this text:

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Career Opportunities: Political Science

Introduction

It is no secret that college graduates are facing one of the toughest job markets in the past fifty years. The pandemic radically transformed the American economy and future job prospects. Despite this challenge, those with a college degree are better equipped to face an uncertain job market than those without a degree. One of the most important decisions a student has to make is the choice of a major; many consider future job possibilities when making that call. A political science degree is incredibly useful for a successful career in many different fields, from lawyer to policy advocate, pollster to humanitarian worker. Employer surveys reveal that the skills that most employers value in successful employees—critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and clarity of verbal and written communication—are precisely the tools that political science courses should be helping you develop. This brief guide will help spark ideas for what kinds of careers you might pursue with a political science degree and the types of activities you can engage in now to help you secure one of those positions after graduation.

Careers in Political Science

Law and Criminal Justice

Do you find that your favorite parts of your political science classes are those that deal with the Constitution, the legal system, and the courts? Then a career in law and criminal justice might be right for you. Traditional jobs in the field range from lawyer or judge to police or parole officer. Since 9/11, there has also been tremendous growth in the area of homeland security, which includes jobs in mission support, immigration, travel security, as well as prevention and response.

Public Administration

The many offices of the federal government combined represent one of the largest employers in the United States. Flip to the bureaucracy chapter of this textbook and consider that each federal department, agency, and bureau you see looks to political science majors for future employees. A partial list of such agencies would include the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Federal Trade Commission. There are also thousands of staffers who work for members of Congress or the Congressional Budget Office, many of whom were political science majors in college. This does not even begin to account for the multitude of similar jobs in state and local governments that you might consider as well.

Campaigns, Elections, and Polling

Are campaigns and elections the most exciting part of political science for you? Then you might consider a career in the growing industry based around

political campaigns. From volunteering and interning to consulting, marketing, and fundraising, there are many opportunities for those who enjoy the competitive and high-stakes electoral arena. For those looking for careers that combine political knowledge with statistical skills, there are careers in public opinion polling. Pollsters work for independent national organizations such as Gallup and YouGov, or as part of news operations and campaigns. For those who are interested in survey methodology, there are also a wide variety of non-political career opportunities in marketing and survey design.

Interest Groups, International, and Nongovernmental Organizations

Is there a cause that you are especially passionate about? If so, there is a good chance that there are interest groups out there that are working hard to see some progress made on similar issues. Many of the positions that one might find in for-profit companies also exist in their nonprofit interest group and nongovernmental organization counterparts, including lobbying and high-level strategizing. Do not forget that there are also quite a few major international organizations—such as the United Nations, the World Health Organization, and the International Monetary Fund—where a degree in political science could be put to good use. While competition for those jobs tends to be fierce, your interest in and knowledge about politics and policy will give you an advantage.

Foreign Service

Does a career in diplomacy and foreign affairs, complete with the opportunity to live and work abroad, sound exciting for you? Tens of thousands of people work for the State Department, both in Washington, DC, and in consulates throughout the world. They represent the diplomatic interests of the United States abroad. Entrance into the Foreign Service follows a very specific process, starting with the Foreign Service Officers Test (FSOT)—an exam given three times a year that includes sections on American government, history, economics, and world affairs. Being a political science major is a significant help in taking the FSOT.

Graduate School

While not a career, graduate school may be the appropriate next step for you after completing your undergraduate degree. Being awarded a Ph.D. or master's degree in political science could open additional doors to a career in academia, as well as many of the professions mentioned earlier. If a career as a researcher in political science interests you, you should speak with your advisors about continuing your education.

Preparing While Still on Campus

Internships

One of the most useful steps you can take while still on campus is to visit your college's career center to explore internships in your field of interest. If you aren't sure where your interests lie, an internship allows you to try out various fields. Knowing what you don't like is as important as learning what you do.

enjoy doing. Not only does an internship give you experience, it can lead to job opportunities later down the road and add to your resume.

Skills

In addition to your political science classes, the following skills will prove useful as a complement to your degree:

Writing: Like anything else, writing improves with practice. Writing is one of those skills that is applicable regardless of where your career might take you. Virtually every occupation relies on an ability to write clearly, concisely, and persuasively.

Public Speaking: Many people are afraid to speak in front of a group, but oral communication is a vital in nearly every profession. You can practice this skill in a formal class setting or through extracurricular activities that get you in front of a group.

Quantitative Analysis: The Internet increases exponentially the amount of data gathered, and the nation is facing a drastic shortage of people with basic statistical skills to interpret and use this data. A political science degree can go hand-in-hand with courses in introductory statistics.

Foreign Language: One skill that often helps a student or future employee stand out in a crowded job market is the ability to communicate in a language other than English. Solidify or set the foundation for your verbal and written foreign language communication skills while in school.

Student Leadership

One attribute that many employers look for is “leadership potential,” which can be tricky to indicate on a resume or cover letter. One way to do so is to include on your resume and/or cover letter a demonstrated record of involvement in clubs and organizations, preferably in a leadership role. Student government is often listed as the primary source of leadership experience, but most student clubs allow you the opportunity to demonstrate your leadership skills.

Conclusion

We hope that this discussion has sparked your ideas about potential future careers. As a next step, visit your college’s career placement office, which is a great place to further explore what you have read here. You might also visit your college’s alumni office to connect with graduates who are working in your field of interest. Political science opens the door to a lot of exciting careers. Have fun exploring the possibilities!

American Government and Politics Today

Nineteenth Edition

One Republic—A Divided Country

1



simonkr/Stock/Getty Images

One World Trade Center, built at Ground Zero of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, was designed to represent the resilience of the American spirit. Including its

mast, the building's height is 1,776 feet, making it the tallest building in New York City.

Learning Objectives After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

- **LO 1-1** Define the institution of government and the process of politics.
- **LO 1-2** Identify the political philosophers associated with the “social contract” and explain how this theory shapes our understanding of the purpose and essential functions of government and the role for individuals and communities in the United States.
- **LO 1-3** Describe the U.S. political culture and identify the set of ideas, values, and ways of thinking about government and politics shared by all.
- **LO 1-4** Compare and contrast types of government systems and identify the source of power in each.
- **LO 1-5** Define political ideology and locate socialism, liberalism, conservatism, and libertarianism along the ideological spectrum.
- **LO 1-6** Apply understanding of the purpose of government, the essential functions of government, and the U.S. political culture to evaluate government’s ability to meet new challenges over time.

Background

On February 9, 2020, Antarctica experienced the single hottest day ever recorded, with a temperature of 69.35 degrees Fahrenheit (20.75 degrees Celsius). According to NASA, Antarctica's two fastest-shrinking glaciers (the Pine Island Glacier and Thwaites Glacier) contain enough vulnerable ice between them to raise sea levels by 4 feet (1.2 meters). More than 8.6 million Americans live in areas susceptible to coastal flooding. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) identified flooding as a factor in more than 90 percent of disaster-related property damage in the United States.

