



2014 ELECTIONS AND  
UPDATES EDITION

# AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

ROOTS AND REFORM

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**O'CONNOR  
SABATO  
YANUS**

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# AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Roots and Reform

Twelfth Edition

2014 Elections and Updates Edition

**Karen  
O'Connor**

Jonathan N. Helfat  
Distinguished Professor of Political Science  
American University

**Larry J.  
Sabato**

University Professor  
and Robert Kent Gooch Professor of Politics  
University of Virginia

**Alixandra B.  
Yanus**

Assistant Professor of Political Science  
High Point University

**PEARSON**

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To Dolly,  
who at 86 followed politics,  
an addiction she  
bequeathed to me  
*Karen O'Connor*

To my Government 101 students  
over the years, who all know that  
“politics is a good thing”  
*Larry J. Sabato*

To the memory  
of AMK,  
the toughest “union girl” I have ever known  
*Alixandra B. Yanus*

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# TO THE STUDENT

## As you open this book you may be asking

yourself, “what possible impact could the Framers of the Constitution—long gone—have on my life in the twenty-first century?” Why is learning about history important to the study of politics today? And how are the ideas of the Framers relevant for understanding modern political issues such as health care, immigration, and abortion rights? We believe that without knowing the history—the roots—of our government, we won’t understand how movements for political change—or reform—came to pass.

As students of the American political process, it can be challenging to identify what is really important and how government truly affects your lives. It is tempting to get caught up in key terms and definitions and miss the major themes that prevail—not only in the American political system, but also around the world.

People like you are still the cornerstone of the political process, something we may forget from time to time. But your vote counts, and executing your rights as a citizen of the United States by taking the time to vote is an important facet of American life that has changed over time to include nearly all citizens, regardless of gender or race.

We hope that you will challenge prevailing notions about politics, ideas that suggest that government is bloated, inefficient, wasteful, and only for old people. We hope that you will come to see that politics can be a good thing, and that government is only able to represent the interests of those who actively pursue their own voice. To this end, we challenge you to identify the issues that affect your everyday lives—education, health care, the economy, just to name a few—and take every opportunity to make your voices heard. Just as the Framers’ decisions in crafting a constitution live on in American political institutions, every decision made by policy makers today will have a lasting impact on your lives tomorrow.

## Meet Your Authors

### KAREN O’CONNOR

is the Jonathan N. Helfat Distinguished Professor of Political Science and the Founder and Director Emerita of the Women & Politics Institute at American University. Before coming to American University, Karen taught political science for seventeen years at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, where she was the first woman to receive the university’s highest teaching award. She has been recognized by several associations as the most outstanding woman in political science and public administration as well as by the Southern Political Science Association (SPSA) for her contributions to the discipline. She has served on the American Political Science Association (APSA) and SPSA councils and as chair of the Law and Courts and Women and Politics Research sections of the APSA.



### LARRY J. SABATO

is the founder and director of the University of Virginia Center for Politics. A Rhodes Scholar, Sabato has taught more than tens of thousands of students in his career at Oxford University, Cambridge University, and the University of Virginia. At the University of Virginia, Sabato has received every major teaching award, including the university’s highest honor, the Thomas Jefferson Award. In 2013 Prof. Sabato won an Emmy award for the documentary *Out of Order*, which he produced to highlight the dysfunctional U.S. Senate, and in 2014, Professor Sabato received a second Emmy award for the PBS documentary based on his *New York Times* bestseller *The Kennedy Half-Century*. Sabato directs the Crystal Ball website, which has an unparalleled record of accuracy in predicting U.S. elections. For more information, visit <http://www.centerforpolitics.org>.



### ALIXANDRA B. YANUS

is Assistant Professor of Political Science at High Point University, where she teaches courses in American government and gender and politics. She is also co-director of the Women and Gender Equality (W.A.G.E.) Leadership Project. She holds a B.A. in Political Science from American University and a M.A. and Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her scholarly research has been accepted for publication in peer-reviewed venues including *Social Science Quarterly*, *Politics & Gender*, and *Women, Politics, & Public Policy*, and in book chapters published by Oxford University Press, CQ Press, and Sage.



