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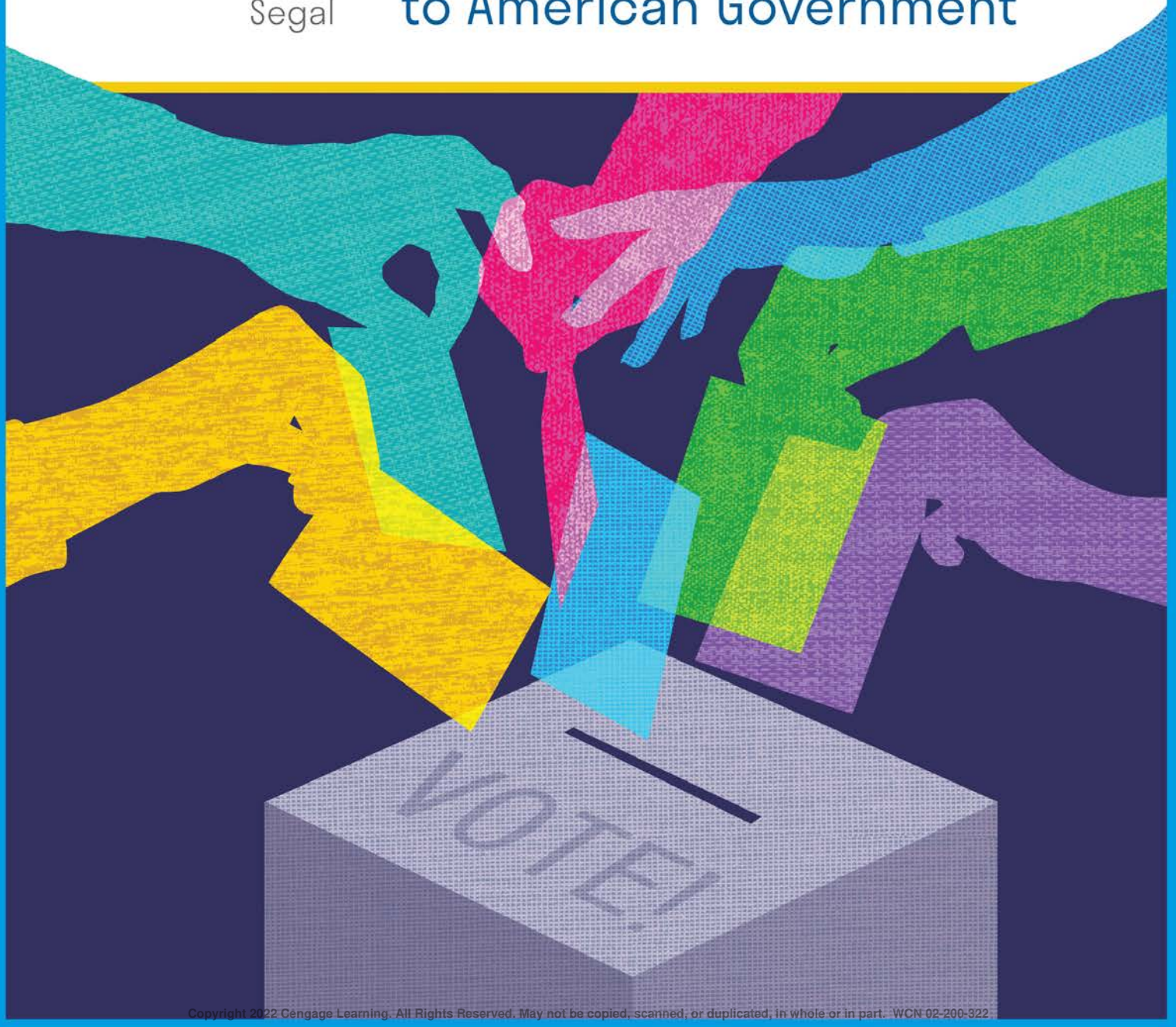
Gateways to Democracy

An Introduction to American Government

Geer
Herrera
Schiller
Segal



EDITION 5

Gateways to Democracy

An Introduction to American Government

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***Gateways to Democracy: An Introduction to American Government*, Fifth Edition**
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Letter to Instructors

Dear American Politics Instructor:

As teachers and scholars of American government, we have come together to write a textbook that engages students in both the process and the policy outcomes of the U.S. government. We present an updated lens through which we can examine the theoretical and structural foundations of American democracy and the resulting political process that demands an active and informed citizenry. To help students understand American democracy and see how they can be involved in their government, we peel back the layers of the political system to expose its inner workings and to examine how competing interests can both facilitate and block the people's will. In doing so, we use the conceptual framework of gateways. We contend that there are gates—formal and informal—that present obstacles to participation and empowerment. But there are also gateways that give students a chance to influence the process and to overcome the obstacles. The gateways framework helps students conceptualize participation and civic engagement—even democracy itself. Our book is both realistic and optimistic, contending that the American system can be open to the influence of students and responsive to their hopes and dreams—if they have information about how the system works. But we avoid cheerleading by also pointing out the many gates that undermine the workings of government. Although the size and complexity of the American constitutional system is daunting, it is imperative to prepare for the demands of democratic citizenship. This has never been truer than today, when we have a rapidly changing demographic balance within our population. Today groups that have been systematically disempowered in American politics and society, such as African Americans and second- and third-generation Latinos, are asserting their power in our politics. It is our hope that this textbook can awaken students and motivate them not only to learn about politics but to also participate actively throughout every stage of their lives.

In keeping with the theme of gates and gateways in American politics, we also open each chapter with a **vignette** that tells the story of an individual who has successfully navigated his or her own way in politics. The important role of the vignette for the instructor is to show the students how people have made a difference in American political and social life; our vignette subjects vary by historical era, career choice, gender, race, ethnicity, and party affiliation. We also include landmark **Supreme Court cases** related to every chapter's subject to show students the continuous and vital role the Court plays in both upholding and knocking down gates to policy implementation and political participation. We include **policy features** in each chapter to illustrate how the chapter's core content operates on a real-time, real-life basis. We also have an **Election 2020 feature** in each chapter. To prepare students to evaluate the vast amounts of data present in today's political discourse, we include a **Political Analytics feature** in each chapter, which asks students to look closely at visual representations of data and to think critically about what they see.

New to This Edition

- An even greater focus on diversity and participation that reflects both the changing demographic infrastructure in America today and the many protests that dotted the American landscape during 2020 and perhaps beyond.
- Expanded information about Donald Trump's presidency including extensive policy coverage as well as analysis of the Republican Party under Trump.
- Discussion of the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on the workings of American government.
- Coverage of the 2018 congressional elections and the 2020 presidential and congressional elections.
- An expanded section on protest politics, including #MeToo, Black Lives Matter, and gun policy social movements.
- Discussion of the reconfigured Supreme Court with new Justices Neil Gorsuch, Amy Coney Barrett, and Brett Kavanaugh, and the tenure of John Roberts as Chief Justice.

- New information about recent Supreme Court cases and their ramifications, such as *Bostock v. Clayton County* (2020) and *Department of Homeland Security v. Regents of the University of California* (2020).
- New opening chapter vignettes featuring Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Mayor Pete Buttigieg, and Dr. Anthony Fauci.
- Explanatory text to accompany all figures to help students interpret data.

MindTap: Your Course Stimulus Package

As an instructor tool, **MindTap** is here to simplify your workload, organize and immediately grade your students' assignments, and help 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 e-book for *Gateways to Democracy*, or in conjunction with the printed text.

Teaching American government remains a vitally important but constantly challenging task for all of us. We know that there are many books to choose from to use in your course. We believe that *Gateways to Democracy* has an innovative approach in reaching and engaging students across a range of backgrounds and enables instructors to more easily achieve their pedagogical goals in American government courses. We have seen it work for our students, and we know it will work for yours.

Sincerely,

John G. Geer, john.g.geer@vanderbilt.edu
Richard Herrera, herrera@asu.edu
Wendy J. Schiller, Wendy_Schiller@Brown.edu
Jeffrey A. Segal, jeffrey.segal@stonybrook.edu

Letter to Students

Dear Student:

Our book begins with a simple question: How does anyone exert political influence in a country of more than 330 million people? Students in American government classrooms across the country are grappling with this question as they develop an appreciation of their role in American public life. In our own classrooms, students ask us: What is my responsibility? Can I make a difference? Does my participation matter? How can I get my opinions represented? These are gateway questions that probe the opportunities and limits on citizen involvement in a democracy. For that reason, we not only provide you with essential information about the American political system but also show you how to become a **more powerful advocate for yourself** within that system. It is not enough to know what you want your government and society to be—you must learn how to make it happen. This course shows you how people from all walks of life have opened gateways to influence public policy, and it shows you the relevance of government in your life. It is our hope that this information motivates you not only to learn about politics but also to participate actively throughout every stage of your life.

In keeping with the theme of gates and gateways in American politics, we open each chapter with a vignette that tells the story of someone who has successfully navigated his or her way in politics. These are people like you who have different gender, ethnic, racial, and partisan backgrounds and who have made a difference in American political and social life. We also include other features focusing on the Supreme Court, public policy, the 2018 and 2020 elections, and data analysis that show you how politics plays out in the United States. All of these special features are designed to relate specifically to you—the student—to give you a blueprint with which to navigate the political system. What makes *Gateways to Democracy* different?

- Streamlined learning objectives and outcomes help you better understand the material and prepare for the graded assignments in the course. We have key terms and guide questions throughout each chapter.
- A focus on diversity reflects the changing demographic infrastructure in America, especially among young people, by providing new coverage of the politics and issues affecting all Americans in every chapter.
- Updated accounts of people who are changing American politics today are included.
- Current policy case studies are included on issues such as voter ID laws, fracking, drone warfare, government surveillance of citizens' communications, the Black Lives Matter social movement, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Benefits of Using MindTap as a Student

As a student, the benefits of using MindTap with this book are endless. With automatically graded practice quizzes and activities, an easily navigated learning path, and an interactive e-book, you will be able to test yourself in and outside the classroom with ease. The accessibility of current events coupled with interactive media makes the content fun and engaging. On your computer, phone, or tablet, MindTap is there when you need it, giving you easy access to flashcards, quizzes, readings, and assignments.

As teachers, our main goal both in this book and in the classroom is to empower you as active participants in American democracy. We know that you balance a lot of competing demands for your time, from other classes, to work, to family responsibilities. This book provides you with the core information you need to succeed in your American government classes, and just as important, to knock down the gates that may stand in your way to achieve your goals within the political system.

Sincerely,

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Richard Herrera, herrera@asu.edu
Wendy J. Schiller, Wendy_Schiller@Brown.edu
Jeffrey A. Segal, jeffrey.segal@stonybrook.edu

Resources

Students

Cengage Unlimited

Cengage Unlimited is the first-of-its-kind digital subscription that empowers students to learn more for less. Students get total access to everything Cengage has to offer on demand—in one place. That's 20,000 e-books, 2,300 digital learning products, and dozens of study tools across 70 disciplines and over 675 courses. Currently available in select markets. Details at www.cengage.com/unlimited.

MindTap

Access *Gateways to Democracy* 5e resources by visiting **www.cengage.com**. If you purchased MindTap access with your book, click on **"Register a Product"** and then enter your access code.

The Cengage Mobile App

Complete course work on the go with the *Cengage Mobile App*, which delivers a seamless course experience on a smartphone or tablet. Read or listen to your textbook, whether online or offline, and study with the help of flashcards, practice quizzes, and instant feedback from your instructor. You can receive due date reminders and complete assignments from the convenience of your mobile device!

Instructors

Access *Gateways to Democracy* 5e resources via **www.cengage.com/login.** Log in using your Cengage Learning single sign-on username and password or create a new instructor account by clicking on "**New Faculty User**" and following the instructions.

MINDTAP
From Cengage

MindTap for *Gateways to Democracy, 5e*

Printed Access Card ISBN: 9780357459263
Instant Access Code ISBN: 9780357459256

MindTap for *Gateways to Democracy*, 5e, is an immersive, outcomes-driven online learning experience built upon Cengage content and correlated to a core set of learning outcomes. MindTap is the platform that gives you complete control of your course to craft unique learning experiences that challenge students, build confidence, and elevate performance.

MindTap introduces students to core concepts from the beginning of your course using a simplified learning path that progresses from understanding to application. Built upon proven learning research and theory, auto-graded assessments and content are paired in a visually captivating side-by-side format.

A variety of activity types enable students to flex their critical thinking muscles while soaking in key concepts. Learners are encouraged to read with close attention, write persuasively with logic, interpret data, consider and articulate their own positions on key topics, and much more. You can further engage students with polling questions that spark discussion and activate learning.

MindTap also provides ample opportunities for students to check themselves for where they need extra help, as well as allowing faculty to measure and assess student progress. With the Cengage Mobile App, you also give your students the power to read, listen and complete activities on their mobile devices, so they're empowered to learn on their own terms.

Instructor Companion Website for *Gateways to Democracy*, 5e

ISBN: 9780357459225

This Instructor Companion Website is an all-in-one multimedia online resource for class preparation, presentation, and testing. Accessible through **www.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; an Instructor's 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.

The Instructor's Manual includes information about all of the activities and assessments available for each chapter and their correlation to specific learning objectives, an outline, key terms with definitions, a chapter summary, and several ideas for engaging with students with discussion questions, ice breakers, case studies, and social learning activities that may be conducted in an on-ground, hybrid, or online modality.

The Microsoft PowerPoint presentations are closely tied to the Instructor's Manual, providing ample opportunities for generating classroom discussion and interaction. They offer ready-to-use, visual outlines of each chapter which may be easily customized for your lectures. A guide to teaching online presents technological and pedagogical considerations and suggestions for teaching an introduction to American government course when you can't be in the same room with students.

Cognero for *Gateways to Democracy*, 5e

ISBN: 9780357459287

Cengage Learning Testing Powered by Cognero is a flexible online system that allows you to author, edit, and manage test bank content from multiple Cengage Learning solutions, create multiple test versions in an instant, and deliver tests from your LMS, your classroom, or wherever you want. The test bank for *Gateways to Democracy* 5e, contains learning objective–specific multiple-choice and essay questions for each chapter.

