

American National Government
POL 140
Sections 3-6
Foundations

Drew Seib

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Announcements

- ▶ Who needs a syllabus?
- ▶ Will talk about your first paper next week.

Goals

- ▶ Power
- ▶ Type of political systems
- ▶ Type of economic systems
- ▶ Political Culture

Current Events

- ▶ What's going on in the world?

Before we get started...a quick review.

- ▶ What is politics?
- ▶ Using one of the definitions by Lasswell or Easton, provide an example of politics.

Power

- ▶ Politics in many ways is about power.
 - Power:** The ability of persons or institutions to control public policy.

Simulation: State of Nature

- ▶ This simulation is meant to demonstrate what life might be like in the “state of nature.”
- ▶ Is there something your group could have done to perform better?
- ▶ How would you describe life in the state of nature?
- ▶ What’s the relationship between the state of nature and power?

Life in the State of Nature

- ▶ Thomas Hobbs describes life in the state of nature as “nasty, harsh, poor, brutish, and short.”
- ▶ What are the trade-offs between the state of nature and government?
- ▶ Do we have too much government, or too much of “life in the state in nature”?



...And so we give ourselves up to government. But, what kind?

Number of Rulers	Rule in the interest of everyone	Rule in the interest of self
One	Monarchy	Tyrant
Few	Aristocracy	Oligarchy
Many	Polity	Democracy

Constitutionalism: Definable limits on the rightful use of power that a government exercises over its citizens.

- ▶ What kind of government does the United States have?

Theories of Power

- ▶ Majoritarianism
- ▶ Pluralism
- ▶ Elitism
- ▶ Bureaucratic Rule
- ▶ Where does power and authority reside in the United States?

Economic Systems

- ▶ Communism
- ▶ Socialism
- ▶ Capitalism
- ▶ What kind of economic system does the United States have?

Political Culture

Political Culture: The characteristics and deep-seated beliefs of a particular people.

- ▶ At the end of yesterday's class, I asked you to think about what it means to be an American. What did you decide?
- ▶ How did the article on "What It Means to be an American" differ from your opinion?
- ▶ Did the article change anyone's mind?

Top Four Ideals

- ▶ Liberty
- ▶ Equality
- ▶ Self-government
- ▶ Individualism

One Minute Paper

- ▶ How does the United States balance its ideals of equality, liberty, and self-government?
- ▶ Why is our political culture (including the top four ideals) so important?
- ▶ What would the United States look like if it did not have this bond?

Putting it All Together

- ▶ Are any of these ideals incongruent with each other?
- ▶ Has the way we balanced these ideals changed over time? If so, how and why?
- ▶ How do we balance these ideals with economic and social policies?
 - ▶ poverty?
 - ▶ minorities?
 - ▶ others?
- ▶ Are any of these ideals inconsistent with “who rules” or how we run our economy?

Something to think about for next time:

- ▶ “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.” How well do we live up to this ideal today?