



# Ameri- can

# Gov- ern- ment

# 4e.



**OPENSTAX**  
**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT 4E**

**ACTIVITY WORKBOOK**

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## WELCOME

Welcome to the American Government Activity Workbook, an active learning supplement to the OpenStax American Government Open Educational Resource (OER) textbook. This workbook is designed for students to deepen their understanding of American government and politics through interactive, hands-on learning experiences that align closely with the textbook's content, and for instructors by including facilitation instructions and tips for best practices with each activity.

### Purpose and Approach

This workbook is designed to help students bridge theoretical knowledge with practical application, fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and real-world connections. Each activity is structured to encourage active learning, empowering students to explore key concepts in depth, engage in thoughtful discussion, and analyze real-life implications of governmental processes and policies.

### Features of the Workbook

All activities in this workbook are linked to specific chapters of the OpenStax American Government textbook, and they are organized by textbook chapter. We have taken care to include activities for each chapter of the textbook. While some activities may relate to a specific chapter, they may not follow the precise terminology or concepts used in the chapter, as there are many ways to approach teaching a given concept (e.g., bureaucracy skits).

Perhaps most importantly, each activity is time-tested: we use these activities in our American government courses and have modified and adjusted them over time based on student feedback.

To ensure that the activities are accessible and adaptable, we have included the following components for instructors as applicable:

- **Learning Objectives:** Clear goals that outline the skills and knowledge students will gain from completing the activity.
- **Relevant Textbook Chapters:** Indicates which chapter(s) align with the activity.
- **Requirements:** Guidance on the expected duration for completing the activity and ideal class size.
- **Modifications:** Tips for adapting activities to different class sizes, modalities, or classrooms.
- **Facilitation Instructions:** Step-by-step guidance for instructors.
- **Tips:** Practical tips to maximize engagement and learning outcomes, drawn from evidence-based teaching strategies.
- **Student Instructions:** These instructions are written directly for the students so that the instructor can offer these directly to the students either as individual activities or strung together as a workbook.
  - Some of the activities may also include supplemental worksheets that can be used for assessment or simply for structure.

## How to Use This Workbook

This workbook is designed for both instructors and students:

- **Instructors** can use it to plan lessons, facilitate active learning, and assess student understanding in a variety of contexts.
  - We have arranged this workbook so that instructors can remove any facilitation instructions to provide this to students directly, either piece by piece, or as a complete workbook for students to use throughout the instruction period.
- **Students** can use it to enhance their comprehension of course material, develop critical thinking skills, and apply knowledge to real-world scenarios.

## Why Active Learning?

Research consistently demonstrates that active learning improves retention, engagement, and critical thinking. By participating in these activities, you will:

- Develop a deeper understanding of foundational concepts in American government.
- Strengthen analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Gain confidence in discussing and debating political and social issues.
- Build connections between theoretical knowledge and current events.

## A Note on Open Educational Resources

As a supplement to the OpenStax American Government textbook, this workbook aligns with the principles of open education. It is freely accessible and can be customized to suit the needs of diverse learning environments. Instructors are encouraged to adapt the activities to better serve their students and share improvements with the broader educational community.

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## About the Authors

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the legislative behavior of mothers and women of color. She is also co-editor of *Elgar Encyclopedia of Teaching and Pedagogy in Political Science* (under contract), [Strategies for Navigating Graduate School and Beyond](#) (2022), and [The Palgrave Handbook of Political Research Pedagogy](#) (2021). She is an award-winning teacher, having been awarded the premier campus-wide teaching award, as well as a campus-wide teaching award for introductory courses, she has also served on APSA's Distinguished Teacher Award committee. She offers introductory courses in political science and upper-division courses in American political institutions and the politics of inequality.

William O'Brochta is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Texas Lutheran University. His work on representation and identity in the Global South has been published in the *British Journal of Political Science*, *Political Behavior*, *Governance*, and *Political Research Quarterly*, among other outlets. He teaches courses in American and comparative politics, international relations, research methods, and public administration. A comparativist by training, he never took, much less taught, an American government course prior to starting on the tenure-track. He has experience teaching American government in class periods ranging from 50 minutes to 1 hour and 50 minutes, on a quarter and a semester system, and from large lecture halls to seminar rooms. His American government students are almost exclusively non-political science majors, and his activities tend to focus on relating political science concepts to tangible examples students experience in their everyday lives. As the Director of Professional Development for the APSA Civic Engagement Section, he also includes civic engagement skill-building in all his courses. He won the Emerging Scholar Award from the APSA Civic Engagement Section.

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## CREATING AND USING ACTIVITIES IN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

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### DEVELOPING A STYLE:

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The process of integrating activities into your American government course should fit with your teaching philosophy and style. In this regard, it is often better to start with simple, short, and easy-to-execute activities and to place those activities into classes with topics you know well. Choose from already created activities until you feel comfortable creating your own activities. Always integrate activities with a purpose: active learning is not a strategy to fill up time during class. Rather, active learning achieves clearly defined learning objectives in a manner different than traditional lecturing.

As you select activities, consider ways to make those activities cohere together into a larger approach or style to the course. If, instead of labeling a course “lecture based,” the course was labelled something else, how would your course be labelled? Perhaps the activities in your course center around civic engagement, use games or simulations, or focus on primary research. Whatever the focus, work to make a consistent throughline between activities so that students learn skills that connect back to the broader learning objectives of the course. That way, when someone inevitably asks why this course includes active learning, your students can clearly explain your rationale in a way that shows that they are learning the content and enjoying the many additional benefits from active learning.

Finally, while different activities are excellent, they are situational. Not every course can or should use the same activities. Likewise, repeating the same activities each day within

a course likely does not reflect the different learning objectives you have for different class sessions. There is always room to pull out a favorite activity when needed to liven up a class session, but explore a diverse range of activities, pick the ones that fit best with the course, and continue experimenting each time you teach the course.

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#### SELECTING ACTIVITIES:

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Many activities can be adopted straight from the instructions provided in this activity workbook. In selecting and modifying activities to fit your course, be sure to consider how the activity will align with the goals of and students in the course. You know your students and your course objectives. Some activities fit better in courses with mostly non-majors or mostly majors, in larger or smaller courses, in different classroom set-ups, at different points during the term, in different academic calendars and class lengths, and for instructors with different levels of expertise.

We recommend selecting activities before the term starts so that you have time to integrate them into course content and course learning objectives. Most activities can be modified quite easily to fit course parameters, but it is better to do so when planning the course as a whole, if possible. One suggestion is to pick and choose the activities you plan to use for the full semester and offer those as a “workbook” directly for the students to work in– this can be accomplished by creating a copy for each individual student that is then shared with them. This is how Julia initially created and used the Activity Book.

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#### CREATING ACTIVITIES:

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We present several activities for each chapter of the OpenStax textbook. The approaches used in these activities are more-or-less unique, so any one activity can usually be modified to fit another topic in American government or in political science more generally. In fact, doing so is one way to start creating activities.

Consider the *Symbols of America* activity, which prompts students with an image and asks them to develop a one-word response that the instructor then writes on the board to enable students to identify common themes between responses. I (William) developed this activity to help me learn students’ names in a large classroom, and so I employ it several times during the term. For instructors who use slides and display a chart or picture about the class topic to greet students as they arrive to class, this activity is a good way to start off class on a low energy day. If you have the memory for it (or write down notes after class), remembering a few student responses and bringing them up during the next version of the activity in a few class periods can help to create a positive and fun classroom atmosphere.

