

Civics Overview

A series of slides that cover the course curriculum and main subjects and topics of our future classes.

Special thanks to Sophie Boczko, my former student.



Definition of government, politics, and civic life

Politics is the actions or activities concerned with achieving and using power in a country or society

Civics is the study of the rights and duties of citizenship

Government is the governing body of a nation, state, or community

<https://guides.lib.purdue.edu/civicsliteracy/civiclife>

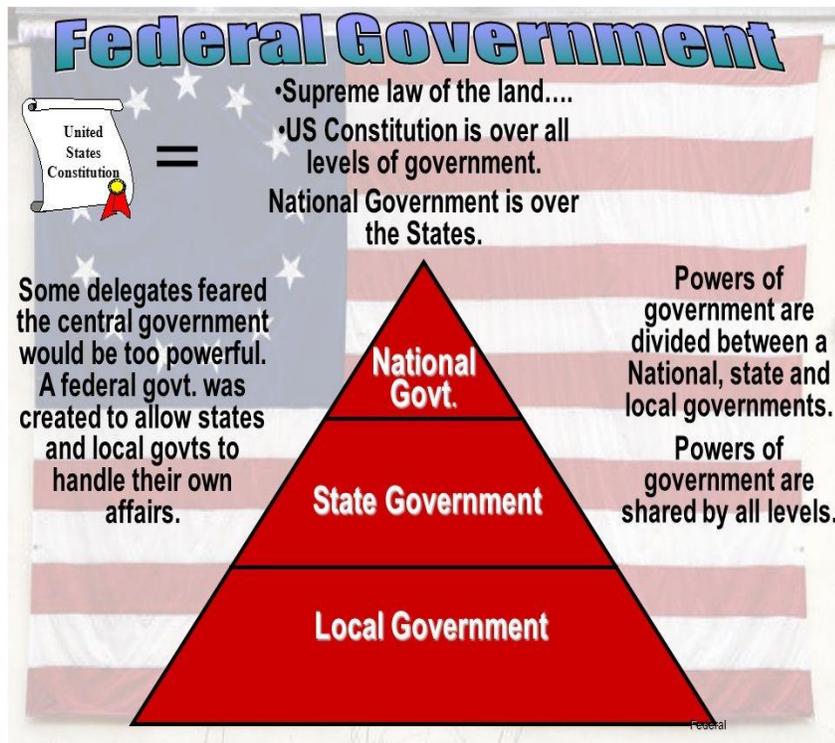
Purposes and principles in government, law, politics, and policies.

The Constitution rests on seven basic principles. They are popular sovereignty, limited government, separation of powers, federalism, checks and balances, republicanism, and individual rights

A government's basic functions are providing leadership, maintaining order, providing public services, providing national security, providing economic security, and providing economic assistance

The Policy Principle holds that political outcomes are the products of individual preferences and institutional procedures

The different roles of federal, state and local powers.



Local, tribal, and territorial governments in the United States plan and pay for most roads, run public schools, provide water, organize police and fire services, establish zoning regulations, license professions, and arrange elections for their citizens

Federal laws are rules that apply throughout the United States and these laws apply in every state, such as Immigration law, bankruptcy law, Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) laws, federal anti-discrimination and civil rights laws that protect against racial, age, gender and disability discrimination, patent and copyright laws, federal criminal laws such as laws against tax fraud, and the counterfeiting of money

There are 50 states and several commonwealths and territories within the United States and they each have its own system of laws and courts that handle criminal matters, divorce and family matters, welfare, public assistance or Medicaid matters and wills, inheritances and estates

The Foundation of the American Political System

The American political system has five main fundamental values and principles:

Popular Sovereignty
Limited Government
Separation of Powers
Checks and Balances
Federalism

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/the-core-principles-of-american-government.html>

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/americas-core-values-liberty-equality-self-government.html>

