

2017–2018 Edition (Without Policy Chapters)

American Government and Politics Today



Ford • Bardes • Schmidt • Shelley

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Australia • Brazil • Mexico • Singapore • United Kingdom • United States

**American Government and Politics Today,
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Library of Congress Control Number: 2016951635

Student Edition:

ISBN: 978-1-337-09325-5

Loose-leaf Edition:

ISBN: 978-1-337-39472-7

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20 Channel Center Street

Boston, MA 02210

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A Letter to Instructors

Dear American Politics Instructor:

Americans are often cynical about our national political system. College students in particular are at a loss to know what to do about the polarized politics and policy gridlock occurring within the modern political system, making American Politics a tough course to teach. This edition of *American Government and Politics Today* is designed to help you move your students from the sidelines of politics to full engagement by equipping them with the knowledge and analytical skills needed to shape political decisions at the local, state, and national levels. Based on review feedback, we include a strong emphasis on the power of modern social media and its ability to engage citizens with one another, as well as to connect citizens with political issues and ideas. The solid content on institutions and the processes of government included in previous editions remains. Features such as “Politics in Practice” and “What if...?” will help you bring politics to life in your classroom, while demonstrating to students why politics matters and how it surrounds them each day—at times without their even knowing it. Each chapter has the most up-to-date data and information and includes coverage of current issues and controversies that we believe will engage students and hold their interest.

We believe that part of America’s cynicism stems from the growing reality of “two Americas”: one with opportunity afforded by privilege and wealth and another whose opportunities, rights, and privileges seem stunted by a lack of wealth. Does the promise of America exist for both groups or only one? How do those who feel they have been left behind as others have prospered regain the promise of the American Dream? What role can political engagement play in doing so? Knowledge is power, and in this edition we try to strike a balance between the content and the skill building necessary for course success, while also presenting students with current controversies in politics and opportunities to engage with those issues. The new “Politics in Practice” feature found in each chapter highlights the ways people engage in politics to make changes. Each chapter begins with the popular feature “What if...?”, which presents students with an opportunity to think through a political scenario that for now is a hypothetical, but could actually happen.

These active learning opportunities bring alive the issues that students are confronted with on a daily basis and give students the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills.

New to This Edition

- This edition has been substantially revised and updated to include the 2016 national elections and recent data, issues, and engaging examples of politics, politicians, and policies.
- In response to our reviewers, we have substantially revised Chapter 10: “The Media and Politics.” This chapter puts a strong emphasis on the way social media connect us to one another and with ideas and political leaders.

- Chapter 9 combines material on “Campaigns, Voting, and Elections” in a format that will lead the student seamlessly through the electoral process.
- In response to reviewers, the features in this edition have been streamlined and the number reduced to three. Each feature has been revised for this edition. “Politics in Practice” is new to this edition and focuses on making politics and people taking political action visible to students by highlighting examples from popular culture and current events. In Chapter 2, the feature highlights the impact of the Broadway musical *Hamilton*, and in Chapter 5 it shows the power of students to change the racial climate on their campus through protest. The feature is designed to enhance student interest by identifying a person or group of people who took on an issue and made a difference.
- A new feature, “Election 2016,” has been added to every chapter in the text. Within the context of each chapter’s focus, this feature guides students to think about the ways an election can change American politics or reinforce the status quo.
- Greater attention has been paid to gender issues throughout the text as suggested by reviewers. New material is included on the historic candidacy of Hillary Rodham Clinton, the Equal Pay Act, and the Lilly Ledbetter Act, in addition to updated coverage of women’s rights and gender equality, gender and racial discrimination, and the pay gap.
- Care has been taken to reflect the growing political power of Latino/a voters and increasingly diverse communities in the examples used throughout the book.
- Tables and figures have been updated, and the results of the 2016 election are included.
- Recent court decisions on marriage equality and immigration, as well as foreign policy issues like the violence in Syria and the refugee crisis, are integrated into the appropriate chapters in order to ensure that the book addresses the most timely political events and topics.

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Seeing students actively engage with the topics addressed in this book and witnessing an eagerness to learn more about the issues currently facing our nation are some of the most exciting experiences given to any faculty member, particularly when many students will only take one undergraduate course in political science. It is our hope that the revisions to this text will help

you reach many students and transform them into thoughtful and engaged citizens for the rest of their lives.