In the same week, the World Health Organization officially named the novel coronavirus first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China, as COVID-19. Chinese health officials reported tens of thousands of cases of COVID-19 infection. The immediate economic impact of the virus was felt worldwide as factories located within Chinese quarantine zones sat idle. Electronics producers, drug manufacturers, and the auto industry are particularly reliant on the Chinese supply chain for parts. The virus spread quickly around the world. In March the number of confirmed cases worldwide exceeded 100,000 and the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. U.S. universities called home students studying abroad, emptied residence halls and campuses, and moved spring and summer instruction online. Festivals, conferences, and major sporting events were cancelled. Governors ordered state residents to stay at home, effectively shuttering many businesses. More than 39 million unemployment claims had been filed in the United States by May. Confirmed cases around the world numbered more than 5.3 million. On May 27, the U.S. death toll reached 100,000. By September, more than 30 million cases were recorded around the world with one-quarter of those occurring in the U.S. The number of U.S. deaths surpassed 200,000 a month before the presidential election. Countries such as Germany, Taiwan, New Zealand, and South Korea that adopted aggressive quarantine, testing, and contact tracing strategies experienced far fewer deaths.

The Essential Functions of Government

The Preamble to the U.S. Constitution articulates six reasons for establishing government. These translate well to the essential functions of government: provide security and protection, promote the general welfare, manage and resolve conflict, secure the blessings of liberty, and provide public goods that might not be available otherwise. Governments around the world take different forms (e.g., totalitarian, authoritarian, direct or indirect democracy) but a government by definition is an authority empowered to make decisions, control resources, and direct the

activities of the citizens within their borders. We believe governments are necessary because a society without rulers and rules quickly descends into chaos, a condition seventeenth-century philosopher Thomas Hobbes described as "solitary poor, nasty, brutish and short."¹ We rely on governments in times of crises; indeed, people expect the government to respond effectively and efficiently. Coordinating a response across the levels of government in our federal system (i.e., national, state, and local levels) is tough enough, not to mention the need to coordinate a global response with other nations. Issues such as climate change and a rapidly spreading, infectious disease do not respect national borders and call upon governments to cooperate.

Governments Without Borders?

The United Nations is perhaps the best-known example of an intergovernmental organization dedicated to international cooperation in promoting peace and security. The UN was established in 1945 in the aftermath of World War II and today includes 193 member states. According to Pew Research Center polling, a majority of citizens in thirty-two countries surveyed have a positive view of the UN; young people ages 18 to 29 are most favorable.² As the world faces global challenges such as climate change, an interdependent manufacturing supply chain, connected economies, and infectious diseases spread by global travelers, will a new form of governance be required, or will existing governments agree to cooperate in new ways?

Climate change provides an example of multinational cooperation, although the problem is far from solved. The United Nations Climate Action Summit 2019 brought together representatives from government, business, science, and climate activists to measure progress on goals articulated in the Paris Agreement to limit global warming. The Youth Climate Action Summit brought young people together from more than 140 countries and territories to share their solutions on the global stage, and to urge world leaders to act now to address climate change.³ However, President Trump announced in 2017 that the United States would withdraw from the Paris Agreement "because of the unfair economic burden imposed on American workers, businesses, and taxpayers by U.S. pledges made under the Agreement."⁴ The withdrawal is scheduled to take effect in November 2020. In July 2020, the Trump administration formally notified the UN that the United States will withdraw from the World Health Organization.

¹Thomas Hobbes, 1588–1679, *Leviathan* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1968).

²Pew Research Center, "United Nations Gets Mostly Positive Marks From People Around the World," <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/09/23/united-nations-gets-mostly-positive-marks-from-people-around-the-world/>.

³United Nations, "Climate Action," <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/index.shtml>.

⁴U.S. Department of State, "On the U.S. Withdrawal From the Paris Agreement," <https://www.state.gov/on-the-u-s-withdrawal-from-the-paris-agreement/>

(continued)

What if..., continued**For Critical Analysis**

1. Even though we are citizens of a state and of the United States, we are increasingly confronted with complex problems that are global in nature. How might the essential functions of any single government need to change to confront new challenges? Given the challenges we face, are individual nations the best way to govern?
2. What are some other issues that you anticipate the U.S. government will need to address? For each issue you identify, evaluate whether it is best handled by a single government or in collaboration with other nations.
3. In what ways has the pandemic challenged the trend toward globalization and finding global solutions to world problems? Are we better able to deal with shared challenges or have the bonds between countries frayed as a result of differences in managing the coronavirus outbreak?

Although it has become popular to complain about government, we could not survive as individuals or as communities without it. The challenge is to become invested enough in the American system and engaged enough in the political process so that the government we have is the government we want, need, and deserve. This is a tremendous challenge because, until you understand how our system works, “the government” can seem as though it belongs to somebody else; it can seem distant, hard to understand, and difficult to use when there is a problem to solve or there are hard decisions to make. Rising partisan polarization and cultural anger magnified through social media are disincentives to engagement. Nevertheless, democracies, especially *this* democracy, derive their powers from the people, and this fact provides each of you with a tremendous opportunity. Individuals and groups of like-minded individuals who participate in the system can create change and shape the government to meet their needs. Those who opt not to pay attention or fail to participate must accept what others decide for them—good or bad.

Complicating matters further is the simple truth that although we all live in the same country and share the same political system, we may experience life and government differently. This leads us to hold different opinions about who should lead us, how big or small government should be, what kind of role government should play in our individual lives, what kinds of issues are appropriate for policy makers to handle, and what should be left to each of us alone.

At the heart of the debate over health care and health insurance is the question of how best to pay for, and provide access to, health care for every citizen. This country’s federal, state, and local governments, corporations, and individuals spent \$3.6 trillion, or about \$11,172 for every person, on health care in 2018.¹ National health spending is predicted to grow at an average annual rate of 5.4 percent. Health insurance costs are rising faster than wages or inflation. Costs like this are not sustainable and drain the economy of resources needed elsewhere. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (commonly known as the Affordable Care Act) was signed into law in 2010, although several delays and extensions were granted early in its implementation. The act is large and complicated because the issue it addresses is large and complicated.

Did You Know?

The Greek philosopher Aristotle favored enlightened despotism over democracy, which to him meant mob rule.

1 Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, National Health Expenditure Data, accessed at www.cms.gov.

Several aspects of the law are favored by nearly everyone, such as providing access to insurance for people with preexisting conditions or allowing children to stay on their parents' insurance until age 26. However, the law also required people to be insured either through their employer or by purchasing insurance so that the costs and risks are spread across the entire population. Failure to do so resulted in a penalty. Because young people are typically healthy and rarely incur expensive medical bills, their participation is necessary to offset the costs of caring for others and to maintain the stability of the state and federal health exchanges. As a group, "young invincibles," as they have been labeled by the health insurance industry, have proven difficult to convince of the necessity of health insurance without requiring it. The law's insurance mandate seems at odds with the value we place on individual responsibility; yet, health care is something everyone requires, and the costs are more manageable if everyone is included. The coronavirus outbreak demonstrated the importance of access to affordable health care and universal insurance to cover the costs of screening, testing, and treatment.