In addition to modifying activities in this workbook and applying them to different course content, there are hundreds of basic instructional techniques that involve active learning and can be applied to teach many different topics. We recommend reviewing some of the below listed resources and choosing a few activity techniques. Again, start with a small activity. Students who are accustomed to not speaking during your class or most classes

that they take may not be immediately comfortable with a particularly intensive activity. Completing a think-pair-share is likely more initially comfortable. Similarly, activities that involve moving around, going outside, submitting documents, et. cetera require more consideration for classroom dynamics and needs. It is possible to complete all activities in this workbook with all kinds of students in all manner of situations, but some activities require more forethought and planning.

Finally, get feedback from your students on the activities. At some point, it is always helpful to measure the success of your activities using techniques from the scholarship of teaching and learning. However, your initial goal is to see if students understand the activity and prefer it to lecturing. Ask them! And ask informally, far before formal course evaluations. You will receive thoughtful responses and feedback.

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#### ACTIVITY AND RESOURCE REPOSITORIES:

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[Journal of Political Science Education](#) (free with APSA membership).

[PS: Political Science & Politics](#) (free with APSA membership).

[European Political Science](#)

[The Political Science Educator](#)

[Active Learning in Political Science](#)

[APSA Educate](#) (including Teaching and Learning Conference papers).

[List of class discussion strategies](#)

[Classtools.net](#) (educational game creator/templates)

[Annenberg Classroom](#)

[Cult of Pedagogy- Discussion Strategies](#)

[Carnegie Mellon University- Group Project Tools](#)

[PBS- Political Science Resources](#)

# CHAPTER 1: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

## DEMOCRACY VALUES AND PROCEDURES

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will identify the main values and processes of democracy.
- Students will discuss the importance of democratic principles.
- Students will evaluate how well the U.S. follows democratic values.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 1.1. [What is Government?](#)

Chapter 1.3. [Engagement in a Democracy](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 20-30 minutes.
- Class size: Any.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- **Arrange students into small groups or pairs**
- **Introduce the Activity:**  
Explain to students that they will work together to discuss the key features of a democracy. Encourage them to think about both what makes a democracy function effectively and what could break it down.
- **Guide the Group Discussion:**  
Ask groups to identify and list **key functions or features of a democracy**, which can include **procedures** (actions or processes a government should follow) and **values** (principles a government should uphold).
- **Prioritize Features:**  
Have groups categorize each procedure or value they identify as **essential**, **important**, or **unimportant** for a democracy to work effectively.
- **Evaluate U.S. Compliance:**  
Once the groups have their lists, instruct them to assess how well the U.S. complies with each procedure or value. They should indicate whether the U.S. **meets the standard**, **partly meets it**, or **does not meet it**.
- **Facilitate Reflection:**  
Prepare to lead a class-wide discussion where groups share their findings and compare perspectives.

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#### MODIFICATIONS:

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- For small classes, use small groups to encourage discussion; however, in larger class sizes working in pairs may be more effective
- This activity is easily modifiable for online modality allowing students to work individually, some more detailed explanation, including examples of procedures and values may be appropriate for this modality as they would not be able to ask questions while working.

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#### TIPS:

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- Be prepared to offer examples of procedures and values
- This activity is based on the [Bright Line Watch](#) democracy survey. If there is time, consider relating students' responses to the public and expert surveys, or assign some of their materials for students to read.

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#### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: DEMOCRACY VALUES AND PROCEDURES

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Working with a small discussion group, consider what features you think make a DEMOCRACY. Taken another way, what are some things that break down a democracy? Take some time to come up with some of the key functions or features of a democracy, these can be PROCEDURES that you think government should follow and/or VALUES you think government should protect. Then indicate whether you think these are *essential*, *important*, or *unimportant* for a democracy to work.

Once you have completed your list of procedures and values for democratic governance, indicate how well you think the US complies with this procedure or value (meets standard? partly? does not meet it?)

PROCEDURE	IMPORTANCE	COMPLIANCE	VALUE	IMPORTANCE	COMPLIANCE

## BRIDGING AND BONDING GROUPS

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Describe group formation and participation.
- Consider the utility of creating typologies.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 1.3. [Engagement in a Democracy](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 10-15 minutes.
- Class size: Any.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Define bridging and bonding groups.
2. Ask students to form small groups and to list examples of bridging and bonding groups.
3. After a few minutes, have groups report out their examples. Create two columns on the board: one for bridging and one for bonding. Place examples into each group. Then begin asking students whether each example is purely bridging or not. Adjust placement so examples fall appropriately between the bridging and bonding columns.
4. Then challenge students to come up with the clearest example of a pure bridging and pure bonding group. Discuss the utility of creating clear typologies versus nuance from a continuous typology.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- Ideal if assigned reading is from Putnam's *Bowling Alone* so that students have some familiarity with civic culture and bridging and bonding groups. This is not required.

### TIPS:

- Good examples of bridging groups for student to wrestle with include jail (but then discuss who gets arrested) and high school students (but then discuss residential segregation).
- Good examples of bonding groups include sports teams (but everyone comes from different places) and identical siblings.

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### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: BRIDGING AND BONDING GROUPS

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1. Form a small group.
2. In your group create a list of examples of bridging and bonding groups where bridging groups are those that form across demographics and interests while bonding groups are those that form within demographics of interests.
3. Find your best example of a purely bridging and purely bonding group.

# CHAPTER 2: THE CONSTITUTION AND ITS ORIGINS

## DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE WORKSHEET

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will find key principles in the Declaration.
- Students will analyze complaints against the British Crown.
- Students will link the Declaration's ideas to modern government.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 2.1. [The Pre-Revolutionary Period and the Roots of the American Political Tradition](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 45-50 minutes.
- Class size: Any.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- Students should be provided a copy or other access to the Declaration of Independence
- Students should be instructed to complete the worksheet in pairs

### MODIFICATIONS:

- This activity is highly modifiable and can be completed independently, in pairs, or in small groups. It could even be completed collectively in a smaller class.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE WORKSHEET

*You will have about 30 minutes to complete the worksheet with a classmate- you must work together, not separately*

1. What is meant by the phrase "it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them"?
2. Provide 3 statements which reflect the Enlightenment ideals of human equality and reason
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
3. What are the three unalienable Rights?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.

4. What type of government does the phrase “Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their powers from the consent of the governed”?
5. When does a people have a right to “alter or abolish” a government and “institute a new government”?
6. What kind of government do the authors of the Declaration claim Britain to be?
7. About how many grievances do the authors of the Declaration accuse the King of Britain of?
  - a. In your own words, what are 5 of those grievances?
    - i.
    - ii.
    - iii.
    - iv.
    - v.
8. Was the Declaration the only petition sent to the King? (how do you know?)
9. The authors claim that the British legislature has attempted to extend an “unwarrantable jurisdiction over us”, what do they mean by this? And why do they claim it to be “unwarrantable”
10. Reflect on the capitalization for “united States of America”
11. What powers do the authors of the Declaration state that these united States of America has (which all other Independent [sovereign] states do)
12. To whom do the people (the authors) pledge their lives? What’s the significance of this?
13. Based on your reading of the Declaration, what kind of government would you expect the authors to arrange for?
  - a. Where would the legitimate authority to govern come from?
  - b. In whom should this legitimate authority to govern be placed?
  - c. Would you expect a strong unitary executor of the laws or a weaker one?
  - d. Would you expect the separate colonies to unify as one or to maintain sovereignty?
  - e. What are some of the benefits and some of the challenges with the expected government?

## ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze how the Articles of Confederation reflect or fail to reflect the political values expressed in the Declaration of Independence.
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation as the United States' first governing document.
- Practice interpreting and synthesizing historical texts through collaborative discussion and argumentation.
- Develop civic literacy by understanding the foundations and limitations of early American governance.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK

Chapter 2.2. [The Articles of Confederation](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 25-30 minutes.
- Class size: Works well in small to mid-sized classes (10–35 students), but can be scaled up by using breakout groups or discussion boards in larger or online classes.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- **Introduction (5 minutes):**
  - Begin with a brief refresher on the **Declaration of Independence**—particularly its core values: natural rights, social contract, consent of the governed, limited government, and the right to revolution.
  - Then, provide historical context on the **Articles of Confederation**, emphasizing the post-revolutionary concerns about centralized power.
  - Provide students with a short excerpted version or full copy of the **Articles of Confederation** (or direct them to a trusted online copy --- [such as this one from the Avalon Project at Yale](#) or LMS posting).
- Instruct students to read and annotate with the following **guiding questions**:
  - Where does the AoC reflect the values of the Declaration (e.g., individual liberty, anti-tyranny, equality)?
  - Where does it fall short or fail to protect those ideals?
  - What tensions do you see between the ideals of independence and the realities of governance?
  - Does the AoC create a government capable of fulfilling the promises made in the Declaration?
- Assign a shared note sheet (on paper or a shared cloud document) or provide a handout with expanded discussion prompts
- Ask students to form groups and:

- Share and compare annotations.
- Identify **2–3 specific examples** where the AoC aligns with the DoI values.
- Identify **2–3 major shortcomings or contradictions**.
- Select one **realistic revision** to improve the AoC based on the values in the DoI.
- Prepare to share one insight or conflict your group debated.
- Complete the activity with a short debrief leading to a conversation about how the Article’s weaknesses led to the Constitutional Convention.

#### MODIFICATIONS:

- Use collaborative documents (e.g., Google Docs or LMS discussion boards) for annotation and shared group notes.
- Place students in breakout rooms for discussion, with a shared slide or form for group responses.
- Asynchronously, students can annotate using Hypothes.is or another annotation tool, then respond to discussion prompts in threads.

#### TIPS:

- Encourage use of color-coded highlights or a two-column note format:  
*Column 1: Connections to DoI values*  
*Column 2: Shortcomings or contradictions*
- Encourage students to focus on **specific language** from both the DoI and AoC to back up claims.
- Model how to draw a thematic connection between ideals (e.g., liberty) and structures (e.g., lack of executive branch).
- Avoid getting bogged down in legal minutiae—keep the emphasis on values and governance design.
- Use this as a launching point for introducing the Constitution as a reaction and revision to the AoC’s failures.

#### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

Read the [Articles of Confederation](#) (Avalon Project) taking notes on how the AoC instills the values of the Declaration of Independence and where it falls short, then join a group of 4-5 to discuss these.

Consider the following questions as you are reading and take some notes:

- Where does the AoC reflect the values of the Declaration (e.g., individual liberty, anti-tyranny, equality)?
- Where does it fall short or fail to protect those ideals?
- What tensions do you see between the ideals of independence and the realities of governance?
- Does the AoC create a government capable of fulfilling the promises made in the Declaration?

Then, in a group, you should:

- Share and compare your notes.
- Identify **2–3 specific examples** where the AoC aligns with the DoI values.
- Identify **2–3 major shortcomings or contradictions**.
- Select one **realistic revision** to improve the AoC based on the values in the DoI.
- Prepare to share one insight or conflict your group debated.

## CONSTITUTION WORKSHEET

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will identify main ideas in the Constitution.
- Students will analyze how the Constitution organizes government.
- Students will relate the Constitution's ideas to modern governance.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 2.3. [The Development of the Constitution](#)

Chapter 2.4. [The Ratification of the Constitution](#)

Chapter 2.5. [Constitutional Change](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 45-50 minutes.
- Class size: Any.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- Students should be provided a copy or other access to the Declaration of Independence.
- Students should be instructed to complete the worksheet in pairs or small groups.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- This activity is highly modifiable and can be completed independently, in pairs, or in small groups. It could even be completed collectively in a smaller class.

### TIPS:

- While this activity can be done alone, we tend to recommend working in pairs or small groups.
- We also tend to recommend this activity be done jointly in class, however, it would also work well as a take-home assignment, just be sure to set the expectations up front.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: CONSTITUTION WORKSHEET

1. Fill in the blank: "The Senate of the United States shall be composed of \_\_\_\_ Senators from each State"
  - a. This is found in Article\_\_\_\_, Section\_\_\_\_\_
2.
  - a. The Judicial Branch is described in Article \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. The Legislative Branch is described in Article \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. The Executive Branch is described in Article \_\_\_\_\_
3. This phrase sets up the Census (counting the population): (Article\_\_\_ Section\_\_\_)
4. This Clause (Section \_\_\_\_, Clause \_\_\_\_\_) is known as the "Necessary and Proper Clause"

5. In the U.S. we have a tiered judicial system, the highest court is known as the \_\_\_\_\_ and the lower courts are known as \_\_\_\_\_, this is described in: Article \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_
6. Each year the President gives a "State of the Union" address. Find the Article and Section which provides for this:
7. Congress can propose Amendments to the Constitution with \_\_\_\_\_ majority of both Houses. Article \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_
8. How were persons who were not deemed "free" counted in the enumeration (Census)? (Article \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_)
9. How often are Representatives elected? (Article \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_)
10. Why is it that even though Senators serve \_\_\_\_\_ years, there are still elections every \_\_\_\_\_ years? (Article \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_)
11. According to Article \_\_\_\_\_, Section \_\_\_\_\_, only the \_\_\_\_\_ has "the sole Power to try all Impeachments"
12. Where are the powers of Congress written? Article \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Name 5
    - i.
    - ii.
    - iii.
    - iv.
    - v.
13. In which Article, Section, and Clause is the Electoral College set up? Art. \_\_\_\_\_ Sec \_\_\_\_\_
14. What are the eligibility requirements to become President? (Article \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_)
15. Some areas in California want to split up to become new states, some argue this is unconstitutional, why? Article \_\_\_\_\_ Sections \_\_\_\_\_.
16. How many states were required to ratify the Constitution? (Article \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_)
17. When was the Constitution written?
18. Where is the Presidential veto discussed? Article \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_
19. Only this chamber can make laws regarding revenue: \_\_\_\_\_ according to Article \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_.
20. All elected officials are bound by oath to the Constitution, but a \_\_\_\_\_ test cannot be required for qualification to said office. (Article \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_)

## CONSTITUTIONS WORLDWIDE

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Describe key principles of the U.S. constitution. Discuss the rationale for adopting these provisions.
- Compare the U.S. constitution to that of other countries.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 2.3. [The Development of the Constitution](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 20-35 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- It is beneficial, though not required, to assign the reading that forms the basis for this activity. Dahl, Robert. 2003. *How Democratic is the American Constitution?* New Haven: Yale University Press (specifically table 2).
- Choose a list of countries for students to investigate so that there is one country for every four students.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Create a slide or handout listing Dahl's 7 key constitutional dimensions.
2. Form student groups and assign each group to a country.
3. Ask groups to research each of the dimensions as it pertains to their country.
4. After some time, create a chart on the board to record their responses to each of the seven questions.
5. Then, show Dahl's chart comparing the U.S. constitution to those of 21 older democracies. Have students pick out where the majority of the countries that they investigated differ from both Dahl's chart and from the U.S. constitution.
6. Discuss patterns and differences.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- Add an activity onto the end of this one that focuses on the "most important" features of the U.S. constitution in comparison to others. Many students will say that the Bill of Rights is the most important constitutional feature, and this can provide an opportunity to discuss why separation of powers is particularly important.

### TIPS:

- Dahl's book makes a comparison between the U.S. constitution and "21 older democracies." You can choose to keep the country list you generate within these bounds, though it is often more interesting if random countries are selected.

- Depending on how these dimensions were or were not previously introduced, you may want to simplify them during the group country research. Judicial review and upper house seats allocated by geographic area are the most challenging for students to understand.