American idea of a constitutional government

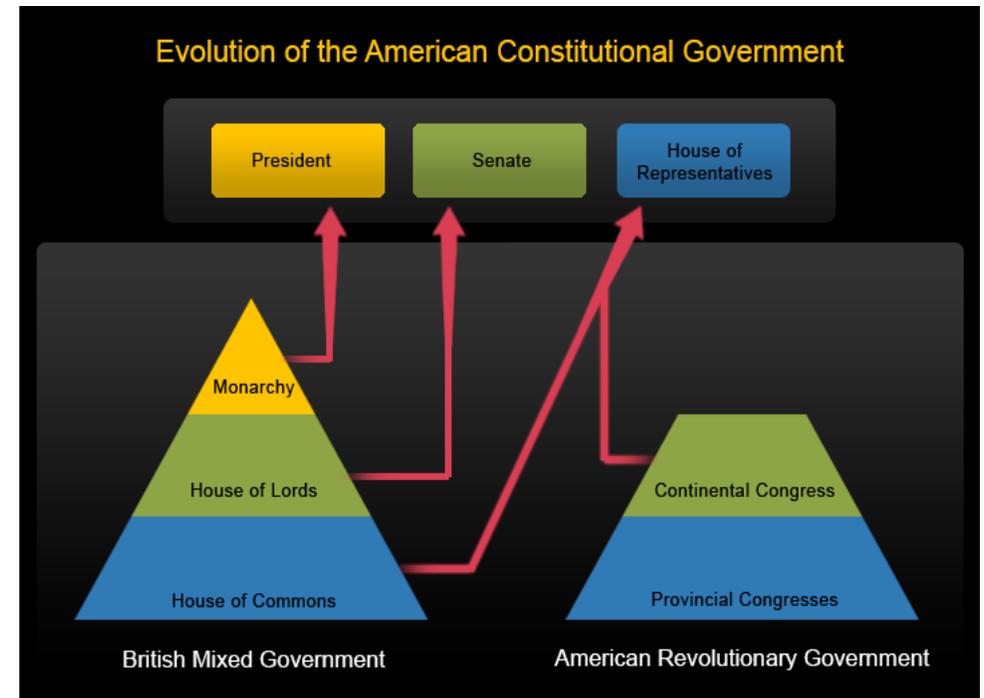
The US government is based on ideas of limited government, including natural rights, popular sovereignty, republicanism, and social contract.

Limited government is the belief that the government should have certain restrictions in order to protect the individual rights and civil liberties of citizens.

<https://www.archives.gov/legislative/resources/education/reviewing-big-ideas>

<https://www.history.com/topics/united-states-constitution/constitution>

<https://clyburn.house.gov/fun-youth/us-government>



American national identity and culture

The culture of the United States of America is primarily of Western origin, but its influences include European American, Asian American, African American, Latin American, and Native American peoples and their cultures.

The American national identity emphasizes four key factors: democracy, free markets, personal liberty and Judeo-Christian values.



Disparity between the ideals and reality in American political and social life

Ideal- The American Dream is a national ethos of the United States, the set of ideals (democracy, rights, liberty, opportunity and equality) in which freedom includes the opportunity for prosperity and success, as well as an upward social mobility for the family and children, achieved through hard work in a society with few barriers.

Reality- Realism is an approach to the study and practice of international politics. It emphasizes the role of the nation-state and makes a broad assumption that all nation-states are motivated by national interests, or, at best, national interests disguised as moral concerns.

Ideal- The concept of the American dream is still one of the most uniquely "American" ideals—the ultimate idea that any individual should be able to pursue their dreams and build the life they want if they put in the hard work.

Reality- The American Dream is a fantasy that has not come true for the millions that are toiling in the system hoping to get a piece of the wealth which America so liberally shares with its rich upper class. Mansions, expensive cars, a happy family and of course lots of money

Why does the nation need Selective Service?

The Selective Service System and the registration requirement for America's young men provide our Nation with a structure and a system of guidelines which will provide the most prompt, efficient, and equitable draft possible, if the country should need it.

Almost all male US citizens and male immigrants, who are 18 through 25, are required to register with Selective Service. It's important to know that even though he is registered, a man will not automatically be inducted into the military.

<https://www.afsc.org/blogs/news-and-commentary/its-time-to-end-not-expand-selective-service-system>

<https://www.sss.gov/news/105th-anniversary-of-the-selective-service/>



The role of the jury in a democratic system and responding to jury duty

The role of the jury is to provide unbiased views or resolution to evidence presented in a case in a court of law.