We resolve these and other conflicting values using the political process, and institutions of government are empowered to make decisions on our behalf. In the case of health care, the conflict was seemingly resolved by the judiciary but then complicated again by the outcome of the 2016 presidential election. The U.S. Supreme Court scheduled an unprecedented six hours of oral arguments over the course of three days in March 2012. The justices faced a number of critical questions, including whether or not the law's requirement that individuals carry health insurance was within the powers granted to Congress by the Constitution. On June 28, 2012, the Supreme Court issued a 5–4 decision upholding nearly all of the health care law,² including the minimum coverage provision. Chief Justice John Roberts wrote the majority opinion. President Obama called the ruling "a victory for people all over this country whose lives will be more secure" because nearly 30 million Americans who currently lack health insurance will eventually be covered as a result of the law. Although in most cases a Supreme Court ruling settles the question, in this case it did not. By some estimates, Republicans in Congress have voted more than 50 times since 2010 to repeal all or part of the Affordable Care Act. The day President Trump was sworn into office, he signed an executive order instructing administration officials "to waive, defer, grant exemptions from, or delay" further implementation of the Affordable Care Act. Even with Republicans in control of Congress and the White House, though, multiple attempts to repeal and replace the ACA failed. Yet, several significant changes have been enacted since 2017, including the elimination of the individual mandate and tax penalty. In 2020, Democratic candidates seeking their party's nomination for president dedicated hours of nationally televised debate time to issues related to health care and health insurance. Democratic Socialist Bernie Sanders argued that health care is a human right and advocated for a single-payer, national health insurance system that would cover every American. He proposed to expand the federal Medicare program, currently limited to people over the age of 65 and some young people with disabilities. A national poll conducted in January 2020 found that a majority of Americans favored a national Medicare-for-all health plan (56 percent) but an even larger share

2 *National Federation of Independent Business, et al. v. Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services, et al.* 567 U.S. (2012).

avored a government-administered public option that would compete with private health insurance plans and be available to all (68 percent). Nearly half of all Americans (48 percent) approve of both plans that call for a larger role for the federal government, while only 22 percent oppose both.³ Americans worry that they or a member of their family will lose health insurance coverage if the Affordable Care Act is repealed or its coverage substantially reduced. Sir Winston Churchill, British prime minister during World War II, once said, “No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.”⁴ Our system is not perfect, but it is more open to change than most. This book offers essential tools to learn about American government and politics today so that you are prepared to change this country for the better.

What are your dreams for the future, and what role do you believe the government can and should play in helping you realize your dreams? There was a time when we all aspired to live the “American Dream” and when we believed that government played an essential role in ensuring that the opportunity to achieve the American Dream was available to everyone. Members of each successive generation were confident that if they worked hard and followed the rules, they would live richer and more successful lives than the previous generation. Public policy has historically been an effective tool to promote economic growth, educational equity, homeownership, and job security. Is that still true today?

There are some troubling signs, to be sure. Significant inequality in income and wealth exists in the United States, and rather than shrinking, the gap has widened for your generation and your parents’ generation. In 1979, the richest 1 percent accounted for 8 percent of all personal income; by 2016, their share had more than doubled, to 20 percent, representing a 70 percent increase even after taxes and government transfers are taken into account.⁵ As the economy improved following the Great Recession (2007–09), the greatest gains in income share went to the top 10 percent of earners. Hourly wage workers, notably fast-food workers, raised awareness of the recovery gap by participating in a series of labor walkouts and demanding an increase to the \$7.25 federal minimum hourly wage. To add momentum to the movement, President Obama signed an executive order early in 2014 raising the minimum wage for workers under new federal contracts to \$10.10 an hour. In 2016, Oregon lawmakers adopted a series of gradual increases over six years using a unique three-tier geographic system whereby workers in large metro areas would earn more per hour than workers in smaller cities or rural areas.⁶ Twenty-one states began 2020 with higher minimum wages as a result of legislative action or ballot initiatives.⁷ The global economic recession, the unemployment rate, rising home foreclosures, and corporate relocation of jobs

3 Luna Lopes, Liz Hamel, Audrey Kearney, and Mollyann Brodie, “KFF Health Tracking Poll—January 2020,” Kaiser Family Foundation, January 30, 2020, <https://www.kff.org/health-reform/poll-finding/kff-health-tracking-poll-january-2020/>.

4 House of Commons speech on November 11, 1947.

5 Congressional Budget Office, “The Distribution of Household Income, 2016” July 9, 2019, <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2019-07/55413-CBO-distribution-of-household-income-2016.pdf>.

6 Kristen Hansen, “Oregon’s Trailblazing Minimum Wage Has Geographic Tiers, Topped by Portland’s \$14.75,” *San Jose Mercury News*, February 19, 2016.

7 National Conference of State Legislatures, “State Minimum Wages: 2020 Minimum Wage by State,” January 6, 2020, <https://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/state-minimum-wage-chart.aspx>.

overseas all present government with significant challenges. The dramatic negative effect of COVID-19 on the U.S. economy will take years if not decades to overcome. Moreover, people's confidence in several institutions (presidency, Congress, churches, and public schools) has fallen over the past decade (see Figure 1-1). More than half of respondents in a recent poll said that Congress has made the American Dream more difficult to attain and 43 percent said that America's public education system has made it more difficult.⁸ Native-born citizens know less than ever about the very political system they hope will restore their confidence in the future; one in three failed the civics portion of the naturalization test in a national telephone survey.⁹ Can people effectively engage in political activity to change their lives for the better when they know so little about the governmental system?

There are also some hopeful signs. In early 2009 even as the recession and financial crisis reached its peak, 72 percent of Americans still believed that "hard work could result in riches."¹⁰ According to the Center for the Study of the American Dream at Xavier University, a majority of Americans remain confident that they will achieve the American Dream despite the current challenges. More than three-quarters of people believe they have already achieved some measure of it. What that looks like today might come as a surprise to some—becoming wealthy, owning a home, and having a successful career no longer define the dream. Instead, having the freedom of choice in how to live and a good family life are identified as essential.¹¹ "Our American dream is simple," said study participant Tamara Johnson of Wisconsin. "The rewards

Image 1-1

Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) speaks to low-wage workers during a protest where the workers demanded presidential action to win an increase in wages to \$15 an hour. Worker's rights and fair wages were central issues in his bid to win the Democratic presidential nomination in 2020. Voters in Florida approved legislation to raise its minimum wage to \$15 an hour by steps through 2026. Approval of a 2020 ballot measure makes Florida the eighth state to adopt a \$15 minimum wage.



Win McNamee/Getty Images News/Getty Images

8 Carl M. Cannon and Tom Bevan, "The American Dream: Not Dead—Yet," *RealClearPolitics*, March 6, 2019.

9 "U.S. Naturalization Civics Test: National Survey of Native-Born U.S. Citizens, March 2012," conducted by the Center for the Study of the American Dream, Xavier University, <http://www.xavier.edu/americandream/programs/National-Civic-Literacy-Survey.cfm>.