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#### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: CONSTITUTIONS WORLDWIDE

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1. Form a group and receive your assigned country.
2. Research your country, trying to answer these specific questions. Research each question collectively and write down your responses.
  - a. Is there a federal or unitary system of government?
  - b. Are there two houses in the national legislature?
  - c. If there are two houses, are seats in the upper house allocated by population?
  - d. Can the judiciary declare laws unconstitutional?
  - e. What is the electoral system for legislative elections?
  - f. How many political parties routinely win election?
  - g. Does the country have a president or a prime minister or neither?

## FEDERALIST PAPERS INTERPRET AND CONNECT

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Engage with primary source documents.
- Understand how federalist paper topics are related.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 2.4. [The Ratification of the Constitution](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 20-30 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Select several federalist papers (10, 14, 15, and 39 work well as a group).

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Help students get into groups of four (if you have four federalist papers selected).
2. Assign each group to read one of the selected papers and to answer the questions.
3. Facilitate the jigsaw and further discussion.
4. In the large group, outline how the different principles in the four papers connect together.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- To shorten this activity, skip the jigsaw and discuss the selected papers on the board.

### TIPS:

- Depending on students' familiarity with the federalist papers, it may be worthwhile to find a simplified version of the text to make it easier to read during class.
- After the jigsaw, check students' understanding of the papers that they read. Additional explanation is sometimes needed.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: FEDERALIST PAPERS- INTERPRET AND CONNECT

1. Get into a group of four.
2. Access and read your assigned federalist paper.
3. After reading, write a summary in plain language of what the paper says and a description of why the paper matters.
4. Once all group members are finished, discuss your summaries, and come to a consensus regarding the meaning of the paper.
5. When prompted, form a new group with one member having read each of the four assigned papers.

6. Describe the papers to one another using your summaries. Identify connections between the papers. What is the overall message that the papers are trying to convey? Why is this argument important?

# CHAPTER 3: AMERICAN FEDERALISM

## FEDERALISM V. UNITARY SYSTEMS

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Explain how federalism prompts different public policy solutions compared to a unitary system.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 3.1. [The Division of Powers](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 25-35 minutes.
- Class size: At least 20 students.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ask students to form a large group (8-10 students).
2. In the group, ask students to select a public policy issue that they are interested in.
3. Split the group into two sub-groups. Assign one sub-group to investigate advantages that federalist systems have in addressing this issue and one sub-group to investigate advantages that unitary systems have in addressing this issue.
4. After some time, tell the sub-groups that they are going to discuss advantages and disadvantages of federalist and unitary systems for addressing this public policy issue. Flip the sub-group assignment so that the group looking at federalist systems is arguing for unitary systems and vice versa.
5. Provide time for student groups to prepare arguments for their system.
6. Ask students to hold a discussion in their group.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- Depending on class size, the discussion can happen with the entire class instead of in the large groups.

### TIPS:

- Focus on relatively broad public policy issues unless students have sufficient background knowledge about more specific issues.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: FEDERALISM V. UNITARY SYSTEMS

1. Form a large group.

2. In your group, select a public policy issue you are interested in.
3. Once assigned a sub-group, investigate the advantages that your system has in addressing the selected issue.
4. Once assigned a system to discuss, prepare advantages to your assigned system.

## BUILDING A NEW STORE

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understand and describe different challenges of federalism.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 3.5. [Advantages and Disadvantages of Federalism](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 10-15 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Select a major chain store that ideally has recently opened in your location (or as close to this as you can get).
- Select several challenges of federalism to introduce. Exit threat and decentralized accountability are two that will apply in most situations.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ask students if they remember when the selected chain store opened.
2. Once students remember the chain store opening, question why it opened in that particular location. Ask students to provide reasons.
3. Ask students why a different location in a different municipality was unsuitable. Depending on the store and the location, the different municipality might simply be just outside of the town or city limits.
4. Discuss how the chain store was brought to the area and introduce decentralized accountability.
5. Discuss how the chain store might leave the area and exit threat.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- This can be a group activity if desired.

### TIPS:

- Choose a chain store that people are interested in and will widely know about.

# CHAPTER 4: CIVIL LIBERTIES

## CITIZENSHIP QUOTES

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Distinguish between legal definition of citizenship and norms of citizenship.
- Compare what it means to be a citizen in other countries to the United States.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 4.1. [What Are Civil Liberties?](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 15-25 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Collect quotes about what it means to be a citizen of various countries. Print quotes or place them on a slide.
  - Inspired by this [New York Times](#) article
  - [Switzerland](#).
  - [Canada](#).
  - Add in the [definition](#) of a citizen.
- Find poll questions about being “truly American” like [this one from Pew](#).

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ask students to form small groups (about four students per group is good).
2. Within their group, students should read each of the quotes. They should first identify what each quote means and try to describe the quote in their own words.
3. After several minutes, students should move to interpreting the quotes taken together, discerning patterns, and thinking about what citizenship means.
4. Facilitate a class discussion that starts with describing the different definitions of citizenship and moves to identifying common themes. Challenge students to adopt the legal definition of citizenship. Why is this definition not satisfying to them? What does it exclude?
5. Discuss these quotes in the context of the poll results.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- Excellent activity to jigsaw different groups. Can give different groups different sets of quotes.
- For smaller classes, section the board off with space for each quote. Student groups write their descriptions of each quote for a visual comparison of the different interpretations.

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### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: CITIZENSHIP QUOTES

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1. Form a group of four students you don't already know well.
2. Read the quotes as a group and ensure that everyone understands what each quote is saying.
3. Discuss each quote and write down what, based on this quote, citizenship means in the country listed. Then, discuss how the quotes fit together and any common themes.

## FLIPPING CIVIL LIBERTIES

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Identify the key civil liberties outlined in the U.S. Constitution, especially those protected under the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment.
- Analyze the historical development and judicial interpretation of civil liberties through landmark Supreme Court cases.
- Apply constitutional understanding to contemporary issues involving individual rights and government powers.

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### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 4.1. [What Are Civil Liberties?](#)

Chapter 4.2. [Securing Basic Freedoms](#)

Chapter 4.3. [The Rights of Suspects](#)

Chapter 4.4. [Interpreting the Bill of Rights](#)

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### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: Two class periods.
  - Day 1: 40–45 minutes for group planning and coordination.
  - Day 2: ~5 minutes prep, 5–7 minutes per group for presentations, plus note-taking/discussion.
- Class size: Works best with 20–40 students, allowing for 7–8 groups.

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### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- Pre-assign or allow students to form 7 groups to cover these civil liberties:
  1. First Amendment – *Speech & Press*
  2. First Amendment – *Religion (Free Exercise & Establishment)*
  3. Second Amendment – *Right to Bear Arms*
  4. Fourth Amendment – *Search & Seizure*
  5. Fifth & Sixth Amendments – *Due Process & Trial Rights*
  6. Eighth Amendment – *Cruel and Unusual Punishment*
  7. Ninth & Fourteenth Amendments – *Privacy & Abortion (Substantive Due Process)*
- **In-Class Activity (Day 1):**
  - After a brief explanation of the flipped class format, distribute or display the **student instructions** (see below).
  - Circulate to support group task assignment and content clarification.
  - Encourage students to identify:
    - Who is researching each piece (e.g., cases, current event)?
    - Who will create visuals/slides?
    - Who will present each part?

**Presentation Day (Day 2):**

- Allow 5 minutes for groups to finalize or upload their materials.
- Facilitate presentations (5–7 minutes per group).
- Ask clarifying questions and encourage student-to-student questions after each.
- Encourage or require notetaking, and optionally collect group handouts or shared slides.