# TO THE INSTRUCTOR

- This country was founded with the express purpose of welcoming immigrants with open arms, providing safe haven from persecution in native lands. Could the Framers have foreseen tough immigration laws like those considered by the Court in *Arizona v. United States* (2012)?
- The Framers saw Congress as a body with limited powers. But modern members of Congress balance the roles of lawmaker, budgeter, and policy maker while also acting as representatives of their district, state, party, and sometimes their race, ethnicity, or gender. How does this affect their behavior?
- The Twenty-Sixth Amendment lowered the voting age to 18. Today, young people are becoming increasingly civically aware and engaged. Could the Framers ever have anticipated how demographic changes would affect public policy?

*American Government: Roots and Reform* provides students with a historical context for understanding modern-day events and legislation. By drawing on more than 250 years of the American political experience, the text aids instructors and students in making comparisons between past and present. In so doing, it helps students realize that some of the challenges we face in American politics today are not new—they are simply new to us. Further, it emphasizes that by learning from the experiences of our predecessors, we may be more able to address these problems efficiently and effectively.

As instructors of American government and politics, we are faced with an increasingly challenging dilemma—persuading students to invest in the American political system at a time when trust in government is at all-time lows, and disillusionment is the norm. But as we well know, this task is perhaps more important than ever. Our students live in a rapidly changing political landscape, in which both the identity of America and the role of the United States in the world are being dramatically challenged and altered. We explore issues that the Framers could never have envisioned and how the basic institutions of governments have changed in responding to these new demands.

Our philosophy remains the same as always—roots and reform. By providing students with information about the roots of government and by explaining why it is important, they come to understand how their participation influences policy reforms today. And we hope that students will come to see that politics can be, and most often is, a good thing.

## New to This Update

While the content and pedagogy of this text stays true to its roots by continuing to provide clear, concise prose that receives high marks from students on readability and ease of comprehension, we strive to present a currency unparalleled by any other book on the market. *American Government* has been reformed to include **fully updated examples, figures, and text** that draw on experiences in American government that are relevant to students' lives.

- The entire book has been updated with examples and data from the **2014 midterm election results** as well as decisions from the **2013–2014 term of the Supreme Court**.

- **Chapter 4** on Civil Liberties opens with a revised vignette that compares decisions from two recent Fourth Amendment cases: *U.S. v. Jones* (2012) and *Riley v. California* (2014). Other updates include the impact of the *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* (2014) decision, as well as Edward Snowden’s leak of information related to NSA surveillance and data collection.
- **Chapter 5** on Civil Rights begins with a new vignette that integrates the shooting of Michael Brown and subsequent protests in Ferguson, Missouri, with the evolution of civil rights in the U.S. Supreme Court updates in this chapter, include the 2013 rulings on California’s Proposition 8 and the Defense of Marriage Act, as well as the Court’s 2014 refusal to hear appeals from lower courts questioning the constitutionality of state bans on same-sex marriages.
- **Chapter 6** on Congress includes the latest results from the midterm elections and discussion of recent shifts in congressional rules and roles in budgeting, lawmaking, and oversight.
- **Chapter 12** on Elections and Voting begins with a new vignette drawn from the results of the 2014 midterm election. Updated coverage includes the 2013 Colorado recall election and up-to-date data throughout the chapter.
- **Chapter 13** on The Campaign Process includes updated data on Super PAC spending during the midterm elections as well as coverage of *McCutcheon v. FEC* (2014) and what it means for campaign finance.
- **Chapter 18** on Foreign and Defense Policy has been updated to reflect President Obama’s use of military air power in Libya, Russia’s annexation of Crimea in the Ukraine, and the United States’ reengagement in Iraq against ISIS.
- **Take a Closer Look** is a visual feature that includes targeted critical thinking questions that encourage readers to progressively engage in deeper understanding and analysis. These features take students beyond answering solely the “what” of the visual and help them to better focus on the “why.”
- **Explore Your World** is a feature that includes a more comparative visual study of politics around the world, including up-to-date images and critical thinking questions that ask readers to examine some of the most commonly held assumptions about how American government does or should function in an increasingly globalized world.
- **Photos** capture major events from the last few years, of course, but to illustrate politics’ relevancy, they show political actors and processes as well as people affected by politics, creating a visual narrative that enhances rather than repeats the text. Also, qualitative literacy—the ability to analyze, interpret, synthesize, and apply visual information—is essential to today’s world, so all of the **figures and tables** included in this edition facilitate that skill.