10 Andrew Ross Sorkin and Megan Thee-Brenan, "Many Feel the American Dream Is Out of Reach, Poll Shows," *The New York Times*, December 10, 2014, <http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2014/12/10/many-feel-the-american-dream-is-out-of-reach-poll-shows>

11 Samuel J. Abrams, Karlyn Bowman, Eleanor O'Neil, and Ryan Streeter, *AEI Survey on Community and Society: Social Capital, Civic Health, and Quality of Life in the United States*, February 2019.

are not things, they are experiences—a meal, a conversation, a walk, a hug. Our American dream is not easy. It requires grit, persistence and drive. Our American dream is not exclusive—it gives. In our American dream no one is left behind.”¹² This emphasis on community and individuality was shared across demographics and political party affiliation. A Pew Research Center study found that Latinos are more likely than the public at large to believe in the American Dream but find it harder to reach than other groups. Being a good parent topped the list of life priorities for 51 percent of those surveyed. Optimism about the future was high; 82 percent of Americans said they were optimistic about their future. Notably, the largest differences were not around income, race, or ethnicity but rather generation; only 73 percent of Gen Z Americans (those born in 1997 or later) were optimistic about the American Dream compared to 83 percent of baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964). In his 2014 State of the Union address, President Obama said, “What I believe unites the people of this nation, regardless of race or region or party, young or old, rich or poor, is the simple, profound belief in opportunity for all—the notion that if you work hard and take responsibility, you can get ahead.”¹³

What is the state of America today? Given the political polarization, divided government, and economic and educational disparities evident in the United States today, are we still one America? Are you confident in the accuracy of the information you receive on the news or through your social media feed? Can the problems we face as a nation today be addressed by the political system? In 2016 voters demonstrated their anger at the “establishment” by electing “outsider” Donald J. Trump, believing that he could shake up the political system. His presidency further polarized the country. Now, in the midst of a global pandemic, and with a newly elected president where do we stand? Is the American republic up to today’s national and global challenges? Can Americans overcome their partisan divide to address the issues before us—most immediately, the economic devastation left by the COVID-19 pandemic, our frayed health care system, and simmering racial tensions? These will be central questions in our analysis of American government and politics today.

Politics and Government

■ LO 1-1 Define the institution of government and the process of politics.

Before we can answer any of these provocative questions, we first have to define some terms. What is politics? **Politics** is the process of resolving conflicts and deciding “who gets what, when, and how.”¹⁴ Although politics may be found in many places outside of government (for example, in your family or workplace), for the purposes of this book, we refer to conflicts and decisions found at the federal, state, and local levels regarding the selection of decision makers, the structure of institutions, and the creation of public policy. Politics is particularly intense when decisions are made that hit close to home, such as

politics

The process of resolving conflicts and deciding “who gets what, when, and how.” More specifically, politics is the struggle over power or influence within organizations or informal groups that can grant or withhold benefits or privileges.

12 Samuel J. Abrams, “The American Dream Is Alive and Well,” *The New York Times*, February 5, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/05/opinion/american-dream.html>.

13 State of the Union Address, January 28, 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/01/28/president-barack-obamas-state-union-address>.

14 Harold Lasswell, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, and How* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1936).

government

The preeminent institution in which decisions are made that resolve conflicts or allocate benefits and privileges. It is unique because it has the ultimate authority within society.

institution

An ongoing organization that performs certain functions for society.

divine right of kings

A political and religious doctrine that asserts a monarch's legitimacy is conferred directly by God and, as such, a king is not subject to any earthly authority, including his people or the church.

social contract

A theory of politics that asserts that individuals form political communities by a process of mutual consent, giving up a measure of their individual liberty in order to gain the protection of government.

decisions about how to spend local and state tax dollars. Equally intense are political decisions that yield leaders for our country. Elections at the national and state levels attract the most media attention, but thousands of elected and appointed officials make up the government and render decisions that affect our lives.

Government is the term used to describe the formal **institutions** through which decisions about the allocation of resources are made and conflicts are resolved. Government can take many forms, come in many sizes, and perform a variety of functions, but at the core, all governments rule. To govern is to rule. Governments can, as a matter of their authority, force you to comply with laws through taxes, fines, and the power to send you to prison, or worse—to death row. The inherent power of government is what led the founders of the United States to impose limitations on this power relative to the rights of individuals. Likewise, the power of government leads Americans to be wary of too much government when less will do.

Why Is Government Necessary?

- **LO 1-2** Identify the political philosophers associated with the “social contract” and explain how this theory shapes our understanding of the purpose and essential functions of government and the role for individuals and communities in the United States.

Americans may not always like government, but they like the absence of government even less. Governments are necessary at a minimum to provide public goods and services that all citizens need but cannot reasonably be expected to provide for themselves. National security and defense are obvious examples. But governments do far more than provide for the common defense. As you will learn in Chapter 2, our founding documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are predicated upon and convey through their language a set of shared political values. Government reinforces those values regularly. One of our defining values is belief in the rule of law, which means that laws determined through the political process are enforced uniformly and that no individual, regardless of wealth, privilege, or position, is above the law. Government includes a system of justice administered by institutions known as the courts to maintain this important value. We will return to this discussion of fundamental values later in this chapter. In addition to providing public goods and services and reinforcing shared values, governments are necessary to provide security so that liberty may flourish.

Our contemporary understanding of why government is necessary has been shaped by Enlightenment thinkers from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe. During the Age of Enlightenment, also known as the Age of Reason, philosophers and scientists challenged the **divine right of kings** and argued that the world could be vastly improved through the use of human reason, science, and religious tolerance. Essential to this argument was the belief that all individuals were born free and equal and imbued with natural rights. Individuals were in control of their own destiny, and by working with others, a society could shape a government capable of both asserting and protecting individual rights. English **social contract** theorists such as Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) and John Locke (1632–1704) were particularly

influential in shaping our theory of government. Hobbes was far more pessimistic about human nature than Locke. Hobbes believed that without government and the rule of law, people would revert to a state of nature, and individuals would be left to fight over basic necessities, rendering life “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”¹⁵ To avoid such a fate, Hobbes argued for a single ruler, a Leviathan, so powerful that the rights of the weak could be protected against intrusion by the strong. By contrast, Locke took basic survival for granted, believing that all humans were endowed with reason—an internal code of conduct. Therefore, individuals are willing to give up a portion of their individual liberty in order to gain the protection of government through the social contract. Government is formed to protect life, liberty, and property; however, if a government compromises its legitimacy by violating the social contract, it is the people’s duty to end the abusive government and replace it with a new form.

It is within this theoretical framework that we understand the necessity for government: to provide security, to protect liberty and enforce property rights, and to maintain legitimacy by exercising authority consistent with the fundamental values of those governed. Consent of the governed is the basis for power and legitimacy in American democracy.

Fundamental Values

- **LO 1-3** Describe the U.S. political culture and identify the set of ideas, values, and ways of thinking about government and politics shared by all.

The authors of the U.S. Constitution believed that the structures they had created would provide for both democracy and a stable political system. They also believed that the nation could be sustained by its **political culture**. A critical question facing America today is, to what extent do all citizens continue to share in a single political culture? Some scholars argue that Americans have become so calcified in their political identities that compromise is viewed as a weakness and intolerance of opposing positions as a strength.¹⁶ Do the widening gaps in income, wealth, and education threaten to undermine our shared political values as well as our confidence in government? We live under one republic, but are we increasingly a divided America? There is considerable consensus among American citizens about concepts basic to the U.S. political system. Given that the population of the United States is made up primarily of immigrants and descendants of immigrants with diverse cultural and political backgrounds, how can we account for this consensus? Primarily, it is the result of **political socialization**—the process by which beliefs and values are transmitted to successive generations. The nation depends on families, schools, houses of worship, and the media to transmit the precepts of our national culture. With fewer people going to church and a widening educational gap that strongly correlates with economic disparities, we may need to reexamine the ways in which our political culture is transmitted. We will return to these important questions throughout the book, but particularly in Chapter 6.

political culture

The set of ideas, values, and ways of thinking about government and politics that is shared by all citizens.

political socialization

The process through which individuals learn a set of political attitudes and form opinions about social issues. Families and the educational system are two of the most important forces in the political socialization process.