Sincerely,

Lynne E. Ford (FordL@cofc.edu)

Barbara A. Bardes (Barbara.Bardes@uc.edu)

Steffen W. Schmidt

Mack C. Shelley, II

A Letter to Students

Dear Student:

Whether you are a political science major, an international affairs major, or are simply taking this course to fulfill a general requirement, we hope that you will enjoy this book and all of its features. *American Government and Politics Today* is meant to be enjoyed as well as studied. To ensure that the most relevant topics are addressed, the book has been thoroughly revised to include the results of the 2016 national elections, global events and foreign policy, and Supreme Court decisions that affect your life. In every chapter, resources are included to help you go online or use social media to investigate the issues presented in the text that capture your interest. American politics is dynamic, and it is our goal to provide you with clear discussions of the institutions of national government and the political processes so that you can be informed and understand the issues as you participate in our political system.

As a student, the federal government may seem remote from your daily life, but that could not be further from the truth! The issues facing the nation today are serious and require your attention, whether it seems that way upon first glance or not. Decisions made in Washington, DC, and in your state capital can determine, for example, the rate of interest that you will pay on student loans, who must serve in the military, or the level of investment in higher education relative to sustaining pensions and Medicare. You may have heard people talking about the “1 percent” and the “99 percent”—this is a way of capturing the gap between the very rich and everyone else. In what ways does rising wealth inequality matter in America? Is it still possible for everyone to achieve the American Dream? Is political equality possible in the face of economic and social inequality? Why did “outsider” candidates fare so well in the 2016 presidential primaries? How will politics change as a result of new groups of political participants? These are just a few of the questions raised by this text. The promise of America is very much alive, but our future is far from certain. Understanding how politics works and knowing your rights as a citizen are critical to shaping the nation’s future. Political questions rarely have simple answers. Political issues invite multiple perspectives that can be shaped as much by gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation as by political party or ideology. Throughout this text, we will try to equip you with what you need to develop your own political identity and perspective so that you can fully engage in the national conversation about our shared future.

This edition’s interactive features are intended to help you succeed in your coursework as well as to understand the role of politics in the modern world.

- **Learning Objectives:** These objectives begin each chapter and serve as your “take-aways,” highlighting the most important content, concepts, and skills. This will make it easy to check your own learning as you work through each chapter.
- **Margin Definitions:** These make it easy to double-check your understanding of key terms within the chapters.

- **What If:** This chapter-opening feature is designed to get you thinking about why politics and government matter to you and your community.
- **Politics in Practice:** This new feature will help you see politics and popular culture in a new way. In each chapter you will find examples of people using politics to make a change. For example, in Chapter 2 the feature highlights the impact of the Broadway musical *Hamilton* on the public's interest in history, and in Chapter 5 it shows the power of students to change the racial climate on their campus through protest.
- **Election 2016:** This new feature, appearing in each chapter, will guide you to think about the ways an election can change American politics or reinforce the status quo.
- **Social Media Margin Questions:** Most chapters include a social media screen capture that poses a critical-thinking question. This feature will challenge you to apply chapter content to the real world.
- **Chapter Summaries:** Revised for this edition, the end-of-chapter summaries link back to a Learning Objective to better test your understanding of the topics at hand.
- **Print, Media, and Online Resources:** Each chapter offers a brief list of additional resources that will allow you to explore further the topics that interest you.

The Benefits of Using MindTap as a Student

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

Sincerely,

Lynne E. Ford (FordL@cofc.edu)

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Text Only Edition

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Instructor Companion Website for Ford/Bardes/ Schmidt/Shelley, *American Government and Politics Today 2017–2018 Edition*

ISBN: 9781337093248

This Instructor Companion Website is an all-in-one multimedia online resource for class preparation, presentation, and testing. Accessible through Cengage.com/login with your faculty account, you will find available for download: book-specific Microsoft® PowerPoint® presentations; a Test Bank compatible with multiple learning management systems; an Instructor's Manual; Microsoft® PowerPoint® Image Slides; and a JPEG Image Library.

The Test Bank, offered in Blackboard, Moodle, Desire2Learn, Canvas, and Angel 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 contains chapter-specific learning objectives, an outline, key terms with definitions, and a chapter summary. Additionally, the Instructor's Manual features a critical thinking question, a lecture launching suggestion, and an in-class activity for each learning objective.