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#### MODIFICATIONS:

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- The number of groups and the topics can be adjusted as needed for class size, however, we have found that this is a good number of presentations and that these create fairly balanced labor division between the groups.
- For online or hybrid classes:
  - Have groups meet in breakout rooms and collaborate via shared online platforms.
  - Submit **video presentations** (e.g., narrated slides or Zoom recordings) for asynchronous review.
  - Use discussion boards or shared documents for classmates to post questions and reflections.

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#### TIPS:

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- Consider following up with a low-stakes quiz to ensure student engagement
- Recommend tools like shared Google Docs or Slides for remote collaboration.
- Emphasize the importance of **judicial interpretation and precedent**—not just the text itself.
- Be flexible with current events—students may discuss legislation, court cases, or cultural moments.

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#### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: FLIPPING CIVIL LIBERTIES

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Our next class session will be run as a flipped classroom, where each group will teach the class about a specific constitutional amendment or set of civil liberties.

We will create 7 groups in class to cover the following amendments/liberties:

1. First- Speech & Press
2. First- Religion
3. Second Amendment
4. Fourth Amendment
5. Fifth & Sixth Amendments
6. Eighth Amendment
7. Ninth Amendment (Privacy & Abortion)
8. 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment

Your group is responsible for preparing a **5–7 minute presentation** to be delivered in the next class. Use your **in-class group time today** (40 minutes) to plan your structure, divide tasks, and begin initial research. You will **finalize your research and prepare your slides or handout before the next class session.**

**Your presentation must include the following:**

- The **actual constitutional text** of your assigned amendment(s)
- A clear explanation of what the civil liberty **protects and does not protect**
- At least **two major Supreme Court cases** interpreting your liberty and the **impact of those rulings**
- At least **one relevant current event or policy debate** connected to the civil liberty
- Visual or organized presentation format (e.g., Google Slides, Canva, PowerPoint, etc.)

**You must also:**

- Involve all group members in the presentation
- Prepare a **sharable version** of your presentation to upload to the class LMS or share via email
- Be ready to present at the beginning of the next class (you'll have 5 minutes to prepare)
- Take notes on other presentations during class

**Tips:**

Use reliable sources, cite your materials, and be ready to answer questions. Keep it clear, structured, and engaging!

## LIMITS ON THE BILL OF RIGHTS

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Describe how freedoms in the Bill of Rights are not absolute and situations in which enforcement can occur.
- Characterize how enforcement has or has not occurred in prior exercises of these freedoms.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 4.2. [Securing Basic Freedoms](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 10-15 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Obtain a copy of your institution's student handbook or similar document that lists the assembly policy. Provide this policy to students on a slide or handout. The important sections are defining what freedom of assembly is, what its restrictions are, and what violations of free assembly are.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Display the policy and ask students to read it.
2. After students have read the policy, ask them whether they have freedom of assembly on campus.
3. Ask students to identify limitations to freedom of assembly as mentioned in the policy.
4. Ask students to identify enforcement actions in the policy. Lead a discussion on how one would exercise freedom of assembly subject to these limitations and the extent of potential enforcement.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- Depending on class size and the way the policy is worded, this activity can be modified into a class debate over what limitations on freedom of assembly are reasonable.

### TIPS:

- This activity is highly dependent on the institution's history of exercising freedom of assembly. For most institutions, this history will be limited or non-existent. If that is the case, an additional modification can be to ask students to interrogate why.
- Most students will likely say that there is freedom of assembly, and some may point out that it is subject to some restrictions. This activity is more effective if

students are pushed to think about what restrictions are appropriate and how those restrictions may be enforced.

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**STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: LIMITS ON BILL OF RIGHTS**

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1. Read the institution's freedom of assembly policy. Be prepared to discuss.

## ARREST

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understand how different rights are practiced.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 4.3. [The Rights of Suspects](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 10 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Select students to be actors or recruit other faculty or staff to do so.
- Develop a scenario with whatever constitutional violations you want to discuss. For example, a two actor scenario could include:
  - Actor 1 clearly steals some item in the classroom.
  - Actor 2 is outside the classroom and enters and is the police officer.
  - Actor 2 stops and detains actor 1 without reasonable suspicion. Add other elements of an unconstitutional stop and arrest here.
  - Actor 2 can commit other “offenses” during the “arrest” depending on the scenario.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Facilitate the class watching the scenario being acted out.
2. Ask students to list violations of constitutional rights that occurred.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- These scenarios could be recorded and played during class.
- Students could be split into groups and given scenarios to act out with each other.

### TIPS:

- Adjust the level of detail in the scenario to the amount of detail about constitutional provisions and court cases in the class.

## AMENDMENT BINGO

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Identify and distinguish among the rights protected in the U.S. Constitution's amendments.
- Connect specific constitutional language to broader themes in civil liberties and civil rights.
- Practice listening for key concepts embedded in constitutional text.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

- Chapter 4.1. What Are Civil Liberties?

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 10-15 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Materials:
  - Pocket constitution, or any list of all 27 constitutional amendments (summarized in short, clear phrases)
  - Blank paper or index cards for students to create 5x5 Bingo cards.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

#### Set up:

- a. Instruct students to draw a 5x5 grid (25 total squares).
- b. The center square should be labeled **Free Space**.
- c. Students must choose **24 out of the 27 amendments**

#### Gameplay (10–15 minutes)

- The instructor reads aloud **short excerpts from the actual constitutional text** of various amendments, but not the number
- Students must identify which amendment is being read and mark the corresponding square on their card.
- Play continues until a student completes a row (horizontal, vertical, or diagonal).
- When a student calls “Bingo,” pause and verify by having them identify the amendments and briefly summarize each right.

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### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: AMENDMENT BINGO

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1. DRAW A 5X5 BINGO CARD.
2. LABEL THE CENTER SQUARE "FREE SPACE."
3. CHOOSE 24 OF THE 27 AMENDMENTS TO INCLUDE ON YOUR CARD (YOU WILL LEAVE OUT THREE).
4. WRITE ONE AMENDMENT (NUMBER OR SHORT DESCRIPTION) IN EACH SQUARE.
5. LISTEN CAREFULLY AS YOUR INSTRUCTOR READS THE TEXT OF AMENDMENTS ALOUD.
6. MARK THE SQUARE IF YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED THE CORRECT AMENDMENT.
7. WHEN YOU COMPLETE A ROW (ACROSS, DOWN, OR DIAGONAL), CALL OUT "BINGO!" BE PREPARED TO IDENTIFY AND BRIEFLY EXPLAIN THE AMENDMENTS IN YOUR WINNING ROW.

# CHAPTER 5: CIVIL RIGHTS

## CONNECTING DEMOGRAPHICS AND VOTING

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze patterns of political participation across key U.S. demographic groups.
- Identify historical and institutional barriers to suffrage and participation.
- Compare turnout rates, vote choice, and civic engagement among groups.
- Connect individual-level participation to group-based and institutional explanations.
- Practice collaborative research and public presentation skills.

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### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 5.1. [What Are Civil Rights and How Do We Identify Them?](#)

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### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time:
  - 30–40 minutes: In-class preparation and group planning
    - Can also be done as a homework assignment with only 10-15 minutes in class to organize groups and offer instructions
  - Next class period: 8–10 minutes per group for presentations + Q&A and discussion
- Class size: 18-30 students
  - 6 groups (1 per demographic group)
  - Optimal group size: 3–5 students
- Materials:
  - Access to laptops/tablets and Internet
  - Shared Google Slides presentation (students submit link)
  - Note sheets or structured listening guide for non-presenting students

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### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- **Introduce the Activity:**
  - Explain that the purpose of this activity is to analyze **voter behavior through a group lens**, with attention to how institutional, cultural, and historical factors shape participation across major demographic categories. These groups are often discussed in scholarship and practice due to their growing or significant impact on U.S. electoral outcomes.
- **Assign Groups:**
  - Form 6 groups and assign each one a demographic group:
    - Women

- African Americans
- Latinos
- Asian Americans
- Native Americans
- Youth (typically defined as 18–24 or 18–29)
- Provide/Project Student Instructions
- After all presentations, lead a discussion on:
  - Which groups have seen the greatest increases in turnout? Why?
  - How do **barriers (legal, cultural, geographic)** differ across groups?
  - In what ways do **mobilization efforts**, media, and party outreach matter?
  - What does this tell us about inequality in democratic participation?
- Consider introducing short commentary or recent developments (e.g., voter ID laws, redistricting, targeted campaign strategies) relevant to each group to enrich analysis.