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## Features

Every chapter in this text uses history to serve three purposes: first, to show how institutions and processes have evolved to their present states; second, to provide some of the color that makes information memorable; and third, to provide students with a more thorough appreciation of the fact that our government was born amid burning issues of representation and power, issues that continue to smolder today. A richer historical texture helps to explain the present.

With roots and reform providing the foundation from which all topics and concepts in this book are discussed, the text is divided into four parts. Part I, Foundations of Government, covers the American Government's Roots, Context, and Culture. Through a discussion of the Constitution, it considers those broad concepts associated with government in the United States: The Federal System, Civil Liberties, and Civil Rights. Part I sets the stage for the coverage in Part II, which introduces students to the Institutions of Government through its discussion of Congress, The Presidency, The Executive Branch and the Federal Bureaucracy, and The Judiciary. Political Behavior, Part III, delves into the ideas and processes that make democracy what it is: Public Opinion and Political Socialization, Political Parties, Elections and Voting, The Campaign Process, The News Media, and Interest Groups. Part IV, Public Policy, rounds out the coverage with detailed discussions of Domestic Policy, Economic Policy, and Foreign and Defense Policy. Coverage in these chapters makes use of the most current data and debates to frame discussions of health care, energy and the environment, education, and the United States' role on the global political stage.

Each chapter also includes the following pedagogical features:

- **Roots of and Toward Reform** sections highlight the text's emphasis on the importance of the history of American government, as well as the dynamic cycle of reassessment and reform that allows the United States

to continue to evolve. Every chapter begins with a “Roots of” section that gives a historical overview of the topic at hand, and ends with a “Toward Reform” section devoted to a particularly contentious aspect of the topic being discussed.

- **The Living Constitution** reflects the authors’ emphasis on the origins of America’s democratic system and expertise in constitutional law. To further support the text’s emphasis on the constitutional underpinnings of government and politics, this boxed feature appears in every chapter. Each feature examines the chapter’s topic in light of what the Constitution says or does not say about it.
- A running **marginal glossary** facilitates students’ understanding of key terms related to the chapter content. A list of key terms also appears at the end of the chapter for easy reference; these key terms are also defined in a glossary at the end of the book.
- A focus on **qualitative literacy** helps students analyze, interpret, synthesize, and apply visual information—skills that are essential in today’s world. We receive information from the written and spoken word, but knowledge also comes in visual forms. We are used to thinking about reading text critically, but we do not always think about “reading” visuals in this way. A focus on qualitative literacy encourages students to think about the images and informational graphics they will encounter throughout this text, as well as those they see every day in the newspaper, in magazines, on the Web, on television, and in books. Critical thinking questions assist students in learning how to analyze visuals.
  - **Tables** consist of textual information and/or numerical data arranged in tabular form in columns and rows. Tables are frequently used when exact information is required and when orderly arrangement is necessary to locate and, in many cases, to compare the information. All tables in this edition include questions and encourage critical thinking.
  - **Charts and graphs** depict numerical data in visual forms. Examples that students will encounter throughout this text are line graphs, pie charts, and bar graphs. Line graphs show a progression, usually over time (as in how the U.S. population has grown over time). Pie charts (such as ones showing population demographics) demonstrate how a whole (total American population) is divided into its parts (different racial and ethnic groups). Bar graphs compare values across categories, showing how proportions are related to each other (as in how much money each party raised in presidential election years). Bar graphs can present data either horizontally or vertically. All charts and graphs in this edition are based on questions that encourage critical thinking.
  - Some of the most interesting commentary on American politics takes place in the form of **political cartoons**. The cartoonist’s goal is to comment on and/or criticize political figures, policies, or events. The cartoonist uses several techniques to accomplish this goal, including exaggeration, irony, and juxtaposition. For example, the cartoonist may point out how the results of governmental policies are the opposite of their intended effects (irony). In other cartoons, two people, ideas, or events that do not belong together may be joined to make a point (juxtaposition). Knowledge of current events is helpful in interpreting political cartoons.



# Supplements

Make more time for your students with instructor resources that offer effective learning assessments and classroom engagement. Pearson's partnership with educators does not end with the delivery of course materials; Pearson is there with you on the first day of class and beyond. A dedicated team of local Pearson representatives will work with you to not only choose course materials but also integrate them into your class and assess their effectiveness. Our goal is your goal—to improve instruction with each semester.