Acknowledgments

Writing the fifth edition of an introductory textbook requires a dedicated and professional publishing team. We were extremely fortunate to continue to work with a number of excellent people at Cengage Learning, including Lauren Gerrish and Erika Hayden who led comprehensive revisions, and Emily Hickey, who was an outstanding developmental editor. Laura Hildebrand has been a top notch manager who has elevated our work in this significantly revised edition with a greater focus on the vital role that traditionally underrepresented groups, such as African Americans and Latinos, play in forcing open gates that stand in the way of participation. Lori Hazard has been a vigilant director of the production process and Haripriya Lakshminarasiman has been terrific at updating our photos and images. We also want to thank our longtime Marketing Manager, Valerie Hartman, and the entire sales force at Cengage Learning for their tireless efforts to promote *Gateways to Democracy*.

Our gratitude goes to all those who worked on the various supplements offered with this text, especially the test bank and Instructor's Manual.

By definition, an American government textbook is a sweeping endeavor, and it would not be possible to succeed without our reviewers. They provided truly constructive input throughout the review and revision process. We list their names on the following page, and we are grateful to them for their contributions to this material's development.

Each of us would also like to thank the individuals who supported us throughout the project.

JOHN G. GEER: I would like to extend special thanks to Grayson Hoffman for her hard work and insights in pulling together new material for the fifth edition. As each edition goes into print, my debt to Jeff, Rick, and Wendy gets larger and larger. They are tremendous coauthors and even better friends. I am so lucky to work with them on this project. My deepest and most heartfelt appreciation goes to Beth Prichard Geer. Beth makes every part of my life better and supports me in all endeavors. It is a true joy to have a partner on life's amazing journey. For that, I will be forever grateful.

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Reviewers

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Amy Colon, SUNY Sullivan
Virginia Haysley, Lone Star College
Ellen Key, Appalachian State University
Greg Rabb, Jamestown Community College

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Jennifer Danielle Bachan, Houston Community College
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Matthew Dunne, Housatonic Community College
Jared Farley, New Mexico Military Institute
Chad Hankinson, Oklahoma State University
Kara Lindaman, Winona State University
Lisa Lawrason, Delta College
Kristina Mitchell, Texas Tech University
Ryane Straus, College of Saint Rose

About the Authors

John G. **Geer**

(PhD, Princeton University) is Ginny and Conner Searcy Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Professor of Political Science, and codirects the Vanderbilt Poll. Geer has published widely, including *In Defense of Negativity*, which won the Goldsmith Prize from the Shorenstein Center at Harvard University. Geer has been a visiting scholar at Harvard University and Princeton University. Geer teaches Introduction to American Politics, as well as specialty courses on elections and campaigns. His teaching has drawn much note, winning numerous teaching awards at both Arizona State University and Vanderbilt University. Geer is a frequent commentator in the press, with appearances on all the major networks (e.g., Fox News, CBS Evening News, CNN), and he has been quoted in newspapers ranging from *The New York Times* to *The Washington Post* to the *Los Angeles Times*. He has done interviews for major international outlets as well, such as BBC and Al Jazeera.

Richard **Herrera**

(PhD, University of California, Santa Barbara) is Professor Emeritus of Political Science in the School of Politics and Global Studies at Arizona State University. He directed the ASU Capital Scholars Washington, DC, Summer Internship program for fifteen years and taught American government for thirty years. He has contributed articles to the *American Political Science Review*, *Journal of Politics*, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, and *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*. His current research interests are focused on U.S. governors, their ideology, policy agendas, and representative functions. He taught courses in American Politics, American Political Parties, and American Politics and Film.

Wendy J. **Schiller**

(PhD, University of Rochester) is the Royce Family Professor of Teaching Excellence in Political Science, Professor of International and Public Affairs, and Chair of the Department of Political Science at Brown University (Twitter acct @profwschiller). She was legislative assistant for Senator Daniel P. Moynihan, a federal lobbyist for Governor Mario M. Cuomo, a Guest Scholar and PhD Fellow at the Brookings Institution, and a post-doctoral fellow at Princeton University. She has published *Electing the Senate: Indirect Democracy Before the Seventeenth Amendment* (2015) with Charles Stewart III, *The Contemporary Congress* (2003, 2005, 2015, 2017) with Burdett Loomis, and *Partners and Rivals: Representation in U.S. Senate Delegations* (2000). She teaches courses on a wide range of American politics topics, including Introduction to the American Political Process, The American Presidency, Congress and Public Policy, Parties and Interest Groups, and The Philosophy of the American Founding.

Jeffrey A. **Segal**

(PhD, Michigan State University) is SUNY Distinguished Professor in the Political Science Department at Stony Brook University. He has served as Visiting Senior Research Scholar at Princeton University, visiting Professor of American Government at Harvard University, and held a Guggenheim Fellowship. Segal is best known, with Harold Spaeth, as the leading proponent of the attitudinal model of Supreme Court decision making. Segal has twice won the Wadsworth Award for a book (with Spaeth) or article ten years or older with lasting influence on law and courts. He has also won the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Law and Court Section of APSA. His work on the influence of strategic factors on Supreme Court decision making won the Franklin Burdette Award from the American Political Science Association. With Lee Epstein, Kevin Quinn, and Andrew Martin, he won Green Bag's award for exemplary legal writing. He has also won a national award sponsored by the American Bar Association for innovative teaching and instructional methods and materials in law and courts.

Career Opportunities: Political Science

Introduction

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 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 guide is intended to spark ideas about 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. In the past decade, there has also been tremendous growth in homeland security, including jobs in mission support, immigration, travel security, and prevention and response. A former political science student of at least one of the authors is now an FBI agent.

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 and consider that each federal department, agency, and bureau you see looks to political science majors as 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. This does not even begin to account for the multitude of similar jobs in state and local governments that you might consider.

Campaigns, Elections, Polling, and Elected Office

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 nonpolitical career opportunities in marketing and survey design. You might also consider running for public office yourself.

Interest Groups and International and Nongovernmental Organizations

Is there a cause that you are especially passionate about? At least one interest group is likely working to see progress made on that issue. Many of the positions that one might find in for-profit companies also exist in their non-profit interest group and nongovernmental organization counterparts, including lobbying and high-level strategizing. Don't forget that there are also major international organizations—such as the United Nations, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)—where a degree in political science could be put to good use. While competition for those jobs tends to be fierce, 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 to you? Tens of thousands of people work for the State Department, both in Washington,

D.C., and in consulates throughout the world. They represent the diplomatic interests of the United States abroad. Entrance into the Foreign Service follows a process, starting with the Foreign Service Officers Test—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.

Journalism

Much of the content of online, newspaper, and television news concerns politics. Expert knowledge in the world of politics plus the ability to write well can land students in journalism positions where they can make a difference. Famous examples are *Washington Post* journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, who uncovered the Watergate scandal, and *Boston Globe* reporters Robby Robinson, Michael Rezendes, and Sacha Pfeiffer, who helped uncover the priest child-abuse scandal in Boston. Public speaking ability can then make radio or television careers more likely.

Graduate School

While not a career, graduate school may be the next step for you after completing your undergraduate degree. Earning a PhD or master's degree in political science could open additional doors to a career in academia as well as many of the professions mentioned here. If a career as a researcher in political science interests you, you should speak with your advisers 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 with regard to an internship in your field of interest. Not only does it give you a chance to experience life in the political science realm, but it can also lead to job opportunities later down the road and add experience to your résumé.

Skills

In addition to your political science classes, these 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: Presenting your ideas clearly and effectively is a vital skill in the modern economy. You can practice this skill in a formal class setting or through extracurricular activities that get you in front of a group.

Quantitative Analysis: As massive amounts of information are collected digitally, the nation is facing a drastic shortage of people with basic statistical skills to interpret and use these 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 résumé or cover letter. What can help is a demonstrated record of involvement in clubs and organizations, preferably in a leadership role. While many people think immediately of student government, most student clubs allow you the opportunity to demonstrate leadership skills.

Conclusion

We hope that reading this has sparked some ideas about potential future careers. As a next step, visit your college's career placement office 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!

1 Gateways to American Democracy

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person, or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."[1]

Shown on the next page, the gates of Columbia University where Barack Obama earned his undergraduate degree.

Steve Liss/The LIFE Images Collection/Getty Images

BARACK OBAMA
Columbia University

It is an American story. Barack Obama was not born into wealth or privilege, yet he secured fame and success. There are not many countries where it is possible for someone of humble origins to rise to the pinnacle of power and influence in the world. But in America it is possible because of the many gateways open to citizens.

Obama's life was not just one of modest beginnings but one shaped by diversity—an ever-increasing aspect of American life in the twenty-first century. Obama is multiracial, with a white mother and a black father. He spent his formative years in Indonesia following the divorce of his parents and his mother's remarriage. At age 10, Obama went to live with his grandparents in Hawaii, where he experienced many different cultures.

Obama faced his share of hardships growing up. Not having his father around was difficult, and the moves he made to Indonesia and Hawaii were inevitably unsettling. But his family focused on securing him a good education, which was part of the motivation for his moving back to the United States in the early 1970s.

In 1979, Obama enrolled at Occidental College in Los Angeles. During this time he became active in student organizations opposing South Africa's practice of apartheid—his first effort at using a gateway to influence public policy. After his sophomore year, Obama transferred to Columbia University in New York, completing a bachelor's degree in political science. His interest in politics and the pursuit of gateways of influence continued. After graduating, Obama moved to Chicago to work as a community organizer in Chicago's largely poor and black South Side.

Eventually, Obama enrolled in Harvard Law School, where he became the first African American president of the Harvard Law Review. This recognition drew national media attention and a contract from Random House to write a book about race relations, ultimately titled *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*. This memoir touched on themes of race and racial identity. It was also during Obama's stint at Harvard that he met Michelle Robinson, a Chicago South Side native and fellow lawyer who worked for the firm where he completed a summer internship. They married in 1992 and decided to live in Chicago to raise their family.

Learning Outcomes

- **LO 1-1** Identify the successes we have achieved and the obstacles we face in establishing a "more perfect union"
- **LO 1-2** Analyze how the constitutional system balances liberty and order
- **LO 1-3** Describe the political values and ideologies Americans share
- **LO 1-4** Evaluate American democracy for responsiveness and equality
- **LO 1-5** List the responsibilities of individuals in a democracy

Obama immersed himself in the African American community in Chicago. He directed the Illinois Vote project, which increased Black turnout in the 1992 election and registered hundreds of thousands of people to vote. Obama continued to pursue the gateway offered by elections. In 1996, Obama ran for and won an Illinois state senate seat, representing the 13th District of Illinois.

During his time as a state senator, Obama worked with both Republicans and Democrats. He helped to pass substantial amounts of legislation on issues ranging from health care and welfare reform to a bipartisan effort to monitor racial profiling in police activity.

Obama decided to run for U.S. Congress against Chicago alderman and incumbent congressman Bobby Rush in the 2000 Democratic primary. But Obama was not nearly as well-known as Rush, and he lost by 30 percentage points in the Democratic primary. It was a stinging defeat, yet it did not deter Obama. Four years later, he ran for an even bigger prize—the U.S. Senate. This time the well-known and potentially well-financed Democrats chose not to run, making it possible for him to win the primary. Obama's luck continued when the GOP nominee, Jack Ryan, faced a scandal involving his ex-wife and sex clubs, forcing him out of the race. That development opened wide a gate for Obama to win the Senate seat.

As he ran for Senate in 2004, he continued to gain national attention, so much so that he was invited to deliver the keynote address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention. On this huge stage, he gave an inspirational speech that propelled him to the top ranks of possible presidential candidates in 2008. He made the most of that opportunity, running a successful campaign that beat the formidable Hillary Clinton in the primaries and then went on to defeat the Republican nominee and war hero, Senator John McCain.

Holding aside one's personal beliefs about President Obama, his story is compelling, speaking directly to how the U.S. political system can work. You can be born into modest circumstances and yet, with grit, determination, and resilience, have a chance to do great things. Not everyone will become president, but everyone can make a real difference by getting involved just as Obama did. Obama's career is proof that the steps you take as a student to be involved in your community can take you places you cannot even imagine right now. The key is to start by walking through one of the many gateways of American politics.

Sandra Baker/Alamy Stock Photo

Gateways: Evaluating the American Political System

LO 1-1 Identify the successes we have achieved and the obstacles we face in establishing a "more perfect union"

This text, *Gateways to Democracy*, explains how citizen involvement has expanded American democracy and how each of you can also influence the political system. We call the avenues of influence "gateways." This text serves as a handbook for democratic citizenship by peeling back the layers of American government to reveal the ways you can get involved and to explain the reasons you should do so. The American political system is complicated, large, and sometimes frustrating. As the term *gateways* implies, there are also *gates*—obstacles to influence, institutional controls that limit access, and powerful interests that seem to block the people's will. We describe these as well because to be a productive and influential member of American society, you need to understand how the hurdles and portals of American politics work.

Key Questions

Have you encountered any recent political gates or gateways tied to COVID-19?

The COVID-19 crisis underscores that some hurdles we face arise from events outside of the control of any individual or government. Nearly all Americans have been affected by this pandemic. It has caused us to change our behavior and led local, state, and national governments to act, in an effort to solve the problem. As you read this book, we will make, where appropriate, links to our gates and gateways theme and this global health crisis.

If you step back and look at American democracy, there are many successes tied to the involvement of our citizens:

- Our institutions have proven stable, even under the worst crises (e.g., a civil war, terrorist attacks, global pandemics).
- Our government has had peaceful transitions of power.
- Citizens are able to protest those policies they oppose.
- Americans enjoy substantial freedom.
- American society has offered over our nearly 250 years a gateway to millions of immigrants.
- Americans exhibit more commitment to civic duty than do citizens in nearly all other major democracies.[2]
- Americans' support of marriage equality has surged over the past few years, underscoring a broadening commitment to civil rights.

Now, these successes do not mean that there are not problems:

- The government does not always respond to public opinion.
- Racial tensions persist across the country and have worsened lately.
- There are growing disparities in wealth among our citizens, yielding increasing inequality in the country.[3]
- The public's trust in the formal institutions of government has never been so low.[4]
- The rate of turnout tends to be the lowest among major democracies, although turnout in 2020 was at record highs.
- Distrust of some religious minorities, such as Muslims and Mormons, remains.[5]
- America has sought at times to erect gates (e.g. walls) to keep certain groups out.

- Political polarization is on the rise, limiting the chance for genuine deliberation among our citizens.[6]
- The U.S. national debt will be more than $40 trillion by 2024.[7]

To solve these and other problems and achieve the "more perfect Union" promised in the Constitution, the nation's citizens must be vigilant and engaged. We have framed our text with the goal of demonstrating the demands and rewards of democratic citizenship. As we explore the American political system, we place special emphasis on the multiple and varied connections among citizenship, participation, institutions, and public policy. Our focus is on the following gateway questions:

Vincent Mancuso/Alamy Stock Photo

Image 1.1 The death of George Floyd sparked protests around the country.