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#### MODIFICATIONS:

- Can be modified for either smaller or larger classes as individual presentations
- Can be modified for online courses using collaborative cloud-sharing slides (e.g. Google Slides) either without presentations or with individual contribution presentations
- Can be expanded as a full-semester length project

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#### TIPS:

- Be sure to explain point 6 to encourage students to consider what items are related to socialization and culture, and which items may be related to legal exclusion and particularly norms and behaviors as consequence of legal barriers.

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#### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: CONNECTING DEMOGRAPHICS AND VOTING

We will create 6 groups in class to cover the following demographic groups and their participation behavior

1. Women
2. African American
3. Latinos
4. Asian Americans
5. Native Americans
6. Youth

Each group is charged with preparing an 8-10 minute presentation for the following class period. The presentation should cover what the following points:

1. Description/Background of the Demographic group
2. Population size (and growth)
3. Suffrage (de jure and de facto)
4. Turnout (general trends/2016)

5. Vote Choice (general trends/2016)
6. Analysis of relationship b/w individual choice with social group choice and institutional factors

You will have about 30-40 minutes in class to work with your group to prepare your structure, assign roles, and plan your presentation. You are expected to complete the research and the presentation prior to the following class period (you will receive 5 minutes to prepare before the presentations begin).

Please create a collaborative visual presentation with a slide (or 2) for each presentation point.

You are expected to pay attention and take notes while other students are presenting!

### **Suggested Resources for Research:**

- [U.S. Census Bureau](#)
- [Pew Research Center](#)
- [U.S. Elections Project](#)
- [Center for American Women and Politics \(CAWP\)](#)
- [Native Vote](#)
- [Voto Latino](#)
- [Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote \(APIAVote\)](#)
- [NAACP Voting Rights](#)
- [Harvard Youth Poll \(Institute of Politics\)](#)
- [American National Election Studies \(ANES\)](#)

## SOCIAL MOVEMENTS ONLINE

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze how in-person social movements can be portrayed in different ways when published on the Internet.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 5.1. [What Are Civil Rights and How Do We Identify Them?](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 25-35 minutes.
- Class size: Any, but works better with larger classes so as to have larger groups.
- Adequate classroom space for students to record videos and act. Ideally a classroom with quick access to the outdoors to do filming there.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ask students to form a group of at least five or six students.
2. Provide them with the below instructions.
3. Once students have recorded their videos and discussed within their group, lead a discussion about how the different protests were portrayed in person compared to online.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- Students can be asked to share their recorded videos with the class. Since these are large video files, doing so requires a classroom with an adequate Internet connection. You should set up a file submission for these files ahead of time. Students often are not familiar with uploading video files.

### TIPS:

- Though it is fun to watch the recorded videos with the class, the effort and time required to share them may not outweigh the benefits to doing so.
- Students can create props with whatever supplies they have or are in the classroom. It is often more entertaining (and cheaper) to do that instead of you purchasing supplies.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS ONLINE

1. Get into a group of five or six students.
2. Appoint one person to be a videographer. All other group members are participating in a protest.
3. Choose an issue you want to protest that is of interest to your group.
4. Discuss what your protest will look like and how you want the videographer to try to capture the protest on video. Do you want to portray a small crowd, a large

crowd, a violent crowd, or something else? Write down a plan for conducting the protest and videoing it to get the impact you want if you were to post the video to social media.

5. Organize your group and practice the protest and videoing several times.
6. Actually act out and record your protest on video, keeping the video to about 30 seconds in length.

After recording your video, discuss with your group how effectively you were able to convey the message in your protest.

## NATIVE AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Compare and contrast written and oral constitutional principles.
- Investigate different methods of formulating citizenship and other constitutional principles.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 5.4. [Civil Rights for Indigenous Groups: Native Americans, Alaskans, and Hawaiians](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 30-40 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Select a short reading or video describing the organizational principles and values of a Native American tribe. Ideally, this material will be an oral history. This material should be from tribes local to your institution. For example, Dorsey, George. 1905. [Traditions of the Caddo](#). Washington, DC: Carnegie.
- Select a Native American tribe's current constitution to examine. This tribe should be local to your institution. For example, [Alabama-Coushatta Tribe's Constitution](#). Find the section on membership.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Begin by discussing why constitutions exist. As likely discussed elsewhere in the course, constitutions without enforcement are parchment guarantees. Introduce concepts like governance compared to government to help students understand that a society can be organized and governed without a formal, written constitution.
2. Students individually read the short passage about Native American constitutional principles. Ask them to write down the characters in the oral history and how they interact.
3. After a few minutes, ask students to form small groups to discuss the oral history and to describe how governing occurred.
4. Discuss this question as a class. Depending on the content of the oral history, this is often a good time to introduce methods of leadership selection and election.
5. Then display the selected tribe's constitution as it pertains to membership. Read as a class.
6. Ask students to point out key membership characteristics in the tribal constitution. Make connections to provisions of citizenship in the U.S.

### MODIFICATIONS:

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- It is feasible to select either the organizational principles document or the constitution. However, it is beneficial to use both in order to trace how organizational principles developed into constitutions.

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#### TIPS:

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- Students will likely need a brief historical background on Native American tribes in the region and their development. This can serve as a good pre-class reading assignment or activity.
- The section on membership is good to use to compare because many such sections often emphasize blood citizenship. This can lead to a discussion of what citizenship can mean to different people. Another appropriate section is on land ownership. The discussion here can be about how land ownership policies may conflict with norms about the ability to own land in the U.S. Select constitutional passages that emphasize different ways of thinking about rights and citizenship.

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#### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: NATIVE AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES

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1. Read the oral history provided to you. As you read, write down the characters in the oral history, their roles, and how they interact with one another.
2. Form a small group. Discuss who the characters are, their roles, and how they interact with one another. Be prepared to share what you find with the class.

## ACCESSIBILITY WALK

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understand how the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies to university campuses.
- Describe improvements to campus infrastructure that meet ADA regulations and areas of non-compliance.
- List implications of non-ADA compliant spaces on people with disabilities.

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### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 5.5. [Equal Protection for Other Groups](#)

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### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 45-60 minutes.
- Class size: Any. Class can complete the checklist as a single group or split up as needed.
- Building or space to complete the accessibility walk.

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### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Set guidelines for group size and the areas that groups can conduct the accessibility walk.
2. Discuss accessibility as a concept and the ADA specifically.
3. Give students 10 minutes to review the ADA checklist and to list the standards they would like to assess.
4. Students go and assess their selected areas for 20 minutes.
5. Once students return from their assessment, ask groups to spend 10 minutes reflecting on whether the space they visited was accessible based on the standards they assessed. Students should reflect on how accessibility is defined (i.e., ADA compliance does not necessarily mean accessible).
6. Discuss findings and observations as a class.
  - Do these ADA standards adequately cover accessibility?
  - What does accessibility mean in a learning environment? Is physical accessibility adequate?
  - How is “readily achievable” measured and determined?
  - How is the university making campus more accessible?

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### MODIFICATIONS:

- Instructors can provide students with a pre-made checklist if they want to shorten the activity duration.
- The activity can take place in the classroom, if desired.