The Microsoft® PowerPoint® presentations are ready-to-use, visual outlines of each chapter. These presentations are easily customized for your lectures and offered along with chapter-specific Microsoft® PowerPoint® Image Slides and JPEG Image Libraries. Access the Instructor Companion Website at www.cengage.com/login.

Cognero for Ford/Bardes/Schmidt/Shelley, *American Government and Politics Today 2017–2018 Edition*

ISBN: 9781337093927

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Acknowledgments

In preparing this edition of *American Government and Politics Today*, we have received superb guidance and cooperation from a team of publishers and editors at Cengage. We have greatly appreciated the collaboration and encouragement given over the years by Carolyn Merrill, former product team manager. Margaret McAndrew Beasley, our developmental editor, deserves our thanks for keeping us moving toward deadlines and for her well-considered suggestions for improvement. We are also indebted to Megan Garvey, content development manager, and Corinna Dibble, content project manager, for their contributions.

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

Reviewers

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

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Barbara A. Bardes is professor emerita of political science at the University of Cincinnati. She received her B.A. and M.A. from Kent State University and her Ph.D. from the University of Cincinnati. She served as a faculty member in political science and dean of Mundelein College at Loyola University of Chicago. In 1993, she was appointed dean of the University of Cincinnati Blue Ash, where she served until 2003. She returned to the Political Science Department, where she held the position of graduate director before retiring. Bardes has written articles on public and foreign policy, and women and politics. She also has co-authored *Declarations of Independence: Women and Political Power in 19th Century American Novels*, *Thinking About Public Policy*, *Public Opinion: Measuring The American Mind*, and *American Government and Politics Today*.

Steffen W. Schmidt is a professor of political science at Iowa State University. He grew up in Colombia, South America, and has studied in Colombia, Switzerland, the United States, and France. He has a B.A. from Rollins College and obtained his Ph.D. from Columbia University, New York, in public law and government. Dr. Schmidt has published 14 books and over 130 articles in scholarly journals and major newspapers. He is the recipient of numerous prestigious teaching prizes, including the Amoco Award for Lifetime Career Achievement in Teaching and the Teacher of the Year award. He is a pioneer in the use of web-based and real-time video courses and a founding member of the American Political Science Association’s section on Computers and Multimedia. He is known as “Dr. Politics” for his extensive commentary on U.S. politics in both U.S. and international media. He comments on CNN en Español and Univision, as well as CTV Canada Cable TV. Dr. Schmidt is a founding member of the USSTRATCOM academic alliance. He’s on Facebook (SteffenWSchmidt) and Twitter (DrPolitics).

Mack C. Shelley, II is a professor of political science and statistics at Iowa State University. After receiving his bachelor's degree from American University in Washington, DC, he went on to graduate studies at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where he received a master's degree in economics and a Ph.D. in political science. He arrived at Iowa State in 1979. From 1993 to 2002 he served as elected co-editor of the *Policy Studies Journal*. Shelley has also published numerous articles, books, and monographs on public policy, including *The Permanent Majority: The Conservative Coalition in the United States Congress*, *Biotechnology and the Research Enterprise: A Guide to the Literature* (with William F. Woodman and Brian J. Reichel), *American Public Policy: The Contemporary Agenda* (with Steven G. Koven and Bert E. Swanson), and *Quality Research in Literacy and Science Education: International Perspectives and Gold Standards* (with Larry Yore and Brian Hand). He conducts policy research in a number of areas funded by grants and contracts.

Career Opportunities: Political Science

Introduction

It is no secret that college graduates are facing one of the toughest job markets in the past fifty years. Despite this challenge, those with a college degree have done much better than those without since the 2008 recession. One of the most important decisions a student has to make is the choice of a major; many consider future job possibilities when making that call. A political science degree is incredibly useful for a successful career in many different fields, from lawyer to policy advocate, pollster to humanitarian worker. Employer surveys reveal that the skills that most employers value in successful employees—critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and clarity of verbal and written communication—are precisely the tools that political science courses should be helping you develop. This brief guide is intended to help spark ideas for what kinds of careers you might pursue with a political science degree and the types of activities you can engage in now to help you secure one of those positions after graduation.