¹⁵ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, revised student edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹⁶ Ezra Klein, *Why We're Polarized* (New York: Avid Reader Press, 2020).



The scale of global migration today exceeds growth in the world's population. The United Nations estimates that 272 million people left their country of origin in 2019, an increase of 51 million since 2010. International migrants comprise 3.5 percent of the global population, compared to 2.8 percent in the year 2000.¹ Why are so many people on the move?

The term migrant is used to characterize a person or group of people in motion from one place to another, within or between countries. Human migration is an ancient phenomenon. Scientists with the National Geographic Society's Genographic Project are currently studying the genetic and paleontological record to explain why humans first left Africa between 60,000 and 70,000 years ago. They believe what set our ancestors in motion were major climatic shifts—in that case, a sudden cooling of the earth's climate. Today's migrants leave their homeland for a variety of reasons, some forced and others by choice. Forced migration might be caused by drought, flooding, and increased frequency of storms and other natural disasters. When Tropical Cyclone Idai struck the coast of Mozambique, the United Nations reported that 1.85 million people needed assistance and 146,000 people were internally displaced. The World Bank estimates that Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia will generate 143 million more climate migrants by 2050.² War and conflict is the most common cause of forced migration. Syria's civil war has internally displaced more than 6.2 million people, and another 5.6 million people have fled the country as refugees seeking safety elsewhere.

Refugees are defined and protected in international law. The 1951 Refugee Convention is a key legal document and defines a refugee as "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion."³ Nearly 75 percent of Myanmar's Muslim Rohingya population sought refuge in Bangladesh in the face of government-orchestrated violence and ethnic cleansing. Southeast Bangladesh is home to the world's largest number of refugee camps housing more than 900,000 men, women, and children. Refugees are protected by international law and provided assistance by world aid organizations. Some refugees seek asylum, an official status that provides ongoing protection from violence and the threat of persecution in their home country on account of race, religion, nationality, or political beliefs. Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts the right of everyone to seek and enjoy asylum.

Migrants can also be people who choose to move to a new country to reunite with family members or to pursue better education and employment opportunities. Migrant workers may move more than once to take advantage of changes in the labor market. Countries, including the United States, offer special visas that allow "guest workers" to enter the country and fill jobs in sectors where there is a shortage of workers. These may be highly skilled workers in the medical or technology sector, or they may be workers to fill low-wage jobs in agriculture or domestic service. Immigrants also provide an important source of new workers for countries with declining population. Germany, for example, will need to attract up to 1.5 million additional skilled workers through immigration to compensate for an aging population. Immigration is a major source of population growth and cultural change in the United States.

The rapid expansion of migration in its many forms puts stress on the social, political, and cultural norms of the countries receiving new residents. The surge of right-wing nationalist politics across Western nations and the rise of nationalist political parties have been positively linked to the increase in migration. The Syrian exodus has produced the greatest number of refugees, not just to neighboring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq but across Europe as well. Germany has been the primary destination country for asylum seekers in Europe, receiving 442,000 asylum applications in one year. Hundreds of thousands of people risked their lives trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea to reach the shores of Italy or Greece. The European Union devised a number of relocation efforts to distribute the impact of refugees across Europe. In 2019, the United States faced its own migrant



JOHAN ORDONEZ/AFP/Getty Images

Image 1-2 Hundreds of Honduran migrants walk near Esquipulas, Chiquimula departament, Guatemala, on January 16, 2020, after crossing the border in Agua Caliente from Honduras on their way to the US.

(continued)

Beyond Our Borders, continued

crisis as people fled violence in Central America, particularly in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Media images of the detention centers at the U.S. border with Mexico led to public outrage and lawsuits. Many of those arriving at the U.S. border were unaccompanied children and women with children. The Trump administration instituted what it termed “Migrant Protection Protocols” to limit the number of asylum seekers entering the United States. The policy is also known as “Remain in Mexico” since migrants are returned to Mexico to await their U.S. asylum hearings rather than being released into the United States to join family or to live on their own. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the policy in March 2020 while lower-court challenges were in process. The Trump administration imposed additional restrictions on asylum-seekers citing a threat to public health from COVID-19. Department of Homeland Security officials said the emergency protocols were needed to protect American and migrant lives by reducing the number of detainees in U.S. custody.

¹United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “News,” September 17, 2019, www.un.org/development/desa/en.

²Kumari Rigaud et al., “Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration,” The World Bank, 2018.

³“Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees,” <https://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html>.

For Critical Analysis

1. The causes of migration are varied, but *climate migrant* is a new term for an ancient phenomenon. When people are forced to move in search of food, water, and housing, how should the world’s governments respond? In the past, aid has come primarily from nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations. With the rise in migration due to climate and conflict, what type of response by a government, by governments coming together (e.g., EU, UN), and nongovernmental organizations will be most effective?
2. What would prompt you and your family to move? Perhaps you have already moved one or more times in your lifetime. If so, what challenges did you face integrating into a new community? Maybe you moved away from home to attend college. While this isn’t nearly as disruptive as being forced to flee violence or famine, what parallels do you see? How can your own experience help you to understand that of the world’s migrants?

Liberty As you recall, the advancement and protection of individual liberty is central to the social contract theory of government. **Liberty** is among the natural rights articulated by Locke and later by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence (“life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”). In the United States, our civil liberties include religious freedom, both the right to believe in whatever religion we choose and freedom from any state-imposed religion. Liberty, as a political value, has two sides to it—one positive (the freedom to) and one negative (the freedom from). The freedom of speech—the right to political expression on all matters, including government actions—is an example of a positive liberty. Freedom of speech is one of our most prized liberties; a democracy could not endure without it. The right to privacy is a more controversial liberty claim. The U.S. Supreme Court has held that the right to privacy can be derived from other rights that are explicitly stated in the Bill of Rights. The Supreme Court has also held that under the right to privacy, the government cannot ban either abortion¹⁷ or private sexual behavior by consenting adults.¹⁸

Positive freedoms are not absolute, and individual liberty can be limited, such as in times of war. When Americans perceive serious threats, they have supported government actions to limit individual liberties in the

liberty

The greatest freedom of individuals that is consistent with the freedom of other individuals in the society.

¹⁷ *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113 (1973).

¹⁸ *Lawrence v. Texas*, 539 U.S. 558 (2003).

Confidence in Institutions Varies: How Do We Know?

Throughout this book, you will find a number of visual features, including figures, tables, photographs, and political cartoons. These visual features are carefully selected to present information that is critical to your understanding of the content in each chapter. Therefore, you must study the visuals carefully. In addition, you may be tested on this information.