- The activity can be extended to incorporate the university's accessibility improvement plan (or similar documents) and/or to include details on writing up accessibility issues and reporting them to the appropriate individual on campus.

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#### TIPS:

- Be sure to fully understand the extent to which the areas being investigated are required to be ADA compliant. While universities --- both public and private --- are public accommodations, some areas may require improvements deemed not "readily achievable."
- Choose checklist standards that are easy to evaluate. Ensure students have a way to measure things like door width.

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#### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: ACCESSIBILITY WALK

1. Form a group of four or five students. Ensure that someone in the group has access to a measuring device (e.g., a ruler, piece of paper of known size, ruler on their phone) and someone has access to a camera.
2. As a group, decide on an area around campus where you have experienced or heard concerns about accessibility. Follow any guidelines for how far away the area can be from your classroom.
3. Visit the [ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities](#). As a group, select 10 standards from the checklist that you would like to evaluate, that you are capable of evaluating with the resources that you have, and that apply to the area you have selected.
4. Write down the standards on a piece of paper and the questions associated with each standard. [Use this fillable document if you prefer.](#)
5. Visit the selected area and complete the information about the 10 selected standards to the best of your group's ability. Take photos of any problematic areas that you identify.
6. Be prepared to discuss your experience with the class.

# CHAPTER 6: THE POLITICS OF PUBLIC OPINION

## PARTY FORMATION

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understand two dimensions of party competition.
- Apply different electoral rules in a mock election.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 6.1. [The Nature of Public Opinion](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 30-60 minutes.
- Class size: Up to 30 students.
- Select electoral competition dimensions and electoral systems prior to starting the activity.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Draw two dimensions of electoral competition on the board. Ask students to place themselves in the two dimensions.
2. Lead a class activity where you form political parties based on the dimensions. Introduce different spatial models of reflecting party organization. Each party should have at least four members.
3. Provide time for the newly formed parties to meet and to develop a party name that reflects their electoral position. Party members should select which members want to run in one of three electoral districts.
4. Conduct successive elections electing three people. These elections can easily include proportional representation (assign everyone to vote in the same district for simplicity), single member district plurality (using the three districts from earlier), approval voting, and two round.
5. Compare electoral success under different methods.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- Choose as many electoral systems as you want. Some electoral systems are easier to set-up for an in class demonstration than others.
- Possible to modify this activity for more than 30 students if students are split into groups to form parties.

### TIPS:

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- Select dimensions of electoral competition that are fun and innocuous like cats vs. dogs and cake vs. fruit.
- Unless this course focuses on electoral politics, it is likely not necessary to teach apportionment methods and quotas, as this gets complex quickly and adds additional provisions to the activity.

## MEASURING PUBLIC OPINION- SURVEY MAKING

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understand how public opinion is measured and the challenges involved in survey design and sampling.
- Create and deploy a basic public opinion survey using online tools.
- Collect, analyze, and interpret survey data in relation to national opinion trends.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 6.2. [How Is Public Opinion Measured?](#)

Chapter 6.3. [What Does the Public Think?](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time:
  - In-class: 50–60 minutes total.
    - 10 minutes intro to public opinion and survey design.
    - 25–30 minutes group survey creation.
    - 5–10 minutes to launch survey and assign distribution.
  - Out-of-class: Time for collecting 8 responses per student.
  - Next class: 20–30 minutes for review, analysis, and discussion of results.
- Class size: Any, students can work in small teams (3–5) or as a whole class to develop a single survey.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- **Introductory Discussion (10 minutes):**  
Begin with a discussion of how public opinion influences democratic governance and why it's difficult to measure. Cover:
  - Sampling challenges (randomness, size, response bias)
  - Question design pitfalls (leading questions, ambiguity, social desirability bias)
  - The role of national benchmarks (Gallup, Pew Research Center)
  - Show a few examples of real survey questions to model both effective and problematic approaches.
- Thoroughly review student instructions and work as a class (or in small groups)
  - In class:
    - Brainstorm policy topics
    - Write and revise questions
    - Decide on demographic categories
- Depending on time, the survey can be modified LIVE in class or can be completed after class, either way, the instructor should share the link with the students via email and/or the LMS
- The next class or week:
  - Bring up live survey results

- Discuss trends, surprises, and interpretation
- Compare class data to **national polling data** (Gallup.com, [PewResearch.org](http://PewResearch.org))
- Open a discussion on:
  - How representative is our sample?
  - What biases may have affected the data?
  - How do politicians use (or ignore) public opinion?

#### MODIFICATIONS:

- For large classes, split into multiple teams creating separate surveys on different topics

#### TIPS:

- There are several survey platforms now, we initially used Survey Monkey, but then moved to Google Forms with institutional access.
  - [SurveyMonkey](http://SurveyMonkey) (free, easy to use, limited logic options)
  - [Google Forms](http://GoogleForms) (free with Google account, unlimited questions, good visualization)
  - [Microsoft Forms](http://MicrosoftForms) (similar to Google Forms, good for Microsoft-integrated environments)
  - [Pollfish](http://Pollfish) or [Qualtrics](http://Qualtrics) (for advanced options, academic access may be available)
- Using a shared document for the whole class can facilitate the survey writing process and make the process more efficient
- Test the survey with a few students before launch!
- Consider preparing the comparisons in advance, although quick searches LIVE on Gallup or Pew websites also demonstrate to students the ease of accessing these data.

#### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: MEASURING PUBLIC OPINION- SURVEY MAKING

**In this activity, our class will collaboratively design and launch a 10-question public opinion survey using an online platform.**

**Survey Guidelines:**

- Total questions: 10.
- 3 demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, education, race, income, party ID).
- 6 policy-related questions (e.g., healthcare, climate change, immigration, voting rights, economy, education).
- 1 referral question: "What is the name of the student who referred you to take this survey?"

**You'll be responsible for collecting 8 responses, including your own. Responses must be submitted before the next class.**

**Tips for question design:**

- Keep questions clear, concise, and neutral.
- Use consistent formats (e.g., multiple choice, Likert scales).

- Avoid double-barreled questions (e.g., “Do you support gun rights and free speech?”).
- Make sure your demographic questions are respectful and inclusive.

**After the survey (next class):**

- We’ll compare our findings to **national public opinion data** from Gallup and Pew Research.
- You’ll analyze what your respondents think, how that differs from national trends, and what that says about public opinion in your networks.

# CHAPTER 7: VOTING AND ELECTIONS

## ELECTION MACHINES

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Discuss different marking and tabulation methods and how forms of technology impact the voting experience.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 7.1. [Voter Registration](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 15-30 minutes.
- Class size: Any.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ask students to form a group.
2. Demonstrate some features of [VerifiedVoting](#) and show students how to find their location.
3. Ask students to complete the activity.
4. Discuss the methods used in the county and in other counties.
5. Link the methods with the voting experience. For example, paper poll books require voting at assigned precincts instead of voting centers. Some states require uniform methods by county while others do not.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- This activity can be expanded to discuss election security if that is of interest.

### TIPS:

- Use the time feature to show examples of mechanical level machines and punch cards, as students typically find these examples interesting.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: ELECTION MACHINES

1. Form a small group.
2. In your group, visit [VerifiedVoting](#) and find the state and county that the institution is located in. Write down the ballot marking method, the tabulation method, and the type of poll book used.
3. Research what each of these methods means, and write a description as a group.
4. Investigate other counties in the state and alternatives to each of these methods.



## IMAGINARY VOTERS

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze how race, gender, socioeconomic status, criminal status, and citizenship have historically shaped voting eligibility in the United States.
- Evaluate the impact of key constitutional amendments, laws, and court decisions on the expansion or restriction of voting rights.
- Consider the relationship between legal eligibility and actual voter participation.
- Practice historical reasoning by applying legal and political contexts to hypothetical cases.