Careers in Political Science

Law and Criminal Justice

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

Public Administration

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

Campaigns, Elections, and Polling

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

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

Interest Groups, International and Nongovernmental Organizations

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

Foreign Service

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

Graduate School

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

Preparing While Still on Campus

Internships

One of the most useful steps you can take while still on campus is to visit your college's career center in 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, it can lead to job opportunities later down the road and add experience to your resume.

Skills

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

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

Public Speaking: An oft-quoted 1977 survey showed that public speaking was the most commonly cited fear among respondents. And yet oral communication is a vital tool 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: The Internet increases exponentially the amount of data gathered, and the nation is facing a drastic shortage of people with basic statistical skills to interpret and use this data. A political science degree can go hand-in-hand with courses in introductory statistics.

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

Student Leadership

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

Conclusion

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


2017–2018 Edition

American Government and Politics Today

Without Policy Chapters

One Republic— Two Americas?

1



One World Trade Center, built at Ground Zero of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, was designed to represent the resilience of the American spirit. Including its mast, the building's height is 1,776 feet making it the tallest building in New York City.

Cameron Davidson/corbis/Getty Images

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

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

Taxes Never Increased and Local Services Disappeared?

Background

The power to tax and spend is a defining function of government. Taxation is a concurrent power, meaning that the federal, state, and local governments can all collect taxes. Taxes on property, goods and services, and income provide revenue for government to operate. Dating back to the earliest days of the republic, the government's power to tax has provoked strong negative reactions. The Boston Tea Party in 1773, the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794, and California's 1978 Proposition 13, known as the "People's Initiative to Limit Property Taxation," are all examples of popular rebellions. More recently, the Tea Party protests have brought attention to questions about the government's power to tax and the appropriate size and role of government. Many fiscally conservative candidates promise to eliminate tax increases and shrink the size of government. In reality, eliminating tax increases means cutting state and local budgets and eliminating services that people have come to expect. How should communities respond? What happens to schools, roads, police and fire protection, and other public services when local governments can no longer afford to pay for them?

Taxes Pay for Local Services We Expect

The tax system allows government to redistribute revenue in a variety of ways. Intergovernmental transfers provide money collected by state and federal governments to local governments, accounting for roughly 40 percent of local operating dollars. Cities and towns make up the rest of their budget through property taxes, local sales taxes, and various user fees. In a recession, people buy fewer goods and services. This means that local governments collect less revenue from sales taxes and need to make up the deficit by other means or cut the budget. Local budget cuts often mean that services to citizens are dramatically reduced or eliminated altogether.

Local governments—counties and cities—usually take responsibility for parks and recreation services, police and fire departments, housing services, emergency medical services, municipal courts, transportation services, and public works (streets, sewers, trash collection, water, snow removal, and signage).

No Taxes, No Services: Tough Choices

In conservative Colorado Springs, Colorado, home of the "Taxpayer's Bill of Rights," voters rejected a tax increase to restore a budget deficit caused by declining sales tax revenues. The city turned off one-third of its streetlights to save electricity costs. The city also locked public restrooms, reduced bus service, and stopped maintaining the city parks.

The city of Flint, Michigan, was placed in state receivership in 2011, and Governor Rick Snyder appointed an emergency manager. At the time, the city was running a \$20 million deficit. As a

cost-savings measure in 2014, the state decided to temporarily switch Flint's water source from Lake Huron to the Flint River until a new supply line to Lake Huron was ready. Almost immediately, residents began to complain about the color and taste of the water. Testing found dangerously high levels of lead and other toxins caused when caustic Flint River water degraded lead water pipes. City residents were warned against using the water for drinking, cooking, or bathing. Thousands of children have tested positive for elevated lead levels, raising concerns about future health issues and school performance. The National Guard was called in to distribute bottled water to Flint residents. The cost of replacing the damaged pipes is now estimated at more than \$55 million.

In New Jersey, Republican governor Chris Christie cut \$3 billion from the state budget in his first two years in office. As a result, Trenton, New Jersey, fired one-third of the police force (103 officers). In a single year, gun-related assaults increased by 76 percent, robberies with a firearm increased by 55 percent, car thefts more than doubled, and break-ins more than tripled. The domestic violence unit was eliminated.