Pearson is pleased to offer the following resources to qualified adopters of *American Government: Roots and Reform*. Several of these supplements are available to instantly download on the Instructor Resource Center (IRC); please visit the IRC at [www.pearsonhighered.com/irc](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/irc) to register for access.

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**INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL.** Create a comprehensive road map for teaching classroom, online, or hybrid courses. Designed for new and experienced instructors, the Instructor's Manual includes a sample syllabus, lecture and discussion suggestions, activities for in or out of class, and essays on teaching American Government. Available on the IRC.

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In the now many years we have been writing and rewriting this book, we have been blessed to have been helped by many people at Pearson Education. For this edition, our new editor, Jeff Marshall, has responded to our fiery personalities and endless ideas with a few tricks—and a whole lot of enthusiasm—of his own. Our project manager, Maggie Barbieri, has invested her time, energy, and perhaps even sanity, into our project. She has become a valuable resource, sharing laughs, obtaining answers to our (many) questions, and using the most powerful means of coercion—Catholic guilt—to assure that we meet our deadlines. Our development editor, Angela Kao, has brought a quiet efficiency to the process; she has demonstrated great flexibility, advising us on content, developing infographics, assisting in photo research, and doing all the behind-the-scenes work that too often goes underappreciated. The production team, particularly Rob De George at Pearson has provided valuable expertise and demonstrated remarkable patience and dedication. And, we would be remiss not to thank our former editor, Eric Stano, who guided this book for more than ten years. We would also like to acknowledge the tireless efforts of the Pearson Education sales force. In the end, we hope that all of these talented people see how much their work and support have helped us to write a better book.



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# AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Roots and Reform

# 1

# American Government: Roots, Context, and Culture



In December 1606, three ships—the *Susan Constant*, the *Godspeed*, and the *Discovery*—set sail from Blackwall, England, to America. These ships held 104 men and boys seeking their fortunes, for the New World was reputed to offer tremendous riches. However, this sorry mix lacked the skills necessary to sustain a colony in the harsh terrain and conditions they were to encounter.

The London Company, a joint stock company that was created to attract much-needed capital to aid British colonization of the New World, financed the colonists. Joint stock companies allowed potential investors to purchase shares of stock in companies anticipating large payoffs for their investments several years down the road. Enthusiasm for this new business model led thousands of English citizens to invest in the London Company. The company was issued the first Virginia Charter in April 1606, legally allowing it to settle a region extending from present-day Cape Fear, North Carolina, to the Long Island Sound. The settlers were under the direction of Sir Thomas Smith, reputed to be one of London's wealthiest financiers, lending further credibility to the venture.

## 1.1

Trace the origins of American government, p. 4.

## 1.2

Evaluate the different types of governments countries may employ, p. 6.

## 1.3

Explain the functions of American government, p. 8.

## 1.4

Describe American political culture, and identify the basic tenets of American democracy, p. 9.

## 1.5

Analyze the changing characteristics of the American public, p. 11.

## 1.6

Assess the role of political ideology in shaping American politics, p. 16.

## 1.7

Characterize changes in Americans' attitudes toward and expectations of government, p. 19.



**THE U.S. POPULATION IS CHANGING** Above, an artist's rendition of the first English settlement, Jamestown, in what is today Virginia. Below, Manhattan Island, New York City with a view of the Freedom Tower.





1.1

**government**

The formal vehicle through which policies are made and affairs of state are conducted.

1.2

1.3

1.4

1.5

1.6

1.7

Although Smith directed the expedition, he chose to remain in England when the ships set sail for the New World. The colonists settled in a swampy area 30 miles from the mouth of the James River, creating Jamestown, Virginia—the first permanent settlement in America—in 1607. Immediately, dismal conditions prevailed. Insufficient numbers of settlers opted to pursue agricultural ventures, and people began to starve. Settlers died of hunger, Indian attacks, lack of proper supplies, and disease.

One major problem with the settlement was a lack of strong leadership. This situation improved with the election of Captain John Smith as the colony's third president. Smith instituted improvements, forcing all colonists to work and attempting to negotiate food trade with local Indians. These efforts succeeded for a short time, but eventually failed, and the harsh winter of 1609–1610 was deemed “The Starving Time.” The conditions reached such dire proportions that a few settlers resorted to cannibalism.