- How can you get yourself and your opinions represented in government?
- How can you make government more responsive, and responsible, to citizens?
- How can you make American democracy better?

Key Questions

Should government be responsive to all citizens or only to those who participate in politics in ways such as voting? What are some specific examples of public policy that might affect you as a college student?

The laws that regulate the American economy, social issues, and even political participation are examples of **public policy**—the actions by government to achieve a goal. In the arena of public policy, we determine who gets what, when, and how, and with what result. In each chapter of this book, we will examine a major public policy issue related to the topic. You will find that the public policy process is often divided into the following five stages:

public policy: *Intentional actions of government designed to achieve a goal.*

1. Identifying the problem
2. Placing the problem on the agenda of policy makers
3. Formulating a solution
4. Enacting and implementing the solution
5. Evaluating the effectiveness of the solution

These stages combine to form an ideal model of the process; however, this process does not always unfold so neatly. You will also find that individuals, organizations, and political institutions all work together to determine public policies: Congress, the president, the executive branch agency that deals with the issue, the courts, political parties, interest groups, and interested citizens. In each chapter, you will learn about an important public policy, analyze who the stakeholders are and how the policy is formed, evaluate the policy, and, finally, construct your own solution (see Public Policy and Gateways to Democracy).

JoeFox Liverpool/Radharc Images/Alamy Stock Photo

Image 1.2 The United States has great wealth, but far too many citizens face poverty and homelessness.

Democracy and the American Constitutional System

LO 1-2 Analyze how the constitutional system balances liberty and order

Today democracy is presumed to be a good form of government, and most would say it is the best form. Democracy is the type of government to which many nations aspire, but this has not always been true. Only in the past two centuries—partly through the example of the United States—has democracy gained favor. Let us sketch some of the fundamental aspects of American democracy.

Liberty and Order

democracy: *System of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them either directly or indirectly through elected representatives.*

self-government: *Rule by the people.*

majority rule: *Idea that a numerical majority of a group should hold the power to make decisions binding on the whole group; a simple majority.*

liberty: *Political value that cherishes freedom from an arbitrary exercise of power that constricts individual choice.*

order: *Political value in which the rule of law is followed and does not permit actions that infringe on the well-being of others.*

rule of law: *Legal system with known rules that are enforced equally against all people.*

minority rights: *Idea that the majority should not be able to take certain fundamental rights away from those in the minority.*

constitutional system: *System of government in which people set up and agree on the basic rules and procedures that will govern them.*

Literally and most simply, **democracy** is rule by the people, or **self-government**. In a democracy, the citizens hold political authority, and they develop the means to govern themselves. In practice, that means rule by the majority, and in the years before American independence, **majority rule** had little appeal. In 1644, John Cotton, a leading clergyman of the colonial period, declared democracy "the meanest and worst of all forms of government."[8] Even after American independence, Edmund Burke, a British political philosopher and politician, wrote that a "perfect democracy is . . . the most shameless thing in the world."[9] At the time democracy was associated with mob rule, and mobs were large, fanatical, ignorant, and dangerous. If the mob ruled, the people would suffer. There would be no **liberty** or safety; there would be no **order**. Eighteenth-century mobs destroyed private property, burned effigies of leaders they detested, tarred and feathered their enemies, and threatened people who disagreed with them. In fact, such events occurred in the protests against British rule in the American colonies, and they were fresh in the minds of those who wrote the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

John Adams, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and later the nation's second president (1797–1801), was not a champion of this kind of democracy. "Democracy," he wrote, "is more bloody than either aristocracy or monarchy. Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There is never a democracy that did not commit suicide."[10] Adams knew about mobs and their effects firsthand. As a young lawyer before the Revolution, he agreed to defend British soldiers who had been charged with murder for firing on protesters in the streets of Boston. The soldiers' cause was unpopular, for the people of Boston detested the British military presence. But Adams believed that, following British law, the soldiers had a right to counsel (a lawyer to defend them) and to a fair trial. In later years, he considered his defense of these British soldiers "one of the best pieces of service I ever rendered my country."[11]

Why? In defending the soldiers, Adams was standing up for the **rule of law**, the principle that could prevent mob rule and keep a political or popular majority under control so it could not trample on **minority rights**. An ancient British legal principle, the rule of law holds that all people are equal before the law, all are subject to the law, and no one is above it. Adams and the others who wrote America's founding documents believed in a **constitutional system** in which the people set up and agree on the basic rules and procedures that will govern them. A constitutional system is a government of laws, not of men. Without a constitution and rule of

law, an unchecked majority could act to promote the welfare of some over the welfare of others, and society would be torn apart.

The American constitutional system, therefore, serves to protect both liberty and order. The Constitution sets up a governmental structure with built-in constraints on power (gates) and multiple points of access to power (gateways). It also has a built-in means for altering the basic rules and procedures of governance through amendments. As you might expect, the procedure for passing amendments comes with its own set of gates and gateways.

The Granger Collection, NYC

Image 1.3 Paul Revere printed this famous engraving of the Boston Massacre in 1770. Emphasizing the shedding of innocent blood—five colonists died—it rallied Bostonians to resist British tyranny. Evidence at the trial of the soldiers indicated that they were provoked by the mob with taunts, clubs, and stones. Lawyer John Adams argued for the defense.

The Constitution as Gatekeeper

"If men were angels," wrote James Madison, a leading author of the Constitution and later the nation's fourth president (1809–17), "no government would be necessary. . . . In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men," he continued, "the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself" (see *Federalist* 51 in the Appendix). Madison and the other **Framers** of the Constitution recognized that the government they were designing had to be strong enough to rule but not strong enough to take away the people's rights. In other words, the Constitution had to serve as a gatekeeper, both allowing and limiting access to power at the same time.

Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and the other **Founders** had read many of the great political theorists. They drew, for example, on the ideas of the British political philosophers Thomas Hobbes and John Locke in perceiving the relationship between government and the governed as a **social contract**. If people lived in what these philosophers called a state of nature, without the rule of law, conflict would be unending, and the strong would destroy the weak. To secure order and safety, individuals come together to form a government and agree to live by its rules. In return, the government agrees to protect life, liberty, and property. Life, liberty, and property, said Locke, are **natural (unalienable) rights**—rights so fundamental that government cannot take them away.

But these ideas about government as a social contract were untested theories when Madison and others began to write the Constitution. There were no working examples in other nations. The only model for self-government was ancient Athens, where the people had governed themselves in a **direct democracy**. In Athens, citizens met

TCD/Prod.DB/Alamy Stock Photo

Image 1.4 Alexander Hamilton, a key player in this nation's founding, has risen to fame in modern day since the release of the hit Broadway musical about his life and legacy. The show's impact on popular culture is a reminder of the importance of highlighting lesser-known histories in innovative ways.

Key Questions

According to political philosophers, people agree to social contracts in forming a government like the one in the United States. What do you agree to do as part of that social contract?

Framers: *The people who were involved in writing the Constitution.*

Founders: *The people who were involved in establishing the United States, whether at the time of the Declaration of Independence or the writing of the Constitution.*

social contract: *Theory that government has only the authority accorded it by the consent of the governed.*

natural (unalienable) rights: *Rights that every individual has and that government cannot legitimately take away.*

direct democracy: *Form of democracy in which political power is exercised directly by citizens.*

Public Policy and Gateways to Democracy

The Gap Between Minimum Wage and Living Wage

The first federal minimum wage requirement was signed into law by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1938 as part of the Fair Labor Standards Act; it set the minimum wage at 25 cents per hour and established a 44-hour workweek. States could mandate pay levels above the federal minimum wage, but they could not go below it. While he was lobbying Congress and the public on behalf of the bill, President Roosevelt said that the United States should give "all our able-bodied working men and women a fair day's pay for a fair day's work."[12] Others have also argued that individuals, families, and communities must be able to earn a living wage in order to rise above the poverty level, which would in turn give them more time and energy to participate in the democratic process.

Today the federal minimum wage is set at $7.25, although more than twenty-five states require employers to pay more than that wage.[13] Still, even at that wage, working full time leaves these workers well below what is called a "living wage." A living wage is not an extravagant level of income. Rather it involves the ability to provide the necessities of life, such as food, shelter, and health care. Given that standard, many workers in this country are well below the poverty level. Table 1.1 shows the gap between the minimum wage and the living wage in each state and the District of Columbia. In forty-seven states, the formal minimum wage is below a wage that would allow these workers to climb out of poverty. In the three states where the minimum wage is higher than the living wage, it is only by less than one dollar. In cases like the state of Arkansas, the gap is about 60 cents (which is still about $1,200 a year). In Virginia, the gap is $6.92 which yields an income difference of about $13,800. These data underscore why there have been numerous calls for increasing the minimum wage. The case becomes even more compelling when you consider these data only consider workers as supporting themselves. If they are supporting a family, the gap grows considerably.

Even with the data from Table 1.1, there are reasons not to raise the minimum wage. The central argument of opponents of raising the minimum wage is that most of these jobs are located in small businesses that cannot afford to pay the higher wages. Employers cannot hire more workers at a higher rate, and in fact they may be forced to fire existing workers if the minimum wage is increased. The demands of maintaining profitability could force such actions. Those who oppose raising the minimum wage also argue that open trade policies have given an unfair advantage to foreign manufacturers that can hire workers at very low wages, and so produce and sell goods for less.

It is difficult, however, to assess the impact of raising the minimum wage on job growth or trade imbalances because there are so many other factors that affect the economy. For example, the last raise in the federal minimum wage occurred in 2009 in the midst of a major recession caused by a crash in the housing market. How many jobs were lost due to the recession, and how many resulted from the hike in the minimum wage? It is possible that the increased minimum wage contributed to a decline in jobs, but it is also possible that the increase had no effect at all in the larger context of an economic downturn. Economists and other experts have not reached a consensus on this question. This issue takes on greater significance in the coming years as the American economy recovers from the massive jobs losses triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In making a policy choice, you must judge what President Franklin Roosevelt called a "fair day's pay for a fair day's work." In the context of the American democracy, the minimum wage debate raises fundamental questions about the government's role in guaranteeing equality of economic opportunity. This debate over the government's role in supporting a basic level of income has taken on much greater importance in light of the COVID-19 crisis. Consider the March 2020 coronavirus

Table 1.1 Minimum Wage vs. Living Wage by State

	Wage Gap	Living Wage (1 adult)	Minimum Wage		Wage Gap	Living Wage (1 adult)	Minimum Wage
Alabama	**$4.08**	$11.33	$7.25	Montana	**$2.73**	$11.38	$8.65
Alaska	**$2.70**	$12.89	$10.19	Nebraska	**$2.02**	$11.02	$9.00
Arkansas	**$0.62**	$10.62	$10.00	Nevada	**$2.26**	$11.26	$9.00
Arizona	**$0.32**	$11.68	$12.00	New Hampshire	**$5.04**	$12.29	$7.25
California	**$1.61**	$14.61	$13.00	New Jersey	**$2.92**	$13.92	$11.00
Colorado	**$1.19**	$13.19	$12.00	New Mexico	**$2.25**	$11.25	$9.00
Connecticut	**$1.13**	$13.13	$12.00	New York	**$4.01**	$15.09	$11.80
DC	**$2.76**	$17.76	$15.00	North Carolina	**$4.54**	$11.79	$7.25
Delaware	**$3.43**	$12.68	$9.25	North Dakota	**$3.87**	$11.12	$7.25
Florida	**$3.61**	$12.17	$8.56	Ohio	**$2.08**	$10.78	$8.70
Georgia	**$7.31**	$12.46	$5.15	Oklahoma	**$3.70**	$10.95	$7.25
Hawaii	**$5.63**	$15.73	$10.10	Oregon	**$1.12**	$13.12	$12.00
Idaho	**$3.79**	$11.04	$7.25	Pennsylvania	**$4.20**	$11.45	$7.25
Illinois	**$2.77**	$12.77	$10.00	Rhode Island	**$1.85**	$12.35	$10.50
Indiana	**$3.82**	$11.07	$7.25	South Carolina	**$4.30**	$11.55	$7.25
Iowa	**$3.64**	$10.89	$7.25	South Dakota	**$1.08**	$10.38	$9.30
Kansas	**$3.71**	$10.96	$7.25	Tennessee	**$3.50**	$10.75	$7.25
Kentucky	**$3.57**	$10.82	$7.25	Texas	**$4.23**	$11.48	$7.25
Louisiana	**$4.03**	$11.28	$7.25	Utah	**$4.33**	$11.58	$7.25
Maine	**$0.09**	$11.91	$12.00	Vermont	**$1.61**	$12.57	$10.96
Maryland	**$4.08**	$15.08	$11.00	Virginia	**$6.92**	$14.17	$7.25
Massachusetts	**$1.21**	$13.96	$12.75	Washington	**$0.20**	$13.30	$13.50
Michigan	**$1.64**	$11.29	$9.65	West Virginia	**$2.09**	$10.84	$8.75
Minnesota	**$1.87**	$11.87	$10.00	Wisconsin	**$4.16**	$11.41	$7.25
Missouri	**$1.69**	$11.14	$9.45	Wyoming	**$5.95**	$11.10	$5.15
Mississippi	**$3.79**	$11.04	$7.25				

Sources: Amy K. Glasmeier, "Living Wage Calculator," Massachusetts Institute of Technology, accessed February 11, 2020, http://livingwage.mit.edu, and "State Minimum Wages: 2020 Minimum Wages by State," National Conference of State Legislatures, accessed February 11, 2020, https://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/state-minimum-wage-chart.aspx#Table.

stimulus bill, Families First Coronavirus Response Act, passed by Congress and signed by President Trump. The bill provided for direct payments made to Americans to help navigate the economic fallout of the country largely closing down to mitigate the crisis. Most individuals earning less than $75,000 could expect a onetime cash payment of $1,200. Married couples would each receive a check, and families would get $500 per child. That means a family of four earning less than $150,000 could expect about $3,400. The government sought to provide a base level of income for a large swath of the public.[14]

Construct Your Own Policy

1. Using the table, determine the wage gap in your state. Do you think the minimum wage should be increased? If you wanted to change the minimum wage laws in your area, what level of government would you have to lobby—local, state, federal, or a combination?
2. Construct a minimum wage policy that takes into account a worker's age, education, family circumstance, and presence of a national crisis.

together to debate and to vote. That was possible because only property-owning males were citizens, and they were few in number and had similar interests and concerns.[15]