In 27 states, municipalities have introduced accident response fees to collect revenue to fund rescue, fire, and ambulance services. Drivers and/or their insurance companies are billed for municipalities' response to traffic accidents. The fees range from about \$300 to more than \$2,000 per hour per vehicle and are based on the piece of equipment used. Extrication devices, popularly known as "Jaws of Life," are among the most costly. Responding to citizen complaints, many states are reviewing the practice, and 13 states have banned the "crash tax."

For Critical Analysis

1. The U.S. tax system is designed to collect and redistribute revenue. Public goods and services paid for by tax revenue are therefore available to all in most cases (police protection, snow removal) or to those in the community who qualify because of special needs (legal aid to the poor, Medicaid). Some services or facilities are financed with "user fees." In other words, you pay only for what you as an individual use (toll roads, parking meters). Consider the local government services just mentioned. In your view, is it better to pay for each with tax revenue or user fees? What if the services rendered are in response to an accident? How does your answer relate to your perspective on the appropriate role for government?
2. We all live in the same country, but will decisions about who has access to public goods and services mean that we are creating two Americas? What kind of country do you want to live in?

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

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

At the heart of the debate over health care and health insurance is the question of how best to pay for, and provide access to, health care for every citizen. In 2015, this country’s federal, state, and local governments, corporations, and individuals spent \$3.2 trillion, or about \$10,000 for every person, on health care.¹ Health insurance costs are rising faster than wages or inflation. Costs like this are not sustainable and drain the economy of resources needed elsewhere. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (commonly known as the Affordable Care Act) was signed into law in 2010, although many of its provisions will take several years to implement, and several delays and extensions were granted early in its implementation. The act is large and complicated because the issue it addresses is large and complicated.

Several aspects of the law are favored by nearly everyone, such as providing access to insurance for people with preexisting conditions or allowing children to stay on their parents’ insurance until age 26. The law also requires people to be insured either through their employer or by purchasing insurance so that the costs and risks are spread across the entire population. Failure to do so results in a penalty. Because young people are typically healthy and rarely incur expensive medical bills, their participation is necessary to offset the costs of caring for others and to maintain the stability of the state and federal health exchanges. As a group, “young invincibles,” as they have been labeled by the health insurance industry, have proven difficult to convince of the necessity of health insurance. The law’s insurance mandate seems at odds with the value we place on individual responsibility; yet, health care is something everyone requires, and the costs are more manageable if everyone is included.

We resolve these and other conflicting values using the political process, and institutions of government are empowered to make decisions on our behalf. In the case of health care, the conflict has been resolved by the judiciary. The U.S.

did you know?

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

¹ Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, accessed at www.cms.gov.


Supreme Court scheduled an unprecedented six hours of oral arguments over the course of three days in March 2012. The justices faced a number of critical questions, including whether or not the law’s requirement that individuals carry health insurance was within the powers granted to Congress by the Constitution. On June 28, 2012, the Supreme Court issued a 5-4 decision upholding nearly all of the health-care law,² including the minimum coverage provision. Chief Justice John Roberts wrote the majority opinion. President Obama called the ruling “a victory for people all over this country whose lives will be more secure” because nearly 30 million Americans who currently lack health insurance will eventually be covered as a result of the law. Although in most cases a Supreme Court ruling settles the question, in this case it did not. In September 2013, Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) controlled the Senate floor for more than 21 hours in what political satirists referred to as a “fauxlibuster” (because a bill was not placed before the body, a true filibuster was not possible). His goal was to attract support to defund implementation of the health-care law. Partisan politics continue to prevent Congress from making performance-enhancing adjustments to the existing law. By some estimates, Republicans in Congress have voted more than 50 times since 2010 to repeal all or part of the Affordable Care Act. In early

2016, under the new leadership of House Speaker Paul Ryan, Congress successfully sent a repeal bill to President Obama. To no one’s surprise, he vetoed the bill.

Sir Winston Churchill, British prime minister during World War II, once said, “No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.”³ Our system is not perfect, but it is more open to change than most. This book offers essential tools to learn about American government and politics today so that you are prepared to change this country for the better.


What are your dreams for the future, and what role do you believe the government can and should play in helping you realize your dreams? There was a time when we all aspired to live the “American Dream” and when we believed that government played an essential role in ensuring that the opportunity to achieve the

Twitter Feed ▶ Congressional Republicans are committed to repealing the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. #OnHisDesk celebrates finally delivering a repeal bill in early 2016. President Obama vetoed the bill.