The introduction of tobacco as a cash crop in 1612 improved the economic status of the settlement, but living conditions remained grim. One resident called the area “an unhealthy place, a nest of Rogues, whores, desolute, and rooking persons; a place of intolerable labour, bad usage, and a hard Diet.”<sup>1</sup> While eventually life in the settlement improved, it is important to remember the sacrifices of early colonists and the trials other waves of immigrants faced to be part of the American dream.

In this text, we explore the American political system through a historical lens. This perspective allows us to analyze the ways that ideas and actions of a host of different Americans—from Indians, to colonists, to the Framers of the Constitution and beyond—have affected how our **government**—the formal vehicle through which policies are made and affairs of state are conducted—works. Much has changed since the days of the Jamestown Colony, and the people who live in America today differ greatly from those early settlers. The experiences and values of those settlers, however, continue to influence politics. This chapter explores the political process, placing people at its center.

## Roots of American Government: We the People

1.1

Trace the origins of American government.



he Preamble to the U.S. Constitution begins with the phrase “We the People.” But, who are “the People”? In this section, we explore that question by looking at the earliest inhabitants of the Americas, their initial and ongoing interactions with European colonists, and how Americans continually built on the experiences of the past to create a new future.

### □ The Earliest Inhabitants of the Americas

By the time the first colonists arrived in what is now known as the United States, indigenous peoples had been living in the area for more than 30,000 years. Most historians and archaeologists believe that these peoples migrated from present-day Russia through the Bering Strait into North America and then dispersed throughout the American continents. Some debate continues, however, about where they first appeared and whether they crossed an ice bridge from Siberia or arrived on boats from across the Pacific.

The indigenous peoples were not a homogeneous group; their cultures, customs, and values varied widely, as did their political systems. The number of these indigenous peoples, who lived in all parts of what is now the United States, is impossible to know for certain. Estimates, however, have ranged as high as 100 million people, a number that quickly diminished as colonists brought with them to the New World a range of diseases to which the indigenous peoples had not been exposed. In addition, warfare with the European settlers as well as within tribes not only killed many American Indians but also disrupted previously established ways of life. Furthermore, the

# The Living Constitution

*We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, 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, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America. —PREAMBLE*

The Preamble to the United States Constitution is little more than a declaration of intent; it carries no legal weight. But, its language has steered American government, politics, institutions, and people for over 200 years. While the language of the Preamble has not changed since the Constitution was written, its meaning in practice has evolved significantly; this is what we mean by a living constitution. For example, the phrases “We the People” and “ourselves” included a much smaller group of citizens in 1787 than they do today. Voting was largely limited to property-owning white males. Indians, slaves, and women could not vote. Today, through the expansion of the right to vote, the phrase “the People” encompasses men and women of all races, ethnic origins, and social and economic statuses. This has changed the demands that Americans place on government, as well as expectations about the role of government in people’s lives.

Many citizens today question how well the U.S. government can deliver on the goals set out in the

Preamble. Few Americans classify the union as “perfect,” and many feel excluded from “Justice” and the “Blessings of Liberty.” Even our leaders do not believe that our domestic situation is particularly tranquil, as evidenced by the continuing debates about the best means to protect America. Still, in appraising how well government functions, it is imperative to look at not only the roots of the political system, but also how it has been reformed over time through amendment, legislation, common usage, and changing social mores.

## CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. How do you think the Framers would respond to the broad interpretation of the Preamble’s intent embraced by many modern political leaders?
2. How have ideas such as promoting “the general Welfare” evolved over time? How has this affected the role and power of American government?

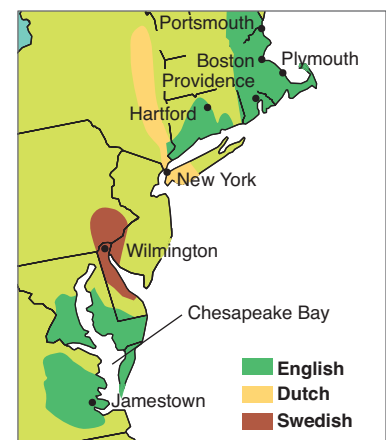
European settlers displaced Indians, repeatedly pushing them westward as they created settlements and, later, colonies.