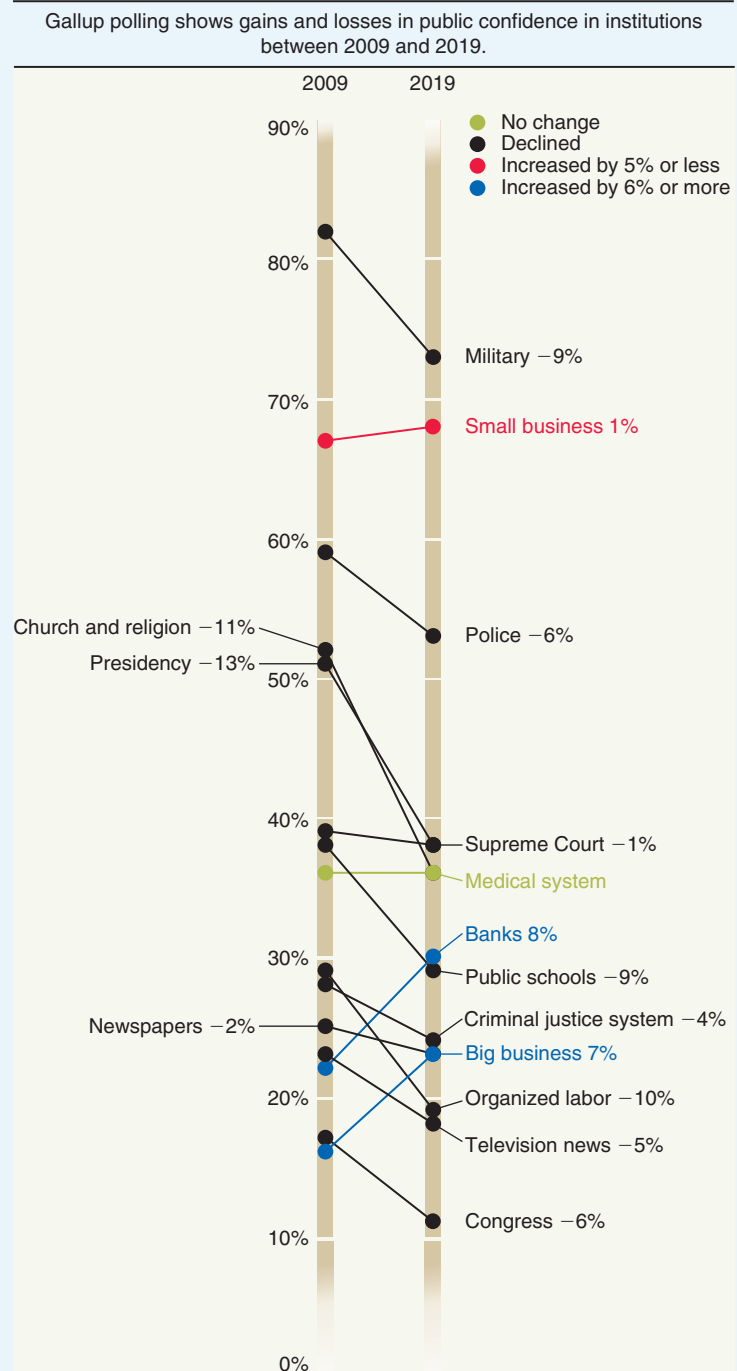
Figure 1-1 presents Gallup polling data on the public's confidence in major institutions at two points in time. Gallup regularly conducts public opinion polls in more than 140 countries around the world. You will often see these polls referenced in news reports. Begin by reading the title of the figure and the descriptive information—the caption—right below the title. Together, the title and caption summarize the information that you need to understand the graphic. Captions below tables, photographs, and cartoons have a similar function. Figure 1-1 shows two points in time, indicating a change in public attitudes. Other ways to show change over time include line graphs.

This figure communicates a lot of information. On the left vertical axis, you will find the scale indicating the percentage of people who expressed a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in each institution in 2009. To display the magnitude of the change (decline or increase) in confidence, the authors have used three colors. The key for the colors is found on the right, near the top. Black, for example, represents a decline in confidence between 2009 and 2019. Red indicates a modest increase (5 percent or less), while blue indicates the largest increase in public confidence in an institution. Read the graphic starting on the left and moving to the right, and follow the line connecting the two dots. You will notice that the military enjoys the highest overall levels of public confidence, while Congress is held in low regard and experienced a decline in the last decade. Most institutions experienced a decline in confidence. Why?

Like many figures, tables, and photographs, this visual presents you with descriptive data. Descriptive information provides an answer to “what” or “who” questions but does not typically answer “why” or “how” questions. Analysis (determining why or how) is a form of critical thinking. The accompanying text may provide theories or results from other research, and sometimes you will find questions for critical analysis. Other times, as in this case, you are left to ask your own questions based on the data presented. According to the data, the presidency suffered the largest decline in public confidence in the last decade. Why? If you develop a **hypothesis** that this decline can be attributed to President Trump, what other information would you need to gather to confirm or discard this explanation? Are two data points enough information? Would it surprise you to learn that confidence in the presidency expressed in 2009 is 25 points higher than 2008 and 15 points higher than 2010? How can you explain this? Synthesizing all of the information to create a new explanation or understanding is the most important skill you can develop in college.

Gallup Historical Trends, “Confidence in Institutions,” <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1597/confidence-institutions.aspx>.

Figure 1-1 ► Confidence in Institutions Varies



Source: Gallup

name of national security. Such limits were imposed during the Civil War, World War II, and the McCarthy era of the Cold War. Following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, Congress passed legislation designed to provide greater security at the expense of some civil liberties. In particular, the USA PATRIOT (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism) Act gave law enforcement and intelligence-gathering agencies greater latitude to search out and investigate suspected terrorists.

Order and the Rule of Law As noted earlier, individuals and communities create governments to provide stability and order in their lives. Locke justified the creation of governments as a way to protect every individual's property rights and to organize a system of impartial justice. In the United States, laws passed by local, state, and national governments create order and stability in every aspect of life, ranging from traffic to business to a national defense system. Citizens expect these laws to create a society in which individuals can pursue opportunities and live their lives in peace and prosperity. People also expect the laws to be just and to apply to everyone equally. The goal of maintaining **order** and security, however, can sometimes run counter to the values of liberty and equality.

Individualism The Declaration of Independence begins with a statement on the importance of the individual in our political culture: "When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with one another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them." By a "separate and equal station," Jefferson was distinguishing the belief in the rationality and autonomy of individuals from the traditions of aristocracies and other systems in which individuals did not determine their own destiny. Individualism asserts that one of the primary functions of government is to enable individuals' opportunities for personal fulfillment and development. In political terms, individualism limits claims by groups in favor of the individual. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that a universal right to health care or a living wage is not a part of the U.S. Constitution.

Equality Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." The proper meaning of equality, however, has been disputed by Americans since the Revolution.¹⁹ Much of American history—and world

hypothesis

A tentative explanation that can be tested and confirmed or discarded.

order

A state of peace and security. Maintaining order by protecting members of society from violence and criminal activity is the oldest purpose of government.

Image 1-3

The Department of Homeland Security is the third largest department of the U.S. government and includes TSA, Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, FEMA, Secret Service, and the Coast Guard, among others. Chad Wolf was the third the Acting Secretary for DHS. Cabinet Secretaries are subject to Senate confirmation, but officials "acting" in the role are not reviewed by the Senate nor subject to confirmation. DHS had a series of acting secretaries in the Trump administration.



Media Punch/MediaPunch Inc./Alamy Stock Photo

¹⁹ Gary B. Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America* (New York: Viking, 2005); and Alfred F. Young, ed., *Beyond the American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993).

equality

As a political value, the idea that all people are of equal worth.

history—is the story of how the value of **equality** has been extended and elaborated. An equally important aspect of American history is the story of inequality and exclusion.