 **Paul Ryan** 
@SpeakerRyan   Follow

THIS IS A FIRST → a bill repealing #Obamacare will be sent to the president's desk.
spkryan.us/1OMvIT1



RETWEETS 90 LIKES 197 

9:26 AM - 6 Jan 2016

Twitter/Paul Ryan

² *National Federation of Independent Business, et. al. v. Sebelious, Secretary of Health and Human Services, et al.* 567 U.S. (2012)
³ House of Commons speech on November 11, 1947.

American Dream was available to everyone. Members of each successive generation were confident that if they worked hard and followed the rules, they would live richer and more successful lives than the generation before them. Public policy has historically been an effective tool to promote economic growth, educational equity, homeownership, and job security. Is that still true today?

There are some troubling signs, to be sure. Significant inequality in income and wealth exists in the United States, and rather than shrinking, the gap has widened for your generation and your parents' generation. In 1979, the richest 1 percent accounted for 8 percent of all personal income; by 2012, their share had more than doubled, to 19.3 percent, their largest share since 1928.⁴ As the economy began to improve, the greatest gains in income share went to the top 10 percent of earners. Hourly wage workers, notably fast food workers, raised awareness of the recovery gap by participating in a series of labor walkouts and demanding an increase to the \$7.25 federal minimum hourly wage. To add momentum to the movement, President Obama signed an executive order early in 2014 raising the minimum wage for workers under new federal contracts to \$10.10 an hour. In 2016, Oregon lawmakers adopted a series of gradual increases over six years using a unique three-tier geographic system whereby workers in large metro areas would earn more per hour than workers in smaller cities or rural areas.⁵ During the same month, legislators in a number of other states considered or passed preemption laws designed to block the development of local wage ordinances. The global economic recession, the unemployment rate, rising home foreclosures, and corporate relocation of jobs overseas all present government with significant challenges. Moreover, people's trust in nearly all institutions (government, media, banks, business, churches, and organized labor) has fallen over the past decade (see Figure 1-1).



Credit: Jim West/Alamy Stock Photo

Image 1-1

Hundreds rallied near a Detroit, Michigan McDonald's restaurant in support of a strike by fast food workers who were demanding a raise from their current wages of about \$7.40 an hour to \$15 an hour. Similar strikes for higher wages took place in cities around the country.

⁴ Facundo Alvaredo, Anthony B. Atkinson, Thomas Piketty, and Emmanuel Saez. "The Top 1 Percent in International and Historical Perspective." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (2013) 27(3): 3–20.

⁵ Kristen Hansen, "Oregon's Trailblazing Minimum Wage Has Geographic Tiers, Topped by Portland's \$14.75" *San Jose Mercury News*, February 19, 2016.

Native-born citizens know less than ever about the very political system they hope will restore their confidence in the future; one in three failed the civics portion of the naturalization test in a national telephone survey.⁶ Can people effectively engage in political activity to change their lives for the better when they know so little about the governmental system?

There are also some hopeful signs. According to the Center for the Study of the American Dream at Xavier University, a majority of Americans surveyed (63 percent) remain confident that they will achieve the American Dream despite the current challenges. More than 75 percent believe they have already achieved some measure of it. Those surveyed defined the American Dream in terms of a good life for their family (45 percent), financial security (34 percent), freedom (32 percent), opportunity (29 percent), the pursuit of happiness (21 percent), a good job (16 percent), and homeownership (7 percent). How does this definition fit with your own? Are you surprised that homeownership is last on the list? How might the mortgage crisis and the persistent economic recession influence how we define our future dreams? As the nation pulls out of the long recession and jobs become more plentiful, will people aspire to own a home again? The U.S. economy added nearly 2.7 million jobs in 2015, dropping the unemployment rate to 5 percent. However, five years after the Great Recession, many families still feel financially vulnerable and have doubts about their chances of attaining the American Dream. A 2014 *New York Times* Poll found that only 64 percent of respondents said that they still believed in the American Dream, the lowest result in two decades. In early 2009 as the recession and financial crisis reached its peak, 72 percent of Americans still believed that “hard work could result in riches.”⁷

Interestingly, the Xavier study found that Latinos and immigrants are most positive about the possibility of achieving the American Dream and are more optimistic about the future of the country than the population as a whole. Finally, a majority of Americans view immigration as an important part of keeping the American Dream alive and believe that immigration continues to be one of America’s greatest strengths. In his 2014 State of the Union address, President Obama said, “What I believe unites the people of this nation, regardless of race or region or party, young or old, rich or poor, is the simple, profound belief in opportunity for all—the notion that if you work hard and take responsibility, you can get ahead.”⁸