But the new United States was nothing like the old city-state of Athens. It was an alliance of thirteen states—former colonies—with nearly 4 million people spread across some 360,000 square miles. Direct democracy was impractical for such a large and diverse country, so those who wrote the Constitution created a **representative democracy** in which the people elect representatives who govern in their name. Some observers, including the Framers, call this arrangement a **republic**, a form of government in which power derives from the citizens, but their representatives make policy and govern according to existing law.

representative democracy: *Form of democracy in which citizens elect public officials to make political decisions and formulate laws on their behalf.*

republic: *Form of government in which power derives from citizens, but public officials make policy and govern according to existing law.*

Could a republic work? No one knew, certainly not the Framers. The government they instituted was an experiment, and they developed their own theories about how it would work. Madison, for example, rejected the conventional view that a democracy had to be small and homogeneous so as to minimize conflict. He argued that size and diversity were assets because competing interests in a large country would balance and control—or check—one another and prevent abuse of power. Madison called these competing interests **factions**, and he believed that the most enduring source of faction was "the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold, and those who are without property, have ever formed distinct interests in society," he wrote. "Those who are creditors, and those who are debtors, fall under a like discrimination. A landed interest, a manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, a monied interest, with many lesser interests, grow up of necessity in civilized nations, and divide them into different classes, actuated by different sentiments and views" (see *Federalist* 10 in the Appendix).

faction: *Defined by James Madison as any group that places its own interests above the aggregate interests of society.*

In a pure democracy, where the people ruled directly, Madison expected that passions would outweigh judgments about the common good. Each individual would look out for himself, for his self-interest, and not necessarily for the interests of society as a whole, which is what we might call **civic interest**. In a republic, however, the people's representatives would of necessity have a broader view. Moreover, they would, Madison assumed, come from the better educated, a natural elite. The larger the republic, the larger the districts from which the representatives would be chosen, and thus the more likely that they would be civic-minded leaders of the highest quality. More important, in a large republic, it would be less likely that any one faction could form a majority. In a small seaside republic, for example, it would be possible for fishing interests to form a majority that could pass laws to the detriment of non-fishing interests. In another small republic, a religious sect could form a majority. But in a large and diverse republic, such narrow minded majorities would not be possible. Interests would balance each other out, and selfish interests would actually be checked by majority rule.

civic interest: *Concern for the well-being of society and the nation as a whole.*

Key Questions

Is it in your self-interest to participate in politics? How do you make most political choices, with your heart or with your mind? How did Madison think most people made political decisions?

Balance, control, order—these values were as important to the Framers as liberty. So while the Constitution vested political authority in the people, it also set up a governing system designed to prevent any set of individuals, any political majority, or even the

Legislative Branch

J Main/Shutterstock.com

Makes the laws

Executive Branch

Vacclav/Shutterstock.com

Executes the laws

Judicial Branch

Brandon Bourdages/Shutterstock.com

Interprets the laws

Figure 1.1 The Three Branches of Government

Within the federal government, power is divided into three separate branches.

government itself from becoming too powerful. The Framers purposely set up barriers and gates that blocked the excesses associated with mob rule.

Consequently, although the ultimate power lies with the people, the Constitution divides power both horizontally and vertically. Within the federal government, power is channeled into three different branches—the **legislative branch** (Congress), which makes the laws; the **executive branch** (the president and the government departments, or bureaucracy), which executes the laws; and the **judicial branch** (the Supreme Court and the federal courts), which interprets the laws (see Figure 1.1). This horizontal division of power is referred to as the **separation of powers**. To minimize the chance that one branch will become so strong that it can abuse its power and harm the citizenry, each branch has some power over the other two in a system known as **checks and balances**. The Constitution also divides power vertically, into layers, between the national government and the state governments. This arrangement is known as **federalism**. In a further division of powers, state governments create local governments.

The American constitutional system thus simultaneously provides gateways for access and gates that limit access. The people govern themselves, but they do so indirectly and through a system that disperses power among many competing interests. This textbook explores both the gateways and the gates that channel and block the influence of citizens.

legislative branch: *The branch of the federal government that makes the laws.*

executive branch: *The branch of the federal government that executes the laws.*

judicial branch: *The branch of the federal government that interprets the laws.*

separation of powers: *Government structure in which authority is divided among branches (executive, legislative, and judicial), with each holding separate and independent powers and areas of responsibility.*

checks and balances: *Government structure that authorizes each branch of government (executive, legislative, and judicial) to share powers with the other branches, thereby holding some scrutiny of and control over the other branches.*

federalism: *System of government in which sovereignty is constitutionally divided between national and state governments.*

American Political Culture

LO 1-3 Describe the political values and ideologies Americans share

As an experiment, the American republic has been open to change in the course of the nation's history. Despite their theorizing, the Framers could not have anticipated exactly how it would develop. Madison was right, however, about the enduring influence of factions. The people quickly divided themselves into competing interests and shortly into competing **political parties**, groups organized to win elections. The process by which competing interests determine who gets what, when, and how is what we call **politics**.[16]

Madison was right, too, about the sources of division, which are often centered in the unequal distribution of property and competing ideas about how far government should go to reduce inequality. Public opinion about such matters is sometimes described along a scale that ranges from left to right, and when people have a fairly consistent set of views over a

political parties: *Broad coalitions of interests organized to win elections in order to enact a commonly supported set of public policies.*

politics: *Process by which people make decisions about who gets what, when, and how.*

Key Questions

Do you think of yourself as liberal, conservative, or moderate when it comes to politics? Senator Bernie Sanders (D-VT), who ran for the Democratic nomination for president in 2016 and 2020, describes himself as a democratic socialist. What do you think that description means?

range of policy choices, they are said to have a **political ideology**—that is, a coherent way of thinking about government—a philosophy, so to speak. In contrast, **party identification**, or partisanship, is a psychological attachment to a particular party. This attachment is related to political ideology, but it tends to be more personal than philosophical.

A person's ideology can be a strong clue as to what he or she thinks about politics. On the left end of the scale are **liberals** who favor government efforts to increase equality, including higher rates of taxes on the wealthy than on the poor and greater provision of social benefits, such as health care, unemployment insurance, and welfare payments to support those in need. **Conservatives**, on the right, believe that lower taxes will prompt greater economic growth that will ultimately benefit everyone, including the poor. Thus, liberals support a large and active government that will regulate the economy, while conservatives fear that such a government will suppress individual liberty and create a dependency that actually harms those it aims to help. Figure 1.2 captures this ideological dimension.

political ideology: *Set of coherent political beliefs that offers a philosophy for thinking about the scope of government.*

michelmond/Shutterstock.com

Image 1.5 Bernie Sanders led a movement that sought to transform American politics. While he was unable to capture the Democratic nomination for president, he did reinvigorate the progressive wing of the party.

The left-right division is not just about economics, however. For social issues, liberals generally favor less government interference, while conservatives favor rules that will uphold traditional moral values. Conservatives are, therefore, more likely to oppose abortion and same-sex marriage, while liberals are more likely to favor a woman's right to make decisions over reproductive matters as well as the right of same-sex couples to wed.

Although terms such as *conservative* and *liberal* are often used to label American political attitudes, it is often more complicated because of the mix of economic and social issues. In addition, Americans are often not ideologically consistent in their orientation to politics. They are likely to take positions on various issues, leaning left on some and right on others. In fact, many Americans are **moderates**, not seeing themselves as ideologically extreme. A sizable number of Americans also describe themselves as **libertarians**, believing that government should not interfere in either economic matters or social matters. Others take a **populist** perspective, opposing concentrated wealth and adhering to traditional moral values.

party identification: *Psychological attachment to a political party; partisanship.*

These ideological frameworks start to crystallize when people are in their early twenties, especially as they start to learn more about politics and come across competing perspectives. College can be an especially formative period when people start to forge their ideological lenses.

liberals: *Individuals who have faith in government to improve people's lives, believing that private efforts are insufficient. In the social sphere, liberals usually support diverse lifestyles and tend to oppose any government action that seeks to shape personal choices.*

Despite the diversity of American **political culture**, we generally favor **individualism** over communal approaches to property and poverty, especially in comparison to the industrialized democracies of Europe and elsewhere in the world. The United States spends less on government programs to help less-well-off people than many other countries, and it has historically refrained from assuming control of business enterprises, such as railroads and banks, except

conservatives: *Individuals who distrust government, believing that free markets offer better ways than government involvement to improve people's livelihood. In the social sphere, conservatives have more faith in government's ability to enforce traditional values.*

Figure 1.2 American Political Ideology

Political ideology has been described in many ways. In one popular version, political thought is plotted on a continuum from left (liberal) to right (conservative).

in times of crisis. The United States tends to favor **capitalism**, an economic system in which business enterprises and key industries are privately owned, as opposed to **socialism**, in which they are owned by government. Yet, to prevent the worst abuses of capitalism, which can arise as businesses pursue profit to the detriment of citizens, Congress has passed laws that regulate privately owned businesses and industries. For example, government monitors banks and financial markets, ensures airline safety, and protects workers from injury on the job.

These regulations tend to moderate vast inequalities in wealth as well. Though prizing individualism, American political culture also has a long-standing tradition of **egalitarianism**. Americans rejected kings in the Revolution and titles of nobility in the Constitution. They also rejected British inheritance laws, which gave virtually all property to the eldest male. With estates divided more equally, and with a vast frontier that allowed land ownership to spread broadly, property in the United States was never as concentrated in the hands of a few as it had been in Europe. This greater equality, in turn, produced a political culture that values each individual's ability to achieve wealth and social status through hard work, not inheritance, and supports a free enterprise economic system, within limits. These observations were first made by Alexis de Tocqueville, one of the many Europeans who traveled to the United States in the nineteenth century to investigate the American experiment. His *Democracy in America* (1835) is a classic study of American institutions and culture. It remains insightful today for its thoughtful observations of American politics and character.

De Tocqueville was impressed by the extent to which individual Americans participated in political life. In a republic, policy making should reflect the will of the people expressed through their elected representatives and interest groups. Madison envisioned that the people's representatives managing the policy-making process would be an elite—well-educated people of "merit." But if the people divide into different classes, as Madison also envisioned, there is a danger to democracy if the people's representatives are an elite who represent only their own interests and not civic-minded leaders who consider the common good. In the early 1950s, the sociologist C. Wright Mills in fact wrote about a narrow **power elite** made up of leaders from corporations, government, and the military who controlled the gates and gateways to power. But a few years later, the political scientist Robert Dahl took issue with Mills and argued that policy making is more **pluralist**, with authority held by different groups in different areas. In this view, coal companies, as stakeholders, have a large say in coal policy, and farmers, as stakeholders, have a large say in farm policy, rather than a single power elite controlling both policy areas. While it is true, for example, that the coal industry pursues its interests vigorously, so do other industries. Elected representatives seek to balance these various interests even as they seek to do what is best for their constituents. The fact that no one group has a monopoly on power suggests that a more **majoritarian** policy-making process is in the making, in which those with a numerical majority hold the authority.

moderates: *Individuals who are in the middle of the ideological spectrum and do not hold consistently strong views about whether government should be involved in people's lives.*

libertarians: *Those who generally believe that government should refrain from acting to regulate either the economy or moral values.*

populists: *Those who oppose concentrated wealth and adhere to traditional moral values.*

political culture: *A shared way of thinking about community and government and the relationship between them.*

individualism: *Set of beliefs holding that people, and not government, are responsible for their own well-being.*

capitalism: *Economic system in which businesses and key industries are privately owned and in which individuals, acting on their own or with others, are free to create businesses.*

socialism: *Economic system in which the government owns major industries.*

egalitarianism: *Belief in human equality that disdains inherited titles of nobility and inherited wealth.*

power elite: *Small handful of decision makers who hold authority over a large set of issues.*

pluralist: *A political arrangement where power is spread across groups and individuals that yields shared governing.*

majoritarian: *System of policy making in which those with a numerical majority hold authority.*

Responsiveness and Equality: Does American Democracy Work?

LO 1-4 Evaluate American democracy in terms of responsiveness and equality

Does American democracy work? That is a question we will be asking in every chapter of this text, and we invite you to start working on an answer. As citizens, you have both a right and a responsibility to judge the government because it is *your* government.

Darren McCollester/Getty Images News/Getty Images

Image 1.6 President Trump's rhetoric and behavior have rocked the political world by tapping into the anger and frustration many Americans felt about the political system and then challenging long held norms.

To guide your thinking, we focus on two basic themes, **responsiveness** and **equality**. Is government responsive to the needs of its citizens? Do all citizens have an equal chance to make their voices heard? We ask you to keep these themes in mind as you learn about the U.S. political system. To give you a basis for making a judgment, we inform you of the findings of political scientists who have been asking and answering these questions for decades. Throughout this text, we present the latest data that speak to these broad issues. It is important to remember that we are not offering our opinions about government; instead, we are putting forward the most compelling evidence and theories, from a variety of perspectives, over the past fifty or so years. It is up to you to consider them and form your own conclusions.

responsiveness: *Idea that government should implement laws and policies that reflect the wishes of the public and any changes in those wishes.*

equality: *Idea that all individuals are equal in their moral worth and so must be equal in treatment under the law and have equal access to the decision-making process.*

monarchy: *System of government that assigns power to a single person who inherits that position and rules until death.*

autocracy: *System of government in which the power to govern is concentrated in the hands of an individual ruler.*

oligarchy: *System of government in which the power to govern is concentrated in the hands of a powerful few, usually wealthy individuals.*

public goods: *Goods or benefits provided by government from which everyone benefits and from which no one can be excluded.*

One way to begin to evaluate American democracy, and to appreciate it, is to look briefly at alternative models of government. In a **monarchy**, an **autocracy**, and an **oligarchy**, a single person or a small elite rules society. Such systems are by definition undemocratic. Rulers in these systems have little reason or need to be responsive to the people. They hold most of the power and are not generally accountable to those they rule. They may try to satisfy the people with programs that meet basic needs for food and safety, but they do so to ensure control. These rulers have little regard for the opinions of the people and do not want them to be engaged in public life. In these systems, the rulers tend to be excessively wealthy, and the people are likely to be impoverished. To maintain order, the rulers typically rely on a strong army or a secret police force to keep the people in line through fear and intimidation. Rulers in such systems are overthrown when dissatisfaction rises to a level at which citizens are willing to risk their lives in open revolt, as they did in Iran in 2018, or when the army or police conspire to replace one ruler with another.