## □ The First Colonists

Colonists journeyed to North America for a variety of reasons. Many wealthy Englishmen and other Europeans left home seeking to enhance their fortunes. With them came a host of laborers who hoped to find their own opportunities for riches. In fact, commerce was the most common initial reason for settlement in North America.

In addition to the English commercial settlements in Virginia, in 1609 the Dutch New Netherlands Company settled along the Hudson and lower Delaware Rivers, calling the area New Netherlands. Later, the Dutch West India Company established trading posts on the Hudson River. Both Fort Orange, in what is now Albany, New York, and New Amsterdam, New York City’s Manhattan Island, were populated not by colonists but by salaried employees. Among those who flocked to New Amsterdam (renamed New York in 1664) were settlers from Finland, Germany, and Sweden. The varied immigrants also included free blacks. This ethnic and racial mix created its own system of cultural inclusiveness that continues to make New York City and its citizenry unique today (see Figure 1.1).

**A RELIGIOUS TRADITION TAKES ROOT** In 1620, a group of Protestants known as Puritans left Europe aboard the *Mayflower*. Destined for Virginia, they found themselves off course and landed instead in Plymouth, in what is now Massachusetts. These



**FIGURE 1.1** WHAT DID COLONIAL SETTLEMENT LOOK LIKE BEFORE 1700?

Prior to 1700, pockets of colonial settlement existed along the East Coast of what became the United States, from present-day Virginia to what is now Maine. These settlements were divided among a number of colonial powers, including the English in the Northeast and around the Chesapeake Bay, the Dutch in what is present-day New York, and the Swedes, largely in present-day Delaware.

- 1.1
- 1.2
- 1.3
- 1.4
- 1.5
- 1.6
- 1.7

**monarchy**

A form of government in which power is vested in hereditary kings and queens who govern in the interest of all.

**totalitarianism**

A form of government in which power resides in a leader who rules according to self-interest and without regard for individual rights and liberties.

new settlers differed from those in Virginia and New York, who saw their settlements as commercial ventures. Adhering to Calvinistic beliefs, the Puritans came instead as families bound together by a common belief in the powerful role of religion in their lives. They believed the Old Testament charged them to create “a city on a hill” that would shine as an example of righteousness. To help achieve this goal, they enforced a strict code of authority and obedience, while simultaneously stressing the importance of individualism.

Soon, the ideas at the core of these strict puritanical values faced challenges. In 1631, Roger Williams arrived in Boston, Massachusetts. He preached extreme separation from the Church of England and even questioned the right of Europeans to settle on Indian lands. He believed that the Puritans went too far when they punished settlers who deviated from their strict code of morality, arguing that it was God, not people, who should punish individuals for their moral shortcomings. These “heretical views” prompted local magistrates to banish him from the colony. Williams then helped to establish Providence, a village in present-day Rhode Island that he named for “God’s merciful Providence,” which he believed had allowed his followers a place to settle.

A later challenge to the Puritans’ religious beliefs came from midwife Anne Hutchinson. She began to share her view that the churches established in Massachusetts had lost touch with the Holy Spirit. Many of her followers were women who were attracted to her progressive ideas on the importance of religious tolerance, as well as on the equality and rights of women. Authorities in Massachusetts tried Hutchinson for blasphemy for her views and banished her from the colony. She and her followers eventually settled in Portsmouth, Rhode Island, which became a beacon for those seeking religious toleration and popular—as opposed to religious—sovereignty.

Thomas Hooker, too, soon found himself at odds with the Calvinist Puritans in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Hooker believed they were too narrow-minded; in his view all men should have the right to vote regardless of religious views or property qualifications. He and his supporters thus relocated to Connecticut, where they developed a settlement at Hartford.

Later colonies in the New World were established with religious tolerance in mind. In 1632, King Charles I granted a well-known English Catholic, George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore, a charter to establish a Catholic colony in the New World. This area eventually became known as Maryland after Mary, the mother of Jesus.