What is the state of America today? Given the economic and educational disparities evident in the United States today, are we one America or two? Are you confident that your life will be better than that of your parents and grandparents? Can the problems we face as a nation today be addressed by the political system? Presidential primary voters in 2016 demonstrated their anger at the “establishment” by casting votes for “outsider” candidates Republican Donald J. Trump and Democrat Bernie Sanders. Yet, President Obama concluded his final State of the Union address by saying, “Fifteen years into this new century, we have picked ourselves up, dusted ourselves off, and begun again the work of

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

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

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

remaking America. We've laid a new foundation. A brighter future is ours to write."⁹ Is the American republic up to today's challenges? These will be central questions in our analysis of American government and politics today.

Politics and Government

■ 1.1 Define the institution of government and the process of politics.

Before we can answer any of these provocative questions, we first have to define some terms. What is politics? **Politics** is the process of resolving conflicts and deciding “who gets what, when, and how.”¹⁰ Although politics may be found in many places outside of government (for example, in your family or workplace), for the purposes of this book, we refer to conflicts and decisions found at the federal, state, and local levels regarding the selection of decision makers, the structure of institutions, and the creation of public policy. Politics is particularly intense when decisions are made that hit close to home, such as decisions about how to spend local and state tax dollars. Equally intense are political decisions that yield leaders for our country. Elections at the national and state levels attract the most media attention, but thousands of elected and appointed officials make up the government and render decisions that affect our lives.

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

Why Is Government Necessary?

■ 1.2 Identify the political philosophers associated with the “social contract” and explain how this theory shapes our understanding of the purpose of government and the role for individuals and communities in the United States.

Americans may not always like government, but they like the absence of government even less. Governments are necessary at a minimum to provide public goods and services that all citizens need but cannot reasonably be expected to provide for themselves. National security and defense are obvious examples. But governments do far more than provide for the common defense. As you will learn in Chapter 2, our founding documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are predicated upon and convey through their language a set of shared political values. Government reinforces those values regularly. One of our defining values is belief in the rule of law, which means that laws determined through the political process are enforced uniformly and that no individual, regardless of wealth, privilege,

politics

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

government

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

institution

An ongoing organization that performs certain functions for society.

⁹ State of the Union Address, January 12, 2016. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sotu>

¹⁰ Harold Lasswell, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, and How* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1936).

divine right of kings

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

social contract

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

political culture

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

or position, is above the law. Government includes a system of justice administered by institutions known as the courts to maintain this important value. We will return to this discussion of fundamental values later in this chapter. In addition to providing public goods and services and reinforcing shared values, governments are necessary to provide security so that liberty may flourish.

Our contemporary understanding of why government is necessary has been shaped by Enlightenment thinkers from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe. During the Age of Enlightenment, also known as the Age of Reason, philosophers and scientists challenged the **divine right of kings** and argued that the world could be vastly improved through the use of human reason, science, and religious tolerance. Essential to this argument was the belief that all individuals were born free and equal and imbued with natural rights. Individuals were in control of their own destiny, and by working with others, a society could shape a government capable of both asserting and protecting individual rights. English **social contract** theorists such as Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) and John Locke (1632–1704) were particularly influential in shaping our theory of government. Hobbes was far more pessimistic about human nature than Locke. Hobbes believed that without government and the rule of law, people would revert to a state of nature and individuals would be left to fight over basic necessities, rendering life “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”¹¹ To avoid such a fate, Hobbes argued for a single ruler, a Leviathan, so powerful that the rights of the weak could be protected against intrusion by the strong. By contrast, Locke took basic survival for granted, believing that all humans were endowed with reason—an internal code of conduct. Therefore, individuals are willing to give up a portion of their individual liberty in order to gain the protection of government through the social contract. Government is formed to protect life, liberty, and property; however, if a government compromises its legitimacy by violating the social contract, it is the people's duty to end the abusive government and replace it with a new form.