In contrast, a democracy asks its citizens to be actively engaged in their own governance, for the benefit of all. As the preamble to the U.S. Constitution states, the people create government (agree to a social contract) to "establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity." The American system of government fundamentally provides protection from foreign enemies and from internal disorder; it also strives to meet the common needs of all citizens.

To promote the general welfare, the government develops public policy, as we have seen. Through incentives, it can alter the actions of individuals that lead collectively to bad outcomes. Consider the following example. If everyone drives to work, pollution increases and more resources are consumed. If a few people then decide to take the bus, those decisions, while admirable, do not yield a cleaner environment or save many resources. But if government incentives, such as making buses free, encourage lots more people to take public transportation, the result is a cleaner environment and saving of resources.

The government often has a stake in pursuing what economists call **public goods**, goods from which everyone benefits. The core idea is that no one can be excluded. We all get the benefits of clean air, even if we have been driving cars and not taking buses. The fact that people cannot, by definition, be denied access to public goods creates disincentives for

people to contribute to their provision. Government can require people to contribute to public goods through taxation. This is a primary justification for government. **Private goods**, by contrast, can be extended to some individuals and denied to others. When a government awards a contract to build a new library, the firm that wins the contract gets private goods (that is, money) from the government. The firms that lost the bid are denied that chance.

private goods: *Goods or benefits provided by government in which most of the benefit falls to the individuals, families, or companies receiving them.*

Who determines what goods, whether private or public, the government should provide, at what levels, and how to pay for them? These are core public policy problems. There are competing interests at every point in determining who gets what, when, and how. Politics is the process by which the people determine how government will respond. And it is in evaluating the basic fairness of government's response, and the basic equality of the people's general welfare that is thus secured, that we see whether American democracy is working.

Representative democracy succeeds when there is constant interaction between the people and the government. Government must be responsive to the needs and opinions of the people, and the public must find ways to hold government accountable. Government officials who are unresponsive to the people need to be removed from office. Elections provide the most common way to remove elected officials and are the primary mechanism for forging responsiveness. But unelected officials are also responsive to the public. The president appoints Supreme Court justices, with the advice and consent of the Senate, and those justices generally issue judgments that are consistent with public opinion. The bureaucrats who are hired to work in government departments carry out laws that the people's representatives have passed and the president has signed. In addition, work in government is always subject to review and investigation by other branches of government, by the media, and by citizen watchdog groups.

Perhaps complicating the government's requirement to be responsive is the changing nature of policy demands made by its citizens. In 2014, a majority of kindergartners were nonwhite—the first time in American history.[17] In just a few years, those kindergartners will be of voting age, helping to redefine the American electorate. Figure 1.3 confirms this observation. By 2045, whites will no longer represent a majority of the voting population.[18] To be sure, nonwhites share many issues that are of concern to white Americans, such as a strong economy. But even so, this change will alter American politics in fundamental ways. People with different racial and ethnic backgrounds may hold views about the role of government and about specific policies that may be different than other groups.

Key Questions

What do the changing demographics of the United States mean for our national political discussions? What is the difference between equality of opportunity and equality of outcome?

For a government to respond fairly to citizens, all citizens must have an opportunity to participate in it. Each citizen must have a chance to have his or her voice heard, either by voting or by participating in the political process and public life. These ideas form the basis of **political equality**. If citizens are not treated equally by the government, with the same degree of fairness, then the foundation of democratic government is weakened. Simply put, democracy requires political equality, and political equality requires democracy.

political equality: *The idea that people should have equal amounts of influence in the political system.*

The notion of equality was enshrined in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." But this ringing statement did not announce an enforceable right, and government under the Constitution has in the course of the nation's history involved profound inequalities, most notably permitting slavery and a severe restriction of the civil rights of the African American minority for nearly two centuries. The American constitutional system was nearly a century and a half old before it guaranteed women the right to vote. Other racial and

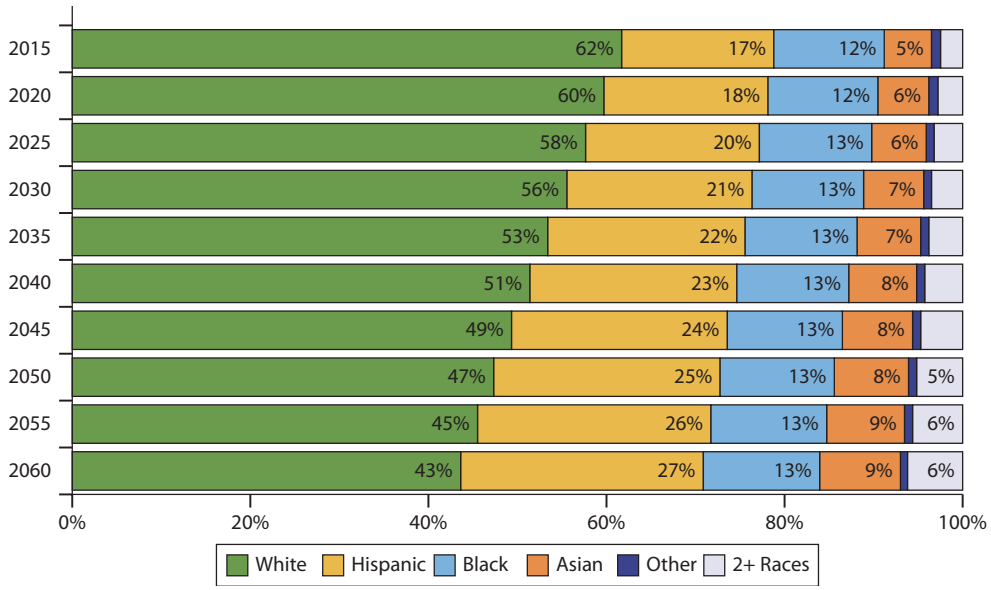


Figure 1.3 Increasing Minority Population in the United States

The growing Latino and Asian populations will likely make the United States a minority-majority country within three decades.

Note: Numbers may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Source: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/03/14/the-us-will-become-minority-white-in-2045-census-projects/.

ethnic minorities have had to challenge the system to secure their rights, and, as the next chapters demonstrate, civil rights are still evolving. One way to evaluate American democracy is to evaluate the degree to which political equality has been achieved.

An example of the ongoing fight for civil rights can be seen in the recent 2018 Georgia gubernatorial race, which sparked allegations of illegal efforts to shrink the number of eligible voters. There are still gates in place to exclude specific citizens from voting through methods like voter suppression and passage of laws that make it harder, especially for the poor, to vote. In 2019, Georgia removed over 300,000 voters in what officials called routine removals of inactive voters. Voting rights advocates, including Stacey Abrams' nonprofit, Fair Fight, see these purges as a type of voter suppression that disenfranchises mostly Democratic low-income voters, young voters, and voters of color.[19] It is important to keep recent events like this in mind when evaluating political equality in America.

equality of opportunity: *Expectation that citizens may not be discriminated against based on race, gender, or national background and that every citizen should have an equal chance to succeed in life.*

equality of outcome: *Expectation that equality is achieved if results are comparable for all citizens regardless of race, gender, or national background or that such groups are proportionally represented in measures of success in life.*

There are other aspects of equality. **Equality of opportunity** is one aspect—the expectation that citizens will be treated equally before the law and have an equal opportunity to participate in government. Does equality of opportunity also mean that citizens have an equal opportunity to participate in the economy (to get a job, to get rich) and in social life (to join a club, to eat at a restaurant)? And what about **equality of outcome**, the expectation that incomes will level out or that standards of living will be roughly the same for all citizens? In the United States, equality of outcome, or results, might entail the proportional representation of groups that have experienced discrimination in the past; that is, for full equality of outcome in Congress or on corporate boards, the number of African Americans would have to be equal to their proportion in the overall population, about 13 percent. What can, or should, government do to ensure equality of opportunity, or equality of outcome? These questions are hotly contested (see Supreme Court Cases: *Plyler v. Doe*), especially efforts to forge equality of outcome. We return to these issues in the final section of this introductory chapter.

One way to think further about equality is to contrast America with countries in Europe, which, as we have seen, have more communal approaches to property and poverty than does the United States and spend more on social programs. European governments, particularly as they exist in Scandinavian countries, limit extreme wealth through tax policies, and the result is greater income equality than in the United States. But the political culture of these nations does not prize individualism as highly as does the political culture of the United States, and the equality of results valued in democratic-socialist systems is nothing like American egalitarianism, which prizes individual effort and rejects Europe's rigid class divisions and inherited titles and wealth.

If the Declaration of Independence announced equality as a natural right of humankind, then the American democratic experiment has taken a long time to work out what that equality means. In 2015, the Supreme Court made marriage equality the law of the land, extending the right to marry to same-sex couples in the landmark case *Obergefell v. Hodges*.[20] Just a few years earlier, the election of Barack Obama as president was another significant achievement for American racial equality. Many observers thought it would be decades before the country elected an African American president.[21] That view reflected the long history of discrimination in this country. But Obama's swearing in as president, not just once but twice, sent an undeniable signal about equality in America.

In 2016, Hillary Clinton broke more barriers by becoming the first woman to be nominated for president by a major party. In 2020, the country saw a gay man in a same-sex marriage, Pete Buttigieg, compete with success for the Democratic nomination, winning the Iowa caucuses. We challenge you to join these twenty-first-century pioneers. This text will give you the information you need to understand the way American government works and to recognize the gates and the gateways. We also invite you to think critically about American democracy, to engage in a class-wide and nationwide conversation about how well it is working, to offer ideas for making it work better, to influence the decision makers who make public policy, and even to become one of them.

The Demands of Democratic Government

LO 1-5 List the responsibilities of individuals in a democracy

American democracy is not a spectator sport. It does not mean choosing sides and rooting for your team from the sidelines or from the comfort of your living room. It requires more than being a passive fan; you need to get into the game. But politics is much more than a game. It shapes your life on a day-to-day basis. As a result, you have both rights and responsibilities. While the specific reasons to be involved in public life may vary, the need to participate does not.

Self-Interest and Civic Interest

The first reason to be involved is **self-interest**. You want government to serve your needs. Those needs, of course, range widely, depending on your stage of life, personal circumstances, and values. Some individuals prefer that the government stay out of people's lives as much as possible, and others prefer governmental assistance for the causes they hold dear. As a student, you may want the government to invest more in higher education and job creation; as a parent, you may want more aid for child care and school construction; as a

self-interest: *Concern for one's own advantage and well-being.*

Supreme Court Cases

Plyler v. Doe (1982)

QUESTION: Does the equal protection clause prohibit states from charging children of undocumented workers tuition in order to attend public school?

ORAL ARGUMENT: December 1, 1981 (listen at http://www.oyez.org/cases/1980-1989/1981/1981_80_1538)

DECISION: June 15, 1982 (read at http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?court=us&vol=457&invol=202)

OUTCOME: Texas violates the equal protection clause when it charges tuition to public school students who cannot prove U.S. citizenship (5–4).

In response to the increasing costs of educating children who were not citizens of the United States, Texas passed a law in 1975 stating that it would not reimburse local school districts for any of those costs. The law also relieved local school districts of any obligation to educate such children.

The parents of unnamed Mexican children who were denied access to the Tyler Independent School District filed suit. They claimed that the law deprived their children of the equal protection of the law as guaranteed by one of the clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

The Supreme Court ruled with the parents, noting first that while the subjects filing the lawsuit were not citizens of the United States, the Fourteenth Amendment prohibits states from denying the equal protection of the law to all "persons" under its jurisdiction, a term that does not distinguish between citizens and non-citizens. In reaching this part of the decision, the Court relied on a speech by Congressman John Bingham, one of the authors of the Fourteenth Amendment: "Is it not essential to the unity of the Government and the unity of the people that all persons, whether citizens or strangers, within this land, shall have equal protection in every State in this Union in the rights of life and liberty and property?"

The Supreme Court's equal protection decisions set different standards of review depending on the group being discriminated against in the law. The toughest standard, "strict scrutiny," applies to laws that discriminate on account of race or discriminate against aliens who are legally in the country. The parents bringing the suit admitted that they could not establish that the children were in the country legally. This distinction meant that the Court would only apply is lowest standard of review, "minimal scrutiny." Under strict scrutiny, Texas would have to show that it had a vital or "compelling interest" in passing the law, a difficult hurdle to pass. However, under minimal scrutiny, Texas only had to show a rational justification for the law.

Texas argued that it had a rational justification for the law, protecting the state's budget. It argued that without such a rule, undocumented workers would flood Texas, and the state's citizens would be required to pay more in taxes to educate them.

A majority of justices rejected that argument. They noted that the law places a lifetime hardship on the children, that undocumented workers come to Texas for a variety of reasons, and that prohibiting the employment of undocumented workers would be far more effective in protecting Texas's budget than denying education to their children.

A public education is a gateway for individuals to a higher-paying job, a fuller life, and a more active role in the democratic system. Providing equal access to education is one of the central ways we ensure equality of opportunity in the United States.

Thinking Critically

1. Can you identify reasons unrelated to prejudice that would lead Texas to want to deny education funds to the students in this case?
2. Should the Supreme Court treat cases involving legal immigrants (strict scrutiny) differently from cases involving undocumented residents (minimal scrutiny)?

working person, you may view health care as the most important government responsibility. Whatever way you define your self-interest, by getting involved you send signals to elected officials, and if enough people agree with you, the government will likely act.

The second reason, what we called earlier *civic interest*, is more complex. The idea is that people get involved in the process because they want to be part of the voluntary organizations that make up the **civil society** that enables communities to flourish. They want to help others, improve their neighborhoods, and create an even better nation. Groups of interested people can accomplish things that individuals acting alone cannot. Sometimes these activities supplement governmental action; for example, neighborhood watch groups keep communities safe, and soup kitchens feed the hungry. Sometimes the activities aim at getting more out of government—more funding for roads or for new sports arenas, for example. By working together, people can encourage greater responsiveness from government. In so doing, they are better able to communicate their needs to a government that, in turn, becomes more responsive.

civil society: *Voluntary organizations that allow communities to flourish.*

As gains in civic interest lead to broader public involvement, they also advance equality. In a democracy, the power of individual acts can be amplified, as Obama's actions demonstrate. Sometimes this amplification takes place through the courts; lawsuits arising from an alleged injustice experienced by one person can result in broad rulings that affect a great many. There are spillover effects to activism that can benefit everyone. Several examples come from the civil rights movement, in which students and others successfully sought to desegregate lunch counters, interstate buses, and local schools.[22]

Today's students are more likely to be civic-minded than college students in previous generations. If you were born between about 1981 and 1996, you are part of the generation that social science researchers have identified as the **Millennials**. If you were born in 1997, onward, you are part of **Generation Z**. This newest generation appears to be loyal, caring, accountable, focused, and thoughtful, according to one recent study. Millennials are more likely to be optimistic and practical, and to identify as political independents. They tend to hold more liberal social views and are more likely religiously unaffiliated.[23] Many Millennial and Generation Z students have started new waves of youth civic engagement with social movements like Black Lives Matter, Students Demand Action, #MeToo, and international climate strikes. This youth involvement mirrors student involvement and protests during the Civil Rights Movement and Vietnam War.