In 1681, King Charles II bestowed upon William Penn a charter giving him sole ownership of a vast area of land just north of Maryland. The king called the land Pennsylvania, or Penn’s Woods. Penn, a Quaker, eventually also purchased the land that is present-day Delaware. In this area, Penn launched what he called “the holy experiment,” attracting other persecuted Europeans, including German Mennonites and Lutherans and French Huguenots. The survival of Penn’s colony is largely attributable to its ethnic and religious diversity.



**WHO WAS ANNE HUTCHINSON?**

Anne Hutchinson was a midwife and minister who challenged the prevailing thinking of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. She was expelled from the colony and went on to found a new settlement at Portsmouth, Rhode Island.

## Types of Government

**1.2** Evaluate the different types of governments countries may employ.

**E**arly Greek theorists such as Plato and Aristotle tried to categorize governments by who participates, who governs, and how much authority those who govern enjoy. As Table 1.1 shows, a **monarchy**, the form of government in England from which the colonists fled, is defined by the rule of one hereditary king or queen in the interest of all of his or her subjects. Another form, an aristocracy, is government by the few in the service of the many.

**Totalitarianism** is a type of government that Aristotle considered rule by “tyranny.” Tyrants rule their countries to benefit themselves. This is the case in North Korea under Kim Jong-Un. In tyrannical or totalitarian systems, the leader exercises unlimited power, and individuals have no personal rights or liberties. Generally, the



**TABLE 1.1** HOW DID ARISTOTLE CLASSIFY THE TYPES OF GOVERNMENTS?

Rule by	In Whose Interest	
	Public	Self
One	Monarchy	Tyranny
The Few	Aristocracy	Oligarchy
The Many	Polity	Democracy

**SOURCE:** Aristotle, *Politics* 3, 7.

rule of these systems tends to be based on a particular religion or orthodoxy, an ideology, or a personality cult organized around a supreme leader.

An **oligarchy** occurs when a few people rule in their own interest. In an oligarchy, wealth, social status, military position, or achievement dictates participation in government. China and Russia are countries that have governments with oligarchic tendencies.

Aristotle called rule of the many for the benefit of all citizens a “polity” and rule of the many to benefit themselves a “democracy.” The term **democracy** derives from the Greek words *demos* (“the people”) and *kratia* (“power” or “authority”) and may apply to any system of government that gives power to the people, either directly, or indirectly through elected representatives. Most governments worldwide are democracies.

## ❑ Devising a National Government in the American Colonies

American colonists rejected a system with a strong ruler, such as the British monarchy, when they declared their independence. The colonists also feared replicating the landed and titled system of the British aristocracy. They viewed the formation of a republican form of government as far more in keeping with their values.

The Framers wanted to create a political system with the people at the center of power. Due to the vast size of the new nation, **direct democracy** was unworkable. As

### **oligarchy**

A form of government in which the right to participate depends on the possession of wealth, social status, military position, or achievement.

### **democracy**

A system of government that gives power to the people, whether directly or through elected representatives.

### **direct democracy**

A system of government in which members of the polity meet to discuss all policy decisions and then agree to abide by majority rule.



### WHAT DOES A MODERN MONARCHY LOOK LIKE?

Here, Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain celebrates her Diamond Jubilee, or sixty years on the throne of Great Britain. She is followed by her presumptive heir, Prince Charles, and his wife, Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall. Behind them are Charles’ sons, Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, accompanied by his wife, Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, and Prince Harry. The British monarch’s powers are largely ceremonial.

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**indirect democracy**

A system of government that gives citizens the opportunity to vote for representatives who work on their behalf.

**republic**

A government rooted in the consent of the governed; a representative or indirect democracy.

more and more settlers came to the New World, many town meetings were replaced by a system of **indirect democracy**, in which people vote for representatives who work on their behalf. The ancient Greeks considered representative government undemocratic; they believed that all citizens must have a direct say in their governance. And, in the 1760s, French political philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued that true democracy is impossible unless all citizens participate in governmental decision making. Nevertheless, most of the colonies operated according to the principles of indirect democracy.

Many citizens were uncomfortable with the term democracy because it conjured up fears of the people and mob rule. Instead, they preferred the term **republic**, which implied a system of government in which the interests of the people were represented by more educated or wealthier citizens who were responsible to those who elected them. Today, representative democracies are more commonly called republics, and the words democracy and republic often are used interchangeably. Yet, in the United States, we still pledge allegiance to our “republic,” not our democracy.