Political equality reflects the value that we place on the individual. At our founding, political leaders excluded some people from the broad understanding of a politically autonomous person. African Americans, women, Native Americans, and most men who did not own property were excluded from the equal extension of political rights. Under a social contract theory of government, individuals must freely enter the compact with others on an equal basis. Although Enlightenment philosophers believed in the inherent equality of all persons, they did not define all individuals as full persons. Recall that the Constitution counted enslaved people as three-fifths of a person. For a period of our history, a married woman was legally and economically indivisible from her husband and could not act as a full person. Today, we believe all people are entitled to equal political rights as well as the opportunities for personal development provided by equal access to education and employment. In reality, we still have work to do to be sure that opportunities afforded by society and protected by government can be fully realized by everyone in society.

Some cultural observers and scholars have begun to question whether political and social equality can coexist with economic inequality. In a book titled *Why Nations Fail*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) economist Daron Acemoglu argues that “when economic inequality increases, the people who have become economically more powerful will often attempt to use that power in order to gain even more political power. And once they are able to monopolize political power, they will start using that for changing the rules in their favor.”²⁰ Many people point to the Supreme Court’s decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Committee*²¹ and the growth in super political action committee (super PAC) spending in federal elections as evidence of the growing political influence of a few very wealthy individuals and interests. Candidate Bernie Sanders captured the imagination of young people and progressive Democrats in his bid to win the Democratic nomination for president by emphasizing the inordinate power and influence in politics of Wall Street relative to the average person. Billionaires Michael Bloomberg and Tom Steyer sought the Democratic nomination in 2020 alongside Sanders, demonstrating his point. After a period of decline during the Great Recession (2007–09), median household income is rising again, but that doesn’t mean inequality is decreasing. Median African American household income was 61 percent of median white household income in 2018, up only modestly from 56 percent in 1970. Income inequality in the United States is the highest of all G7 nations, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.²² As income inequality has increased, year to year and generation to generation, economic mobility (the opportunity to improve one’s economic standing) has declined. Can the values of political and social equality withstand the significant erosion of economic equality that has accompanied

²⁰ Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012).

²¹ 558 U.S. 08-205 (2010).

²² The Group of Seven (G7) is an informal bloc of industrialized democracies: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

the Great Recession? Civil rights and the value of equality will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Property The value of reducing economic inequality is in conflict with the right to **property**. This is because reducing economic inequality typically involves the transfer of property (usually in the form of money) from some people to others. For many people, liberty and property are closely entwined. A capitalist system is based on private property rights. Under **capitalism**, property consists not only of personal possessions but also of wealth-creating assets, such as farms and factories. The investor-owned corporation is in many ways the preeminent capitalist institution. The funds invested by the owners of a corporation are known as *capital*—hence, the very name of the system. Capitalism is also typically characterized by considerable freedom to make binding contracts and by relatively unconstrained markets for goods, services, and investments. Property—especially wealth-creating property—can be seen as giving its owner political power and the liberty to do whatever he or she wants. At the same time, the ownership of property immediately creates inequality in society. The desire to own property, however, is so widespread among all classes of Americans that egalitarian movements have had a difficult time securing a wide following here.

As with the other values shaping our political culture, even individual property rights are not absolute. **Eminent domain** allows government to take private land for public use in return for just compensation. Weighing the public's interest against the interest of private landowners is a delicate political judgment. Typically, eminent domain is used to acquire land for roads, bridges, and other public works projects. A 2005 Supreme Court ruling, however, allowed the city of New London, Connecticut, to “take” homeowners’ property and turn it over to private developers, who built an office park and expensive condominiums.²³ In this atypical case, the majority ruled that economic stimulus and the increase in city tax revenues fulfilled the public use requirement for eminent domain takings. Since the ruling, several state and local governments have passed laws to forbid the kind of takings at issue in this case.

Why Choose Democracy?

- **LO 1-4** Compare and contrast types of government systems and identify the source of power in each.

Today, 195 nations exist in the world. Nearly all have some form of government that possesses authority and some degree of legitimacy. Governments vary in their structure and how they govern. The crucial question for every



Allen Brown/Dbimages/Alamy Stock Photo

Image 1-4

The Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial, located on the National Mall in Washington, DC, is administered by the National Park Service. The image of Dr. King emerges from a granite “stone of hope” surrounded by a “mountain of despair” reflecting the steadfast resolve of each generation to achieve a fair and honest society.

property

Anything that is or may be subject to ownership. As conceived by the political philosopher John Locke, the right to property is a natural right superior to human law (laws made by government).

capitalism

An economic system characterized by the private ownership of wealth-creating assets, free markets, and freedom of contract.

eminent domain

A power set forth in the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that allows government to take private property for public use under the condition that just compensation is offered to the landowner.

²³ *Kelo v. City of New London*, 545 U.S. 469 (2005).

totalitarian regime

A form of government that controls all aspects of the political and social life of a nation.

authoritarianism

A type of regime in which only the government is fully controlled by the ruler. Social and economic institutions exist that are not under the government's control.

nation is who controls the government. The answer could be a small group, one person—perhaps the monarch or a dictator—or no one.

At one extreme is a society governed by a **totalitarian regime**. In such a political system, a small group of leaders or a single individual—a dictator—makes all political decisions for the society. North Korea is an example of a totalitarian state. Citizens are deprived of the freedom to speak, to dissent, to assemble, and to seek solutions to problems. Individual needs, including food, are subsumed by the interests of the ruler and the regime. Famine, widespread malnutrition, and illness exist as a result of the country's "military first" policy. Running afoul of the regime can often mean imprisonment or death. Kim Jong-il was succeeded by his son, Kim Jong-un, in 2011, continuing an unbroken 63-year reign that began with Kim Jong-il's father, Kim Il-sung. Under Kim Jong-un's rule, North Korea has inflamed relations with South Korea and the United States by developing and testing short-range ballistic missiles and rockets. President Trump engaged in an unprecedented level of direct diplomacy by meeting with Kim Jong-un multiple times in an effort to reach agreement on denuclearization. No deal was ever reached. Totalitarianism is an extreme form of authoritarianism.

Authoritarianism is also characterized by highly concentrated and centralized power maintained by political repression. Authoritarianism differs from totalitarianism in that only the government is fully controlled by the ruler, leaving social and economic institutions to outside control. The contemporary government of China is often described as authoritarian. China is ruled by a single political party, the Communist Party. Policies are made by Communist Party leaders without input from the general population. The Chinese market economy is expanding rapidly with little government intrusion or regulation, but signs of political dissent are punished severely. Internet access is monitored and political content restricted. The Chinese government came under intense world criticism for its failure to deal swiftly and effectively with the 2020 coronavirus outbreak. A Chinese doctor, Li Wenliang, who issued an early warning

Image 1-5

Hong Kong was a British colony until 1997, when it was returned to China under a policy known as "one country, two systems." This arrangement granting Hong Kong a degree of autonomy from the Chinese Communist Party was supposed to remain in place until 2047. However, in 2014 China's Standing Committee of the National People's Congress refused to allow universal suffrage in Hong Kong igniting student-led protests. Subsequent restrictions have increased the ranks of pro-democracy demonstrators. Protesters use umbrellas to shield themselves from police tear gas and pepper spray. See Chapter 4, *Beyond Our Borders*, for more information.



hanohiki/Shutterstock.com

about the virus before it spread, was said by the government to have “severely disrupted the social order.” He subsequently died from the virus.²⁴

Many terms for describing the distribution of political power are derived from the ancient Greeks, who were the first Western people to study politics systematically. One form of rule by the few was known as **aristocracy**, literally meaning “rule by the best.” In practice, this meant rule by leading members of wealthy families who were, in theory, the best educated and dedicated to the good of the state. The ancient Greeks had another term for rule by the few, **oligarchy**, which means rule by a small group for corrupt and self-serving purposes.