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

Fundamental Values

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

The authors of the U.S. Constitution believed that the structures they had created would provide for both democracy and a stable political system. They also believed that the nation could be sustained by its **political culture**. A critical question facing America today is to what extent do all citizens continue to share in a single political culture? Does the widening wealth and income gap threaten to undermine our shared political values as well as our confidence in government? We live under one republic, but are we increasingly two Americas? There is considerable consensus among American citizens about

¹¹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*: (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Revised Student Edition, 1996).

Beyond Our Borders

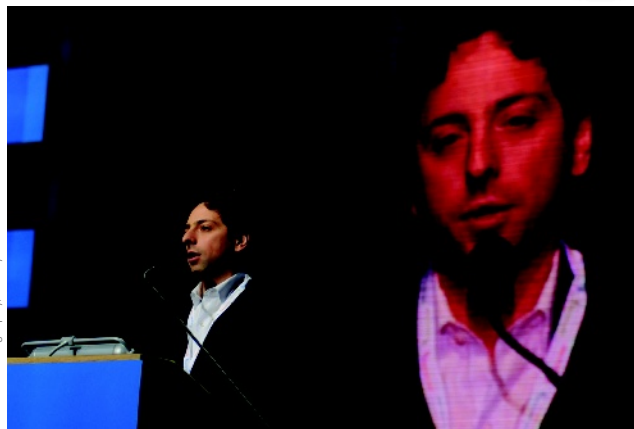
Immigrant Workers: Challenging Cultures in Europe



One of the most controversial issues in American politics is the debate over what to do about undocumented immigrants who have come to the United States for employment and a better life. An estimated 12 million individuals reside in the United States without legal status. Some conservatives believe that the best solution is deporting the undocumented people to their respective native countries. Others, including President Obama and moderate leaders of both parties, have argued that the United States should recognize its need for workers and implement a system by which individuals can come to this country to work and someday earn a right to citizenship. Immigration is a major source of population growth and cultural change in the United States. The political focus on undocumented immigrants can overshadow the tremendous benefits of immigration. For example, immigrants are among the founders of many prominent American technology companies, such as Google, Yahoo!, and eBay.

Nations, especially those in Europe, have long admitted immigrants as unskilled and semiskilled workers to fuel their economies and increase their populations. Immigrants make up about 12 percent of the population of Germany and 15 percent of that of Austria. Thirty-seven percent of Luxembourg's populace are immigrants; in Switzerland, that figure is around 23 percent. For many decades, Great Britain has allowed individuals who were subjects of the British Commonwealth to enter the country, and France extended legal residency to many French citizens from its former colonies in North Africa. Germany estimates that it will need to attract up to 1.5 million additional skilled workers through immigration to compensate for an aging population.

All nations face a dilemma in how to balance the cultural energy immigrants bring with the tensions associated with integration and assimilation processes. Immigrants may find limits to employment, education, and housing. Nonwhite and Muslim residents claim they are the subject of unwarranted police attention through racial or religious profiling. Clashes sometimes turn violent. Reports of Syrian refugees raping and groping women during New Year's Eve celebrations in Cologne, Germany, forced German Chancellor Angela Merkel to defend her open-door policy toward Muslim refugees entering the country from terrorism hot spots in the Middle East. Young people rioted in France over the lack of employment opportunities for nonwhite French residents, and the Netherlands has seen outbreaks of violence



Idealink Photography/Alamy Stock Photo

Image 1-2 Sergey Brin, co-founder and president of Google, was born in Moscow, Russia. When Brin was six, his family entered the United States with the assistance of HIAS, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. In honor of the thirtieth anniversary of his family's immigration, Brin gave \$1 million to HIAS, which he credits with helping his family escape anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union.

by Muslim residents against other Dutch citizens. Youth riots in Sweden were particularly surprising, given the nation's reputation for welcoming the world's refugees, most recently people fleeing the civil war in Syria. However, even Sweden adopted tougher measures when the number of asylum seekers topped 80,000 in two months' time. Many of these states are engaged in serious internal discussion about how to socialize new residents to the culture of their new home and how to ensure that immigrants can find economic opportunities for themselves and their children, while at the same time challenging the prejudice and racism sometimes found in the native population.

For Critical Analysis

1. How can the inevitable tensions created when new ideas and customs confront established cultures be resolved? What role is appropriate for government in this process?
2. To what extent should nations ensure that immigrants accept the cultural and political values of their new home? In what specific ways does multiculturalism benefit political, social, and economic development?