## Functions of American Government

**1.3** Explain the functions of American government.

**I**n attempting “to form a more perfect Union,” the Framers, through the Constitution, set forth several key functions of American government, as well as governmental guarantees to the people, which have continuing relevance today. These principal functions of government and the guarantees they provide to citizens permeate our lives. Whether it is your ability to obtain a low-interest student loan, buy a formerly prescription-only drug such as Claritin or Plan B over the counter, or be licensed to drive a car at a particular age, government plays a major role. And, without government-sponsored research, we would not have cell phones, the Internet, four-wheel-drive vehicles, or even Velcro.

### □ Establishing Justice

One of the first tasks expected of any government is the creation of a system of laws allowing individuals to abide by a common set of principles. Societies adhering to the rule of law allow for the rational dispensing of justice by acknowledged legal authorities. Thus, the Constitution authorized Congress to create a federal judicial system to dispense justice. The Bill of Rights also entitles people to a trial by jury, to be informed of the charges against them, and to be tried in a courtroom presided over by an impartial judge.

### □ Ensuring Domestic Tranquility

As we discuss throughout this text, the role of governments in ensuring domestic tranquility is a subject of much debate and has been since the period of the 1600s and 1700s known as the Enlightenment. In crises, such as the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the federal government, as well as state and local governments, can take extraordinary measures to contain the threat of terrorism from abroad as well as within the United States. The creation of the Department of Homeland Security and the passage of legislation giving the national government nearly unprecedented ability to ferret out potential threats show the degree to which the government takes seriously its charge to preserve domestic tranquility. On a more practical front, local governments have police forces, states have national guards, and the federal government has both the armed services and the ability to call up state militias to quell any threats to order.

## □ Providing for the Common Defense

The Framers recognized that a major purpose of government is to provide defense for its citizens against threats of foreign aggression. In fact, in the early years of the republic, many believed that the major function of government was to protect the nation from foreign threats, such as the British invasion of the United States in the War of 1812 and the continued problem of piracy on the high seas. Thus, the Constitution calls for the president to be commander in chief of the armed forces, and Congress has the authority to raise an army. The defense budget continues to be a considerable and often controversial proportion of all federal outlays.

## □ Promoting the General Welfare

When the Framers added “promoting the general Welfare” to their list of key governmental functions, they never envisioned how governmental involvement at all levels would expand so tremendously. In fact, promoting the general welfare was more of an ideal than a mandate for the new national government. Over time, though, our notions of what governments should do have expanded along with governmental size. As we discuss throughout this text, however, universal agreement on the scope of what governments should do is absent. For example, part of the debate over health care reform in 2010 centered on whether health care should be a fundamental right guaranteed by the federal government.

## □ Securing the Blessings of Liberty

Americans enjoy a wide range of liberties and opportunities to prosper. They are able to criticize the government and to petition it when they disagree with its policies or have a grievance. This freedom to criticize and to petition is perhaps the best way to “secure the Blessings of Liberty.” Though they are on opposite sides of the political spectrum, the Tea Party and Moral Monday movements both demonstrate citizens’ right to protest actions of the government.

### political culture

Commonly shared attitudes, beliefs, and core values about how government should operate.

### personal liberty

A key characteristic of U.S. democracy. Initially meaning freedom *from* governmental interference, today it includes demands for freedom *to* engage in a variety of practices without governmental interference or discrimination.

# American Political Culture and the Basic Tenets of American Democracy

1.4 Describe American political culture, and identify the basic tenets of American democracy.

**W**e can define **political culture** as commonly shared attitudes, beliefs, and core values about how government should operate. American political culture emphasizes the values of liberty and equality; popular consent, majority rule, and popular sovereignty; individualism; and religious faith and freedom.

## □ Liberty and Equality

Liberty and equality are the most important characteristics of the American republican form of government. The Framers wrote the Constitution itself to ensure life and liberty. Over the years, however, our concepts of **personal liberty** have changed and evolved from freedom *from* to freedom *to*. The Framers intended Americans to be free from governmental infringements on freedom of religion and speech, from unreasonable searches and seizures, and so on. The addition of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution and its emphasis on due process and on equal protection of the laws, as well as the subsequent passage of laws guaranteeing civil rights and liberties, however, expanded Americans’ concept of liberty to include demands for freedom to work or go to school free from

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