Millennials: *Generation born between 1981 and 1996.*

Generation Z: *Generation born from 1997, onward.*

Participation in the public sphere serves the larger civic interest. Voting is the most obvious political act. In addition, people express their views and ideas to public officials by volunteering in political campaigns, attending rallies, writing letters, and organizing meetings. E-mail, websites, blogs, podcasts, social networking, text messages, and uploading of videos on YouTube offer additional means of joining the debate about politics and having an influence on government. Those who control the levers of power need to know your views so they can respond. With all the new technologies, the interface between people and politicians is now easier than ever.

Politics and the Public Sphere

Your generation has the power to shape the future in which you will live. Will America continue to be a land of opportunity? The following three issues represent some of the important concerns that you and the nation face. Working on these problems is reason enough to take part in the nation's civic life.

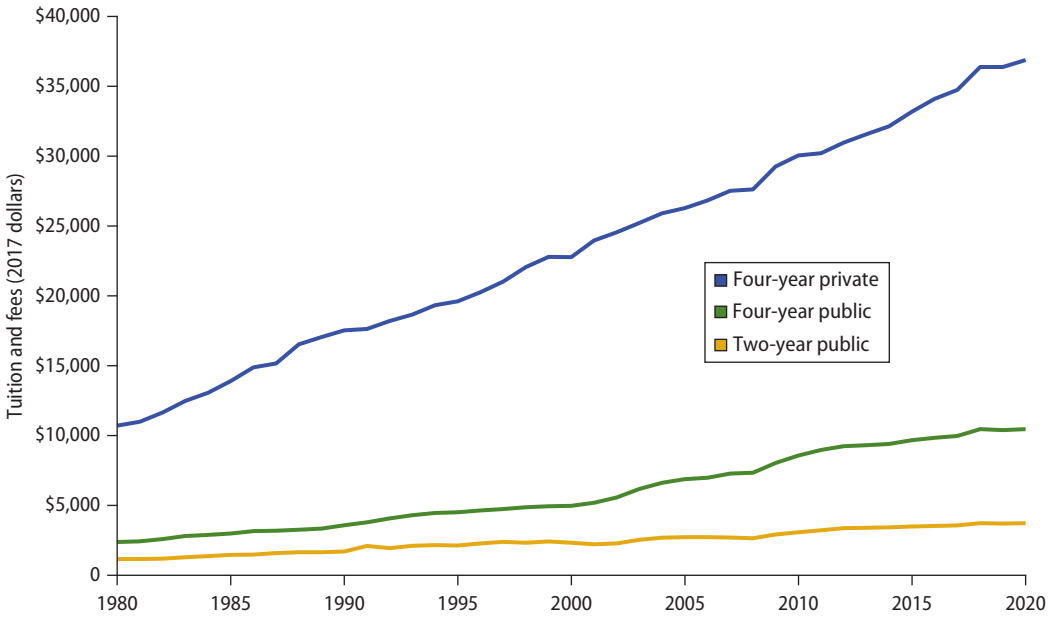
Educational Opportunity. Because you are attending college, education policy affects you every day and is important to your future. Education has long been considered

both a fundamental component of democratic society and a stepping-stone to economic advancement. But what does it take to get a college degree, and who should bear the burden?

These are important questions because the cost of a college education continues to rise. Private colleges are increasingly expensive, and during times of economic decline, as state and local governments have faced budget cuts, public institutions of higher learning have also raised tuition (see Figure 1.4). The consequence of these increases is that students are taking on more and more debt to pay for these higher costs. This debt imposes a greater financial burden on you and begins to hurt just when you may also be thinking about having a family and buying a house.

If an educated public is necessary to democracy, and if the entire nation benefits from the contributions of college-educated individuals, does the federal government have an obligation to promote educational opportunity? Congress has decided it does and authorizes the Department of Education to spend some $32 billion annually to fund financial aid for higher education, including Pell Grants, work-study programs, and supplemental education opportunity grants. In response to deficit concerns, however, Pell Grants in general have been decreasing—from $41 billion in 2012 to $22 billion for the fiscal year 2020 budget.[24]

College affordability is a concern of all college students and deserves to be a concern for the nation generally. Yet Americans do not hear much discussion about education in the news media; even President Obama's proposal to make community college free did not



Note: The amounts shown are the list or published tuition and fees, not what students actually pay. Most undergraduates receive grant aid. The amounts shown are "sticker price" and do not account for grant aid. The College Board estimates them by weighting published tuition and fees by full-time undergraduate enrollment. They are deflated using the Consumer Price Index.

Figure 1.4 College Costs, 1980–2020

College costs have been increasing at a steady rate over the past four decades, drawing the interest of policy makers over the past few years.

Source: College Boards Trends in Higher Education, Table 2 accessed February 13, 2020, http://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing/figures-tables/published-prices-national.

Note: The amounts shown are the list or published tuition and fees, not what students actually pay. Most undergraduates receive grant aid. The amounts shown are "sticker price" and do not account for grant aid. The College Board estimates them by weighting published tuition and fees by full-time undergraduate enrollment. They are deflated using the Consumer Price Index.

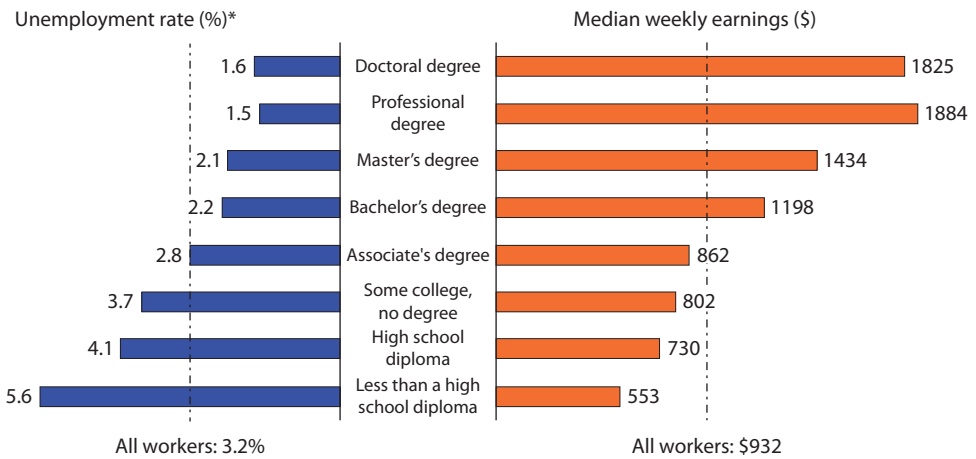
garner much attention. In the election of 2020, several candidates such as Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren made college costs a major issue of their campaigns, but it still typically garners only limited coverage by television, cable, websites, and radio stations.[25] Does the lack of media attention pose a barrier to getting educational opportunity on the policy agenda? What can you do to make government responsive to concerns about education? Education policy is examined in more detail in Chapter 3, Federalism.

Economic Opportunity. Educational opportunity is linked to economic opportunity because the more education you have, the more you are likely to earn. And the differences over the course of a lifetime can be millions of dollars in personal income (see Figure 1.5). Even so, you still have to ask whether you be able to find a good job after graduation. This is an important question as you continue your education.

Key Questions

What value do you place on earning a college degree? Should college education be free?

Having a population of educated citizens who have good-paying jobs and who make a contribution to society is surely important for the entire nation. But does the government have an obligation to create economic opportunity? Should it intervene in business and the marketplace to equalize opportunity or to preserve competition, or should government allow the economy to be shaped by market forces? Should government step in to assist when a non-economic shock, like a pandemic or a foreign war, leads to massive unemployment and curtailment of economic activity? This last question has taken on new meaning in light of the COVID-19 crisis and the massive infusion of money by the federal government to help workers, small businesses, corporations, state and local governments, and hospitals. Government was not correcting a problem with the economy. It was responding to an external event that lead to widespread economic dislocation. There was nearly unanimous support by both parties for this unprecedented intervention by the government to address the COVID-19 crisis. It will be interesting to see how this crisis recasts this long-standing debate about the role of government. Despite relief at the start of the pandemic, the Republican-controlled Senate and President Trump defeated every attempt at COVID-19 relief packages from the House Democrats through late October 2020.



Note: *These estimates are prior to the surge in unemployment tied to COVID-19.

Figure 1.5 Earnings and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment

The benefits of a college education are clear: You can expect to earn about twice as much per week with a college degree than with only a high school degree.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed February 13, 2020, https://www.bls.gov/emp/chart-unemployment-earnings-education.htm.

Elections 2016, 2018, and 2020

A Changing and Frustrated Electorate

All elections present candidates and parties with the challenge of gauging voters' preferences across a variety of issues. The 2020 election was no exception as Donald Trump's and Joe Biden's campaigns used focus groups and surveys to try to get a handle on what voters cared about and how best to reach the hearts and minds of the voters. The 2016 election seemed to be an election that spoke to the anger of the American public—something Trump tapped into. Two years later, the anger was directed at President Trump when the Democrats captured control of the House of Representatives. The battle for the Democratic nomination in 2020 continued to underscore a frustration by many voters about the actions and statements of President Trump. Much of this unhappiness can be tied to the changing demographics of the United States, and with those shifts come more complicated sets of policy demands from voters. (See Figure 1.3 and the discussion in Section 1.4.)

These changes in the electorate also are fueling reactions by white Americans. One manifestation of that is the anger registered by this part of the electorate (see also Figure 1.6). There were notable partisan differences in 2016, with Republican white voters angrier than their Democratic counterparts. But anger can cut many ways.

In 2020, the Democrats led by Joe Biden were motivated and turned out in record numbers. When all the votes were counted, President Trump lost by more than 4 percentage points nationally (or about 6 million votes). His mishandling of the pandemic and willingness to invoke racist rhetoric gave many Americans reason to vote him out of office. The task now facing President Biden is to unify a nation beset by crises, anger, and disagreement.

Because of the fundamental importance of this question, we examine the role of government in the economy by taking a hard look at its obligations as well as at federal and state budgets, deficit spending, the national debt, and tax policy. These concerns have always been at the top of the policy agenda and that is obviously true today. These short-term decisions are critical, but they also have long run implications. Consider that the federal government has been running historically high deficits (has spent more than it receives in revenue) that have produced a huge jump in the national debt. Just two decades ago, the national debt was about $5 trillion. In 2020, the national debt has swelled to about $25 trillion given the COVID-19 crisis. And that trend will only continue. Some estimate the debt will be over $40 trillion within four years—a nearly eight-fold increase since the turn of the century.[26]

Paying down this debt will take generations; your great-grandchildren will still be paying for it when they reach adulthood. For you, now, the size of this debt means that the federal government has less funding and limited flexibility for investing in future programs that might create economic opportunity, such as education, job training, and infrastructure projects. How the government pays off this debt affects you, too, especially changes in the tax system that may alter your future income and job prospects. Thus, the federal budget and its ability to expand economic opportunity will directly affect your quality of life and standard of living. But given the experience of the COVID-19 crisis, the conversation about those long-term costs is more in the background than normal.

Participation Opportunity. How can you make your voice heard on education policy and economic policy issues that matter to you? Your first obligation is to learn about the issues and then to vote in a way that advances both your self-interest and your civic interest. You can also make your voice heard by joining groups that advocate your position. The U.S. Constitution guarantees rights of free speech and assembly, and both are fundamental gateways in any democracy.

Over a decade ago, citizens formed the *Tea Party movement* to express their opinions that the government was not being responsive to their interests. The Tea Party movement grew out of localized groups of citizens who believed that the federal government has become too big, too expensive, and too intrusive. In the first set of elections after they formed, members of the Tea Party aligned themselves with Republicans. The members of the Tea Party often clashed with more establishment Republicans. But with Trump in the White House, the Tea Party movement ebbed. Trump transformed the party in his image and found a way to marginalize more establishment Republicans. Most leaders in the GOP went along with Trump's every move, save for a few like former Senators Corker (R-TN) and Flake (R-AZ) and current Senator Mitt Romney (R-UT).

Encyclopaedia Britannica/UIG Universal Images Group/Newscom

Image 1.7 The "Don't Tread on Me" slogan adopted by the Tea Party movement has a long association with resistance and protest. The movement adopted its central symbol, the snake, to represent the colonies in the era of the American Revolution.

Regardless of your opinions about the Tea Party or Trump, the value of participation and the value of free expression of opinion in American democracy is critical. Political movements can alter the political landscape by shifting the policy agenda and the direction of public discourse. As individuals and groups make their voices heard with energy and commitment, they fulfill a vital role in making our government more responsive and, hence, more democratic.

Your Gateway to American Democracy

James Madison, a key member of the Founding Fathers, offers an important final thought: "Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives."[27] To govern yourself, you will need to understand your government, to be informed about issues you care about, to participate in politics, and to be engaged in the nation's civic life. As Madison and all those who wrote the nation's founding documents understood, an engaged public is the best check on excesses of power that threaten fair and just government. If the people do not meet the demands of democratic citizenship, if they do not fulfill their responsibilities, they will lose the freedoms they cherish.

JOHN G. MABANGLO/EPA/Newscom

Image 1.8 The Black Lives Matter movement set an important tone on many campuses about the need to foster a greater commitment to inclusion, equity, and diversity and those efforts continue today.

Political Analytics

Latinos in American Politics

LATINOS ARE DESCRIBED IN A FEW WAYS. The term Latino/Latina refers to persons of Latin descent residing in the United States. Hispanic is often used for people who share a common language, Spanish. A recent label used is Latinx as a gender neutral name for Latino. You will see all of these terms in this book and others, as well as in the media. It is important to note that all of these terms describe an ethnicity, not a race. Therefore, it is possible that some Latinos identify as white, while others may be black, and still others are of mixed race. All of these terms are broad and may mask important distinctions among Latinos.