Jury service helps to support fairness in trials; jury service is able to give impartial viewpoints on cases that are presented in court.

In both civil and criminal cases, it is the jury's duty to decide the facts in accordance with the principles of law laid down in the judge's charge to the jury.

The decision is made on the evidence introduced, and the jury's decision on the facts is usually final.

Jury service is one of the most important civic duties you can perform. The protection of rights and liberties in federal courts largely is achieved through the teamwork of a judge and jury.

<https://www.uscourts.gov/services-forms/jury-service>

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/jury-duty-informational-videos>

Citizenship and participation in American society

Every U.S. citizen must obey federal, state and local laws, and pay the penalties that can be incurred when a law is broken.

All citizens must pay taxes in one form or another, including federal, state, local, Social Security, property and sales taxes.

By voting, citizens are participating in the democratic process.

Citizens vote for leaders to represent them and their ideas, and the leaders support the citizens' interests.

There are two special rights only for U.S. citizens: voting in federal elections and running for federal office.

<https://youtu.be/SREjVj9ZzDI>

The roles of citizens in American society

Citizenship is the state of being vested with the rights, privileges and duties of a citizen, but it can also be defined as the character of an individual viewed as a member of society.

While U.S. citizenship provides many rights, it also involves many responsibilities.

The U.S. government, as established in the Constitution, protects the rights of each individual regardless of background, culture or religion.

Although all U.S. citizens enjoy the freedoms, protections and legal rights that the Constitution promises, citizens also have the responsibility, or “civic duty,” to meet certain societal standards and guidelines.

Civic duties ensure that democratic values written into the Constitution and the Bill of Rights are upheld.

Responsibilities include both those that are voluntary as well as those required by law.

<http://www.civics.ks.gov/kansas/citizenship/responsibilities-of-citizens.html>

<https://ympacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Civics-EOC-Review-CATEGORY-2-ROLES-RIGHTS-AND-RESPONSIBILITIES-OF-CITIZENS.pdf>

Being a citizen: personal, political, civic and economic responsibilities and rights

Civic responsibilities are tasks bestowed upon citizens by their government to ensure a balance between protection and allegiance.

The government would not function without its citizens and there would be no citizens without government.

A responsible citizen abides by all the law and order of the country.

They are entitled to exercise all the fundamental rights and duties, such as casting a vote, paying government taxes and protecting the country from corruption.

The difference between social and political participation

Political participation includes a broad range of activities through which people develop and express their opinions on the world and how it is governed, and try to take part in and shape the decisions that affect their lives.

Social participation is defined as a person's involvement in activities that provide interaction with others in the society or the community and expresses interpersonal interactions outside the home.

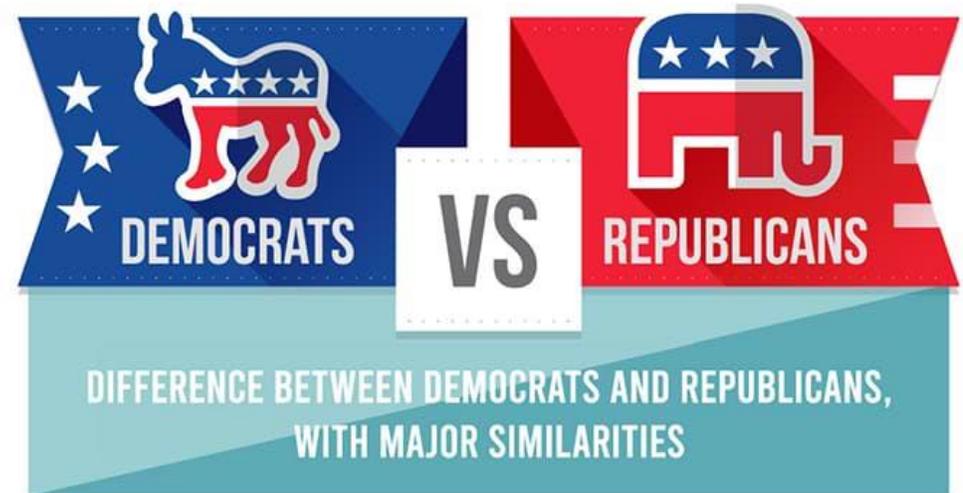
<https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-civic-participation-definition-examples.html>

<https://youtu.be/sYRS26BD-9w>

<https://youtu.be/fqBv0iOarx0>

The Political Party System in America

- The electoral system in the U.S. is called a two-party system.
- That means that two parties dominate the political field in all three levels of government.
- In the U.S. these two parties are the Republican Party and the Democratic Party.
- Some historians have suggested that two-party systems promote centrism and encourage political parties to find common positions which appeal to wide swaths of the electorate.
- It can lead to political stability which leads, in turn, to economic growth.