The Greek term for rule by the people was **democracy**, which means that the authority of the government is granted to it from the people as a whole. Within the limits of their culture, some of the Greek city-states operated as democracies. Today, in much of the world, the people will not grant legitimacy to a government unless it is based on democratic principles. Mass protests against the Assad regime in Syria that plunged the country into civil war, as well as mass demonstrations in Hong Kong, are recent examples.

If totalitarianism is control of all aspects of society by the government, **anarchy** is the complete opposite. It means that there is no government at all. Each individual or family in a society decides for itself how it will behave, and there is no institution with the authority to keep order in any way. As you can imagine, examples of anarchy do not last very long. A state of anarchy may characterize a transition between one form of government (often totalitarian or authoritarian and repressive) and one where people want more power but do not yet have political institutions to structure popular participation. The interim period can be chaotic and violent, as in Somalia and, to a lesser degree, in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen following the Arab Spring rebellions. Entire cities have been destroyed in the Syrian uprising and ensuing civil war, leading to a mass exodus of the population as refugees.

Direct Democracy as a Model

The system of government in the ancient Greek city-state of Athens is usually considered the purest model of **direct democracy**, because the citizens of that community debated and voted directly on all laws, even those put forward by the ruling council of the city. The most important feature of Athenian democracy was that the **legislature** was composed of all the citizens. Women, foreigners, and slaves, however, were excluded because they were not citizens. This form of government required a high level of participation from every citizen; participation was seen as benefiting the individual and the city-state. The Athenians believed that although a high level of participation might lead to instability in government, citizens, if informed about the issues, could be trusted to make wise decisions. Greek philosophers also believed that debating the issues and participating in making the laws was good for the individual’s intellectual and personal development.

Direct democracy has also been practiced in Switzerland and in the United States in New England town meetings. At New England town meetings, which can include all of the voters who live in the town, important decisions—such as levying taxes, hiring city officials, and deciding local ordinances—are made by majority vote. Some states provide a modern adaptation of direct democracy

aristocracy

Rule by “the best”; in reality, rule by an upper class.

oligarchy

Rule by the few in their own interests.

democracy

A system of government in which political authority is vested in the people. Derived from the Greek words *demos* (“the people”) and *kratos* (“authority”).

anarchy

The absence of any form of government or political authority.

direct democracy

A system of government in which political decisions are made by the people directly, rather than by their elected representatives; probably attained most easily in small political communities.

legislature

A governmental body primarily responsible for the making of laws.

²⁴ BBC News, “Li Wenliang: Coronavirus Kills Chinese Whistleblower Doctor,” February 7, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-51403795>.

initiative

A procedure by which voters can propose a law or a constitutional amendment.

referendum

An electoral device whereby legislative or constitutional measures are referred by the legislature to the voters for approval or disapproval.

recall

A procedure allowing the people to vote to dismiss an elected official from state office before his or her term has expired.

for their citizens; representative democracy is supplemented by the **initiative** or the **referendum**—processes by which the people may vote directly on laws or constitutional amendments. The **recall** process, which is available in many states, allows people to vote to remove an official from state office.

Because of the internet, Americans have access to more political information than ever before. Voters can go online to examine the record of any candidate. Constituents can contact their congressional representatives and state legislators by sending them e-mail or a text. Individuals can easily find like-minded allies and form political interest groups using social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and countless others. During the 2008 presidential campaign, the Obama team pioneered new uses of the internet to connect supporters, solicit campaign donations, and maintain nearly constant contact between likely voters and the campaign. By the 2016 presidential contest, a candidacy without a social media relationship with voters would have been unthinkable. Hillary Clinton announced her candidacy in a video and a tweet pointing supporters to her website. Following Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's campaign announcement, his campaign claimed to have garnered "3.4 million Facebook users in the U.S. who generated 6.4 million interactions regarding the launch of his campaign."²⁵ Once he was elected president, Donald Trump's prolific use of his personal Twitter account made many Americans uncomfortable. *The New York Times* analyzed more than 11,000 of President Trump's tweets and concluded that Twitter "is a lever for him to drive policy, a weapon to punish enemies and a megaphone to rally supporters."²⁶ One poll found that 72 percent of Americans said the president "tweets too much."

Image 1-6

"We're in the building. Swearing in tomorrow". Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York used Instagram to announce the arrival of the most diverse freshman class in the history of Congress. Thirty-six non-incumbent women were elected in 2018. Pictured from L-R: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ayanna Pressley, Ilhan Omar, Deb Haaland, Veronica Escobar, and Sharice Davids. All six women won re-election in 2020.



Martin Schoeller/AUGUST

²⁵ Andrew O'Reilly, "Candidates, Parties Map Out Social Media Campaigns in Attempt to Reach Latino Voters," Fox Latino News, June 22, 2015.³⁶ Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: April 2013, <http://kff.org/health-reform/poll-finding/kaiser-health-tracking-poll-april-2013/>.

²⁶ "The Twitter Presidency," *The New York Times*, Sunday, November 2, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/02/us/trump-twitter-takeaways.html>



White House Photo/Alamy Stock Photo

Image 1-7

President Barack Obama was often photographed interacting with children. In this photo, he bends down to listen to the daughter of departing U.S. Secret Service agent in the Oval Office of the White House. Presidents throughout history have served as role models and important forces in socializing new generations to politics. How are Presidents Bush, Obama, Trump and Biden similar and different in the impact they have on young people coming of age during their administrations?

Social media provides voters with new forms of real-time engagement through breaking campaign news, the debates, and election night returns. President Obama's victory tweet of "Four more years" set a record for retweets. Facebook motivates people to get to the polls; seeing that friends had already voted worked as a form of peer pressure to do likewise. In the last week of the 2012 campaign, Twitter released a political engagement map that allowed users to track tweets about specific candidates or issues around the country. A Republican 2016 campaign manager observed, "Social media is the new coffee shop where neighbors, friends, colleagues and family gather to discuss issues, talk about the candidates and influence others." Allegations of Russian interference in the 2016 and 2020 elections cast a shadow on the enthusiasm for gathering political information through social media.

There are limits to how much political business people currently want to conduct using technology, largely because of security concerns. Although Colorado offered its citizens the opportunity to vote online in 2000, the experiment was short-lived. The Pentagon canceled a plan for troops overseas to vote online in 2004 due to internet security concerns. The extent of National Security Agency (NSA) surveillance and spying disclosed by Edward Snowden in documents leaked to *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post*, as well as massive personal data breaches reported by retailers, universities, and states, have increased the American people's skepticism about conducting important transactions online. The results of the 2020 Iowa Caucuses were delayed for days due to a coding error in the app used to record and aggregate votes. The United States does not have a national election infrastructure, leaving states to run their elections as they see fit. States with a large number of military personnel have been the most likely to experiment with online forms of remote voting. West Virginia and some counties in Utah, Oregon, and Colorado are implementing a voting app to allow military and others overseas to vote using a smartphone. Several states allow for voter registration online. Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington, and Utah mail ballots to all eligible voters for every election. We will explore election security issues and state innovations to provide greater access to the polls in more detail in Chapter 9.