In the United States, about two-thirds of Latinos are of Mexican descent, known as Mexican-Americans. Others are of Cuban, Puerto Rican, or Dominican heritage. Latinos may also be from Central or South America. The political attitudes and preferences may vary in important ways when we begin to explore the so-called Latino vote. Recall from Figure 1.3 that the Latino population has been growing at a rapid rate. Figure 1.6a shows the growth of Latinos since 1980 and their projected numbers by 2050. The percentage of Americans who are Latinos has almost tripled in the last forty years.

While the growth of the Latino population is impressive, another way to assess the group's political importance is to see how many are in the electorate. That is, how many are eligible voters? In 2016, 27.3 million Latinos were eligible to vote. In 2020, that number grew to 32 million Latinos. Most of that 5 million voter increase is due to Latinos turning 18 years old. Figure 1.6b shows the growth of the Latino electorate as a share of the total electorate. The 2020 election will represent the first election in which Latinos are the second largest percentage of the eligible voters, surpassing African Americans. Moreover, Latinos' share of eligible voters is largest in California, Texas, Florida, Arizona, and New Mexico, important states for presidential candidates.

The population of Latinos in the United States is growing, and their share of the electorate is projected to reach over

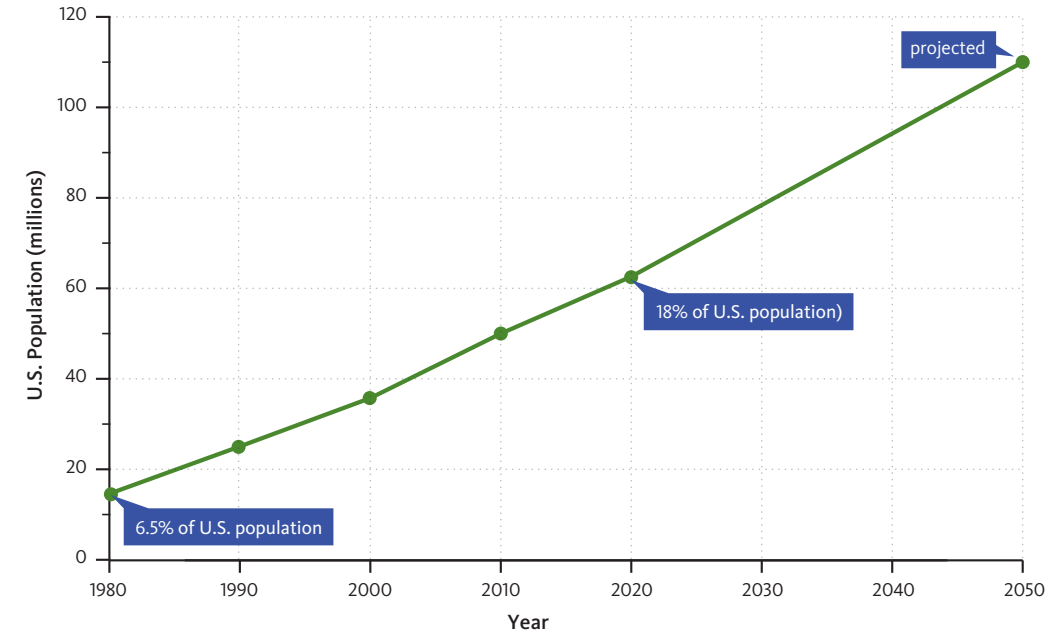


Figure 1.6A Latino Population Growth

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Projection Databases, https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popproj/data/datasets.All.html.

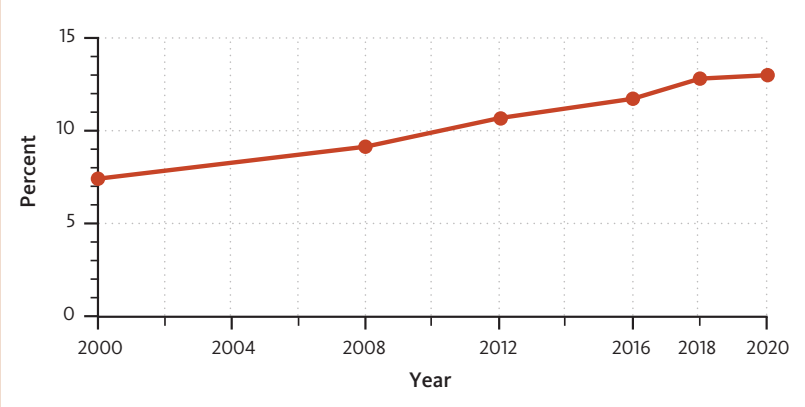


Figure 1.6B Latino Share of U.S. Electorate

Source: https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/01/31/where-latinos-have-the-most-eligible-voters-in-the-2020-election/ft_2020-01-31_latinovoters_01/

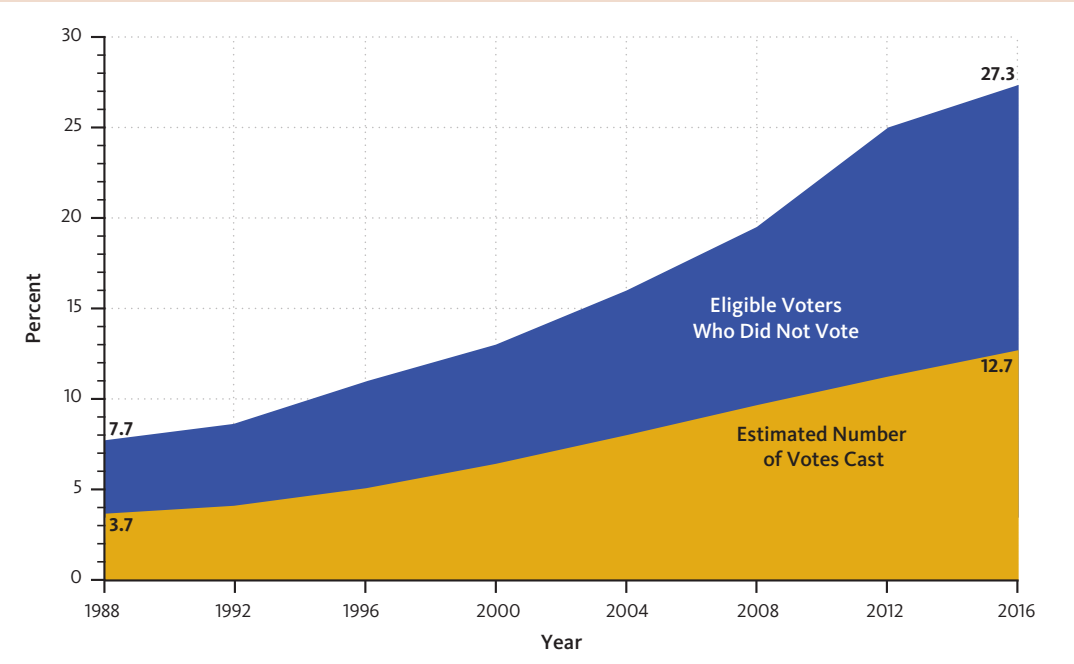


Figure 1.6C Latino Voters and Nonvoters

Source: https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/05/12/black-voter-turnout-fell-in-2016-even-as-a-record-number-of-americans-cast-ballots/ft_17-05-10_voter-turnout_latino/

13 percent. One may conclude that their political power is substantial. Latinos, however, have historically punched below their political weight. Though they are a sizeable minority of voters, only half of them are eligible to vote. Of those who are eligible to vote, less than 50 percent actually vote. Figure 1.6c shows that since the 1996 presidential election, eligible Latinos who did not vote exceeded those who did by 4 million in 1996 and by over 14 million in 2016.

Thinking Critically

1. The 2020 election provided Latinos an opportunity to make a difference in the outcome. How might you use data from that election to assess how Latinos contributed to the results?
2. There are a number of reasons why Latinos have not voted in as large a percentage as white or African American voters. What might be some of those reasons?

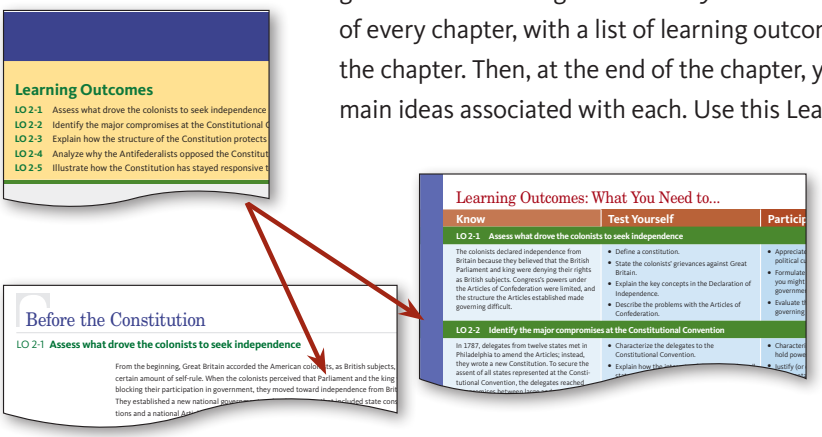
We have written this text to give you the information you need to understand your government—its gates and gateways. We hope it will also push you to evaluate whether government is working for you and for all the nation's citizens. How democratic are we? How can we be better? One thing is certain: We will not be better unless you are involved. The only way to make American democracy more responsive and more equal is by participating.

We, therefore, invite you—actually, we urge you—to enter the gateways to democracy. These gateways are open to you as an American. They empower you, as a citizen, to play an important role in American civic life, and they enable you to experience the amazing arena of American politics.

We look forward to sharing the journey with you.

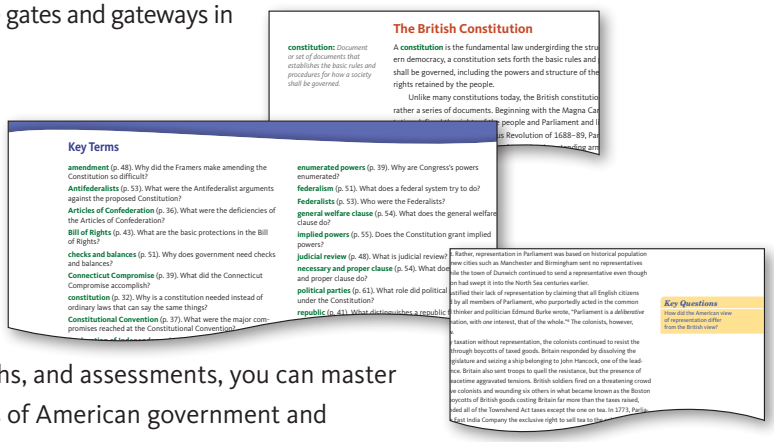
What you need to know about your text and online study tools to study efficiently and master the material

Learning about American government can be your first step through the gateway. Each chapter of *Gateways to Democracy* is built to maximize efficient studying and help you get the most out of your course in American government. But these study materials are just part of the guidance for learning that *Gateways to Democracy* provides. Study aids start on the first page of every chapter, with a list of learning outcomes Each outcome is keyed to a major section of the chapter. Then, at the end of the chapter, you'll find the outcomes and a summary of the main ideas associated with each. Use this Learning Outcomes chart as a chapter review.



Key Terms are boldfaced in the chapter text, defined on the page, and amplified at the end of the chapter with questions that will let you test your comprehension. In Chapter 1, however, definitions are consolidated to serve as essential vocabulary that you can refer to throughout the course.

Understanding the workings of American government and your role as a citizen involves more than mastering content. Throughout the chapter, margin questions—called Key Questions—ask you to think for yourself about the role and responsiveness of government, the meaning of citizen equality, and the gates and gateways in American democracy.



Gateways to Democracy also offers an online learning package called MindTap. Through interactive assignments, including videos, graphs, and assessments, you can master the essential concepts of American government and

understand how they apply to real life. With MindTap, you learn more, are better prepared to participate in class, and improve your grade. MindTap also includes an eBook. Get instant access via CengageBrain (http://www.cengagebrain.com) or via a printed access card in your bookstore.

Chapter Review

Key Terms

Use the list of key concepts for this chapter as a glossary for this course. Each of the following entries includes the page numbers on which a particular concept is introduced, and most list later chapters in which the concept is discussed. A full glossary of key concepts is also included at the end of this text.

autocracy (p. 14). System of government in which the power to govern is concentrated in the hands of an individual ruler.

capitalism (p. 12). Economic system in which businesses and key industries are privately owned and in which individuals, acting on their own or with others, are free to create businesses.

checks and balances (p. 11, Chapter 2). Government structure that authorizes each branch of government (executive, legislative, and judicial) to share powers with the other branches, thereby holding some scrutiny of and control over the other branches.

civic interest (p. 10, Chapter 11). Concern for the well-being of society and the nation as a whole.

civil society (p. 19). Voluntary organizations that allow communities to flourish.

conservatives (p. 12, Chapter 6). Individuals who distrust government, believing that free markets offer better ways than government involvement to improve people's livelihood. In the social sphere, conservatives have more faith in government's ability to enforce traditional values.

constitutional system (p. 6). System of government in which people set up and agree on the basic rules and procedures that will govern them.

democracy (p. 6). System of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them either directly or indirectly through elected representatives.

direct democracy (p. 7). Form of democracy in which political power is exercised directly by citizens.

egalitarianism (p. 13). Belief in human equality that disdains inherited titles of nobility and inherited wealth.

equality (p. 14). Idea that all individuals are equal in their moral worth and so must be equal in treatment under the law and have equal access to the decision-making process.

equality of opportunity (p. 16, Chapter 15). Expectation that citizens may not be discriminated against based on race, gender, or national background and that every citizen should have an equal chance to succeed in life.

equality of outcome (p. 16, Chapter 5). Expectation that equality is achieved if results are comparable for all citizens regardless of race, gender, or national background or that such groups are proportionally represented in measures of success in life.

executive branch (p. 11, Chapter 13). The branch of the federal government that executes the laws.

faction (p. 10, Chapter 8). Defined by James Madison as any group that places its own interests above the aggregate interests of society.

federalism (p. 11, Chapters 2, 3). System of government in which sovereignty is constitutionally divided between national and state governments.

Founders (p. 7, Chapters 2, 16). The people who were involved in establishing the United States, whether at the time of the Declaration of Independence or the writing of the Constitution.

Framers (p. 7). The people who were involved in writing the Constitution.