Third Parties

Third Parties



Third party is a term used in the United States for American political parties other than the two dominant parties, currently the Republican and Democratic Parties.

Sometimes the phrase "minor party" is used instead of third party.

Third parties are most often encountered when they nominate presidential candidates.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_party_\(United_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_party_(United_States))

The Electoral Process

An electoral system or voting system is a set of rules that determine how elections and referendums are conducted and how their results are determined.

After you cast your ballot for president, your vote goes to a statewide tally. In 48 states and Washington, D.C., the winner gets all the electoral votes for that state.

Maine and Nebraska assign their electors using a proportional system.



Preparing to vote and why your vote counts

Vote counting is the process of counting votes in an election.

It can be done manually or by machines.

In the United States, the compilation of election returns and validation of the outcome that forms the basis of the official results is called canvassing.

The law does not require citizens to vote, but voting is a very important part of any democracy.

By voting, citizens are participating in the democratic process.

Citizens vote for leaders to represent them and their ideas, and the leaders support the citizens' interests.

<https://www.studentsunited.org/blog/2016/11/3/prepare-to-vote-with-these-seven-easy-steps>

Campaigns and elections and the roles of various types of media

A communication platform such as social media is persuasive, and often works to change or influence opinions when it comes to political views because of the abundance of ideas, thoughts, and opinions circulating through the social media platform.

A political campaign is an organized effort which seeks to influence the decision-making progress within a specific group.

In democracies, political campaigns often refer to electoral campaigns, by which representatives are chosen or referendums are decided.

An election is a formal group decision-making process by which a population chooses an individual or multiple individuals to hold public office.

Elections have been the usual mechanism by which modern representative democracy has operated since the 17th century.

<https://journalism.uoregon.edu/news/six-ways-media-influences-elections>

Seeking public office

This person is called a "nominee", though nominee often is used interchangeably with "candidate".

A presumptive nominee is a person or organization believes that the nomination is inevitable or likely?

The act of being a candidate in a race for either a party nomination or for electoral office is called a "candidacy".

A designating petition may designate candidates for nomination for one or more different public offices or for nomination for election to one or more party positions or both, but designations or nominations for which the petitions are. required to be filed in different offices or petitions for the same.

<https://www.usa.gov/election>

Legal rights and responsibilities in civic life, the workplace, and school

Assuming the personal, political, and economic responsibilities of a citizen.

These responsibilities include taking care of oneself, supporting one's family and caring for, nurturing, and educating one's children.

Civic responsibilities are tasks bestowed upon citizens by their government to ensure a balance between protection and allegiance.

The government would not function without its citizens and there would be no citizens without government.

Support and defend the Constitution.

Stay informed of the issues affecting your community.

Participate in the democratic process.

Respect and obey federal, state, and local laws.

Respect the rights, beliefs, and opinions of others.

Participate in your local community.

How can rights vary from location to location within the nation?

The United States is celebrated as the gold standard when it comes to freedom and citizenship rights. And that is true since American citizens are blessed with a progressive government system that offers equal rights to all of its citizens.

Rights and responsibilities help make our communities better.

Rights are freedoms we have that are protected by our laws, while responsibilities are duties or things that we should do.

In order to be good citizens, or members of a community, we must understand our rights and responsibilities.

Some state laws that differ from state to state are gun control laws, custody laws, divorce laws, motor carrier laws, business laws and marriage laws.

Gun laws and same sex marriage laws have most recently been in the news.

Both topics are controversial and hotly debated.

<https://www.legalmatch.com/law-library/article/why-do-states-have-different-laws.html>