Generation Z (p. 19). Generation born from 1997, onward.

individualism (p. 12). Set of beliefs holding that people, and not government, are responsible for their own well-being.

judicial branch (p. 11). The branch of the federal government that interprets the laws.

legislative branch (p. 11). The branch of the federal government that makes the laws.

liberals (p. 12, Chapter 6). Individuals who have faith in government to improve people's lives, believing that private efforts are insufficient. In the social sphere, liberals usually support diverse lifestyles and tend to oppose any government action that seeks to shape personal choices.

libertarians (p. 12). Those who generally believe that government should refrain from acting to regulate either the economy or moral values.

liberty (p. 6, Chapter 2). Political value that cherishes freedom from an arbitrary exercise of power that constricts individual choice.

majoritarian (p. 13). System of policy making in which those with a numerical majority hold authority.

majority rule (p. 6). Idea that a numerical majority of a group should hold the power to make decisions binding on the whole group; a simple majority.

Millennials (p. 19, Chapter 6). Generation born between 1981 and 1996.

minority rights (p. 6). Idea that the majority should not be able to take certain fundamental rights away from those in the minority.

moderates (p. 12, Chapter 6). Individuals who are in the middle

of the ideological spectrum and do not hold consistently strong views about whether government should be involved in people's lives.

monarchy (p. 14). System of government that assigns power to a single person who inherits that position and rules until death.

natural (unalienable) rights (p. 7, Chapter 4). Rights that every individual has and that government cannot legitimately take away.

oligarchy (p. 14). System of government in which the power to govern is concentrated in the hands of a powerful few, usually wealthy individuals.

order (p. 6). Political value in which the rule of law is followed and does not permit actions that infringe on the well-being of others.

party identification (p. 12, Chapter 6). Psychological attachment to a political party; partisanship.

pluralist (p. 13). A political arrangement where power is spread across groups and individuals that yields shared governing.

political culture (p. 12). A shared way of thinking about community and government and the relationship between them.

political equality (p. 15). The idea that people should have equal amounts of influence in the political system.

political ideology (p. 12, Chapter 6). Set of coherent political beliefs that offers a philosophy for thinking about the scope of government.

political parties (p. 11, Chapters 2, 9). Broad coalitions of interests organized to win elections in order to enact a commonly supported set of public policies.

politics (p. 11). Process by which people make decisions about who gets what, when, and how.

populists (p. 12). Those who oppose concentrated wealth and adhere to traditional moral values.

power elite (p. 13). Small handful of decision makers who hold authority over a large set of issues.

private goods (p. 15). Goods or benefits provided by government in which most of the benefit falls to the individuals, families, or companies receiving them.

public goods (p. 14). Goods or benefits provided by government from which everyone benefits and from which no one can be excluded.

public policy (p. 5, Chapter 16). Intentional actions of government designed to achieve a goal.

representative democracy (p. 10). Form of democracy in which citizens elect public officials to make political decisions and formulate laws on their behalf.

republic (p. 10, Chapter 2). Form of government in which power derives from citizens, but public officials make policy and govern according to existing law.

responsiveness (p. 14). Idea that government should implement laws and policies that reflect the wishes of the public and any changes in those wishes.

rule of law (p. 6, Chapter 4). Legal system with known rules that are enforced equally against all people.

self-government (p. 6, Chapter 3). Rule by the people.

self-interest (p. 17, Chapters 6, 11). Concern for one's own advantage and well-being.

separation of powers (p. 11, Chapter 2). Government structure in which authority is divided among branches (executive, legislative, and judicial), with each holding separate and independent powers and areas of responsibility.

social contract (p. 7). Theory that government has only the authority accorded it by the consent of the governed.

socialism (p. 13). Economic system in which the government owns major industries.

Learning Outcomes: What You Need to...

Know	Test Yourself	Participate
LO 1-1 Identify the successes we have achieved and the obstacles we face in establishing a "more perfect union"		
American democracy offers many gateways to participation because, at its core, American government is about individuals and self-governance. There are also gates against public participation—obstacles to influence, institutional controls that limit access, and powerful interests that seem to block the people's will. To be an engaged and productive citizen, you need to take advantage of the gateways but also know how to navigate around the gates.	• List the successes of American democracy. • Identify challenges we face in achieving "a more perfect union."	• Begin evaluating American democracy based on the concepts you have learned in this chapter.

Know	Test Yourself	Participate
LO 1-2 Analyze how the constitutional system balances liberty and order		
Democracy is self-government. In the American constitutional system, the people set up and agree on the basic rules and procedures that will govern them. The American constitutional system works to protect both liberty and order. The Constitution sets up a governmental structure with built-in constraints on power (gates) and multiple points of access to power (gateways). Power in American government is divided among three branches (executive, legislative, and judicial) and between the national government and the states.	• Make a connection between minority rights and democratic rule. • Define social contract. • Analyze how the Constitution divides power.	• Understand the tension that surrounds issues related to government responsiveness and citizen equality.
LO 1-3 Describe the political values and ideologies Americans share		
American political culture favors individualism, and the U.S. economic system favors capitalism. American citizens may lean conservative or liberal, but most are moderates. With a government designed to constrain power and the popular will, and a citizenry divided into different perspectives and prizing individualism, the development of public policy is difficult and complex.	• Assess the importance of political ideology. • Distinguish between liberalism and conservatism. • Identify the political values that most Americans share.	• Figure out what political beliefs you hold and where you stand within the spectrum of political ideologies.
LO 1-4 Evaluate American democracy in terms of responsiveness and equality		
One way to evaluate whether public policy is serving the people of the United States and to judge whether American democracy is working is to measure government responsiveness and citizen equality.	• Identify the functions of government as defined by the Preamble. • Contrast the role of citizens in a democracy to their role in other forms of government. • Explain the differences between equality of opportunity and equality of outcome.	• Consider what political goals you think the government should set for itself regarding responsiveness and equality.
LO 1-5 List the responsibilities of individuals in a democracy		
Civic interest pushes people to help others and become active participants in a democracy. Education is a fundamental component of democratic society and a stepping-stone to economic advancement.	• Compare self-interest to civic interest. • Describe public policies that encourage you to participate in American democracy.	• Recognize all the options for participation and their importance.

2 The Constitution

"In New York, in Washington, they don't understand our problems. They don't know about the 3 million Mexicans who live in the Southwest. Let us pray to God that we triumph, that the nation's Supreme Court agrees with us."

Shown on the next page, the University of Texas at Austin where Gus Garcia completed his undergraduate studies.

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division (LC-USZ62-137627)

GUS GARCIA
University of Texas at Austin

Gus Garcia, high school valedictorian and star of the debate team at the University of Texas at Austin, grew up observing the social and legal discrimination against Latinos in Texas. It was the 1940s. Like Thurgood Marshall, the famed civil rights attorney and the first African American on the Supreme Court, Garcia wanted to fight for the rights of his people. Garcia followed his undergraduate years at the University of Texas with law school there. After serving in the Judge Advocate General Corps in the military, Garcia returned to Texas where he worked as legal counsel for the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and helped create the American GI Forum, a veterans group for Latinos, in 1948.

He also ran for the Board of Education in San Antonio, Texas, in 1948, joining forces with a local African American businessman. Their white opponents took out an ad in the local paper on the day before the election declaring, "It is your duty to keep racial and sectional strife out of your schools by electing experienced people who can work together in harmony. . . . Among the other candidates is a Negro undertaker [and] an active member of LULAC"[1] (i.e., Garcia). Garcia won the election, becoming the first Latino to serve on the San Antonio School Board.

In 1948, Garcia won a federal district (trial) court case on behalf of Minerva Delgado and others seeking to deny the state of Texas the authority to segregate Latino public school students as a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment, which guarantees equal protection of the law.[2] This decision, without recognition from higher courts, was largely ignored within the state of Texas. As Garcia continued the struggle for Latino civil rights, Thurgood Marshall requested access to the *Delgado* case file from the attorneys in that case as part of his battle against racial discrimination.[3]

In 1952, Garcia began work on the case of *Hernandez v. Texas*.[4] The case would arguably become the most important constitutional decision by the Supreme Court regarding the Latino community in the United States.

Changes to the meaning of the Constitution can come about in two ways. First, there are constitutional amendments, twenty-seven of which have been enacted since 1791. Constitutional interpretation by the Supreme Court provides a second, and far more frequently used, gateway to updating the meaning of the Constitution.

Learning Outcomes

LO 2-1 Assess what drove the colonists to seek independence
LO 2-2 Identify the major compromises at the Constitutional Convention
LO 2-3 Explain how the structure of the Constitution protects liberty
LO 2-4 Analyze why the Antifederalists opposed the Constitution
LO 2-5 Illustrate how the Constitution has stayed responsive to changing needs

The *Hernandez* case involved the murder conviction of Pedro Hernandez by an all-white jury in Texas. It was the first time that the Supreme Court dealt with a case involving issues related to Latinos as well as the first time a Latino attorney had argued before the Supreme Court. Texas argued that the equal protection clause applied only to African Americans, not other ethnic groups. Garcia, alternatively, argued that within Texas, Mexican Americans were treated as "a class apart" from the white community and should receive the protections of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The fact that Latinos still had separate schools and bathrooms, and did not sit on juries, convinced a unanimous Supreme Court that "the constitutional guarantee of equal protection of the laws is not directed solely against discrimination between whites and Negroes."[5] The justices were convinced that under the social and legal system in Texas, Mexican Americans were treated as "a separate class"[6] and as such deserved full constitutional protection from the equal protection clause, and that Texas denied Hernandez that protection by excluding Latinos from serving on juries. The Court, which had already heard but not yet decided the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, was interested enough in Garcia's argument that it gave him unscheduled extra time during oral argument, an extremely rare gesture. The Supreme Court reversed the conviction of Hernandez. That reversal allowed Texas to retry Hernandez by a jury that did not exclude Latinos. Hernandez was found guilty again.

Nevertheless, Gus Garcia's legal victory led to a fundamental change in how the U.S. Constitution is interpreted with regard to discrimination against Latinos, granting them legal security under the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Garcia used the constitutional system of the United States to create new rights for the Latino community. Moreover, just two weeks after the *Hernandez* decision, the Supreme Court struck down segregated schools in *Brown v. Board of Education*, a case in which Garcia had been a supporter.

In this chapter, we examine the governing documents prior to the Constitution, particularly the Articles of Confederation and its deficiencies. We also track the debates at the Constitutional Convention and afterward, as the people of the United States decided whether to ratify the new Constitution. They did ratify it, but almost immediately they amended it. After we examine the structure and philosophy behind the new Constitution, we consider its responsiveness, through both amendment and less formal procedures, to changing times.

Source: The information from this vignette comes from the Salinas article cited in the first footnote as well as A Class Apart: A Mexican American Civil Rights Story, *PBS Home Video, 2009, from which we pulled the opening quote.*

Before the Constitution

LO 2-1 Assess what drove the colonists to seek independence

From the beginning, Great Britain accorded the American colonists, as British subjects, a certain amount of self-rule. When the colonists perceived that Parliament and the king were blocking their participation in government, they moved toward independence from Britain. They established a new national government under documents that included state constitutions and a national Articles of Confederation. In this section, we trace that process.

The British Constitution

constitution: *Document or set of documents that establishes the basic rules and procedures for how a society shall be governed.*

A **constitution** is the fundamental law undergirding the structure of government. In a modern democracy, a constitution sets forth the basic rules and procedures for how the people shall be governed, including the powers and structure of the government, as well as the rights retained by the people.

Unlike many constitutions today, the British constitution is not a single document but rather a series of documents. Beginning with the Magna Carta in 1215, the British constitution defined the rights of the people and Parliament and limited the powers of the king. Following the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688–89, Parliament asserted the power to suspend the law, to levy taxes, and to maintain a standing army. By the eighteenth century, British subjects believed that the British constitution guaranteed them certain rights, including the right not to be taxed without their consent and the right to be tried by a jury of their peers.

Toward Independence

Key Questions

Should the colonists have had the same rights as other British subjects? What rights do you think you have as an American? When did you last think about those rights?

The American colonists believed they had all the rights of British subjects. Thus, they objected when, following the French and Indian War (1754–63), Great Britain tried to recoup some of the costs of defending the colonies by imposing regulations and taxes on them. The Sugar Act of 1764 set forth a long list of items that could be exported only to Great Britain, limiting competition for the colonists' goods. The Stamp Act of 1765 established a tax on virtually all forms of paper used by the colonists. Although Britain had previously levied import and export taxes on the colonies, this was the first direct tax by Britain on the colonists on products made and sold in America.

The colonists reacted angrily, forming trade associations to boycott, or refuse to buy, British goods. They also published pamphlets denouncing the loss of liberty. Led by Patrick Henry, they challenged not just the taxes themselves, but Parliament's authority to pass such measures. "Give me liberty," proclaimed Henry before the Virginia House of Burgesses, "or give me death." Soon enough, riots broke out against Stamp Act collectors, making enforcement impossible.

Britain repealed the Stamp Act in 1766 but replaced it with the Townshend Acts, which imposed new taxes on imports. The colonists mobilized against these new import taxes. Led by Samuel Adams, the Massachusetts legislature issued a letter declaring the Townshend Acts unconstitutional because they violated the principle of "no taxation

North Wind Picture Archives/Alamy Stock Photo

Image 2.1 American Colonists protest the British Stamp Act.

without representation." The colonists thus began to insist that they had the right to participate in the political decisions that affected them.

The British had a more limited view of both participation and representation. At the time, only about one in six British adult males had the right to vote for Parliament, whereas two-thirds of free American adult males could vote for their colonial representatives.[7] Moreover, while most British cities did have representation in Parliament, some—just like the colonies—did not. Rather, representation in Parliament was based on historical population centers, so large new cities such as Manchester and Birmingham sent no representatives to Parliament, while the town of Dunwich continued to send a representative even though storms and erosion had swept it into the North Sea centuries earlier.

The British justified their lack of representation by claiming that all English citizens were represented by all members of Parliament, who purportedly acted in the common good. As political thinker and politician Edmund Burke wrote, "Parliament is a *deliberative* assembly of *one* nation, with *one* interest, that of the whole."[8] The colonists, however, rejected this view.

Key Questions

How did the American view of representation differ from the British view?

Aggrieved by taxation without representation, the colonists continued to resist the Townshend Acts through boycotts of taxed goods. Britain responded by dissolving the Massachusetts legislature and seizing a ship belonging to John Hancock, one of the leaders of the resistance. Britain also sent troops to quell the resistance, but the presence of soldiers during peacetime aggravated tensions. British soldiers fired on a threatening crowd in 1770, killing five colonists and wounding six others in what became known as the Boston Massacre. With boycotts of British goods costing Britain far more than the taxes raised, Parliament rescinded all of the Townshend Act taxes except the one on tea. In 1773, Parliament granted the East India Company the exclusive right to sell tea to the colonies, and the