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### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 7.1. [Voter Registration](#)

Chapter 7.2. [Voter Turnout](#)

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### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 35–50 minutes.
- Class size: Any.

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### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- Assign or allow groups to form (3–5 students per group).
- Each group should complete their chart and prepare to share highlights of their findings.
- Encourage use of **timeline references** or handouts listing key constitutional and legislative changes.
- Prompt groups to share 1–2 examples of “imaginary voters” that sparked debate or surprise.
- Discuss broader themes:
  - When did voting rights meaningfully expand?
  - Who is still marginalized or left out today?
  - What’s the difference between **legal eligibility** and **practical participation**?

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### MODIFICATIONS:

- For online or hybrid classes:
  - Use a shared Google Sheet or Jamboard for hypothetical person charts
  - Breakout rooms for group discussions
  - Optionally, submit individual “profiles” with annotations in place of live presentations

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### TIPS:

- The [United States Voting Rights Timeline](#) from the Northern California Citizenship Project is an excellent resource to share with students to work with as a short-

hand guide, but recommending them to use the textbook or any reputable online source will work

- Encourage students to **cite legal developments** (e.g., “This person is Native American in 1912, which means they weren’t yet U.S. citizens and could not vote.”)
- Incorporate discussions on **intersectionality**—how overlapping traits (e.g., being a Black female felon in Alabama in 1994) compound exclusion

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### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: IMAGINARY VOTERS

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You will work in a small group to examine **voting eligibility and participation** across U.S. history using **hypothetical individuals**.

You have five **categories of identity**:

- **Race/Ethnicity**: White, Black, Native American, Hispanic, Chinese
- **Sex**: Male, Female
- **Age**: 16, 19, 26, 35, 48, 72
- **Region**: New York, Alabama, California, Washington, D.C., Montana
- **SES Status**: Low income, Middle income, High income, Felon, Immigrant

And six **historical years**:

- 1840, 1862, 1912, 1954, 1968, 1994, 2017

**Your Task:**

1. Create approximately **10 different hypothetical individuals** by randomly selecting one trait from each of the five categories.
2. For **each individual**, do two things:
  - Decide if they would be **legally allowed to vote for Congress** in the assigned year.
  - Discuss how **likely they would be to vote** and why—consider barriers like literacy tests, voter suppression, poverty, access to polling places, apathy, and social movements.

Be ready to explain your reasoning using **historical facts**—laws, amendments, or events—that shaped voting rights and behavior.

## CAMPAIGN AD STORYBOARD

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Translate political issues into a convincing advertisement.
- Demonstrate understanding of key features of political advertising.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 7.4. [Campaigns and Voting](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 20-30 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Ledger paper.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Discuss effective campaign ad strategies.
2. Ask students to form groups and to complete the activity.
3. Select groups to share their ads and list and discuss the strategies that students used to convince people to vote for their candidate.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- Watch campaign ads prior to starting the activity to get an idea for how campaign ads are made.
- Display the best or most interesting ads at the beginning of the next class.

### TIPS:

- This works best on ledger paper. Drawing on a computer is time consuming and limits collaboration among members of the group.
- Restrict the list of potential politicians if you like, though students are more invested in the activity if they are imagining what a campaign might look like for a favorite potential candidate.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: CAMPAIGN AD STORY BOARD

1. Form a small group.
2. In your group, choose a politician or potential political candidate to create an ad for. List a set of principles that this candidate will run on during their campaign.
3. Using the paper provided, divide the paper into six sections, one for each scene in your campaign ad.

Draw out each scene in the ad so as to cultivate as many votes for your candidate as possible. Write a short description of the scene under each one.

# CHAPTER 8: THE MEDIA

## FACES OF A CANDIDATE

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze how media outlets portray presidential candidates and political events.
- Evaluate differences in tone, framing, emphasis, and content across news sources.
- Understand the role of campaign advertisements in shaping public perception.
- Discuss the implications of media bias, partisanship, and selective reporting in American democracy.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 8.3. [Regulating the Media](#)

Chapter 8.4. [The Impact of the Media](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 35-50 minutes.
- Class size: Any.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduction (5–10 minutes)- Begin with a short discussion about media bias, the 24-hour news cycle, and the importance of media literacy. Prompt students to think about:
  - How tone, word choice, and image selection influence perception.
  - The distinction between reporting and commentary.
  - The role of campaign ads in shaping candidate image.

Optionally, share one short news clip or campaign ad to model quick analysis.

- Circulate to support research and ensure diversity of sources (but remember that part of this activity is to not necessarily use unbiased sources!).
- Provide a list of suggested outlets and reputable places to find campaign ads (e.g., YouTube, official candidate websites, AdImpact, or OpenSecrets).

Remind students to critically analyze tone, framing, and visual cues – not just facts.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- While this activity is particularly engaging during election season, it can be done in any year using previous elections' candidates.

### TIPS:

- Push students to compare not only the facts reported, but what's left out, how headlines are framed, and what visuals are used.
- Use this as a launchpad for discussing the role of media in elections, agenda-setting, and political polarization.
- Consider archiving student findings to compare portrayals across time or between election cycles.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: FACES OF A CANDIDATE

In your small group, you'll research how one current or recent presidential candidate is portrayed in the media. Your goal is to compare coverage from at least three different media outlets and find 1-2 campaign ads by or about your candidate.

#### Instructions:

- Choose or receive a candidate to research.
- Select one recent **issue or event** (e.g., a debate, policy announcement, controversy).
- Find coverage of that issue from at least **three different outlets** (aim for a range in ideology or format – e.g., Fox News, CNN, NPR, AP, MSNBC, Politico, The Hill, et. cetera).
- Watch **at least one or two campaign ads** from the candidate's official campaign (or related PAC).

#### As a group, analyze the following:

- How does each outlet portray the candidate? (positive, neutral, critical?)
- What details are emphasized or omitted?
- What tone or language is used?
- How does the campaign ad present the candidate compared to media coverage?
- What does this suggest about **media bias, candidate messaging, or public perception?**

#### Use this template for your notes:

Candidate Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Outlet 1 (Name): \_\_\_\_\_

Summary:

Analysis of Tone/Framing:

Outlet 2 (Name): \_\_\_\_\_

Summary:

Analysis of Tone/Framing:

Outlet 3 (Name): \_\_\_\_\_

Summary:

Analysis of Tone/Framing:

Campaign Ad (Title or Link): \_\_\_\_\_

Summary:

Image/Message Portrayal:

## MEDIA BIAS CHART

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Identify strategies for consuming political media.
- Critically analyze political media.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 8.4. [The Impact of the Media](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 30-40 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Select one of the many available “media bias charts” for use during class.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Display the media bias chart.
2. Ask students to collectively interpret the chart to get a basic understanding of how it is laid out.
3. Ask students to suggest strategies for consuming media based on the chart. These strategies often involve consuming media from different political spectrums (media omnivores) or concentrating media consumption in “neutral” sources.
4. Ask students how they know that this chart is reliable. Invite them to search for information about the makers of the chart and to evaluate this information.
5. Discuss how by using a chart like this, the user is assuming all media consumed on a particular outlet is equally biased, regardless of the veracity of the chart.
6. Then, students should work on their own to conduct an analysis of political media that they find.
7. Discuss the results. Pay particular attention to what students can learn from their articles and when it is helpful to go through this article evaluation process.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- The activity can be split into two discrete sections if desired.

### TIPS:

- This activity pairs well with a discussion on public trust in different media outlets.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: MEDIA BIAS CHART

1. Go to your social media feed. If you do not have social media, choose a news website and go there.
2. Once on your social media feed, find a politics-related news article. If you cannot find any politics-related news articles, choose any news article or go to a news website.

3. Write out your answers to the following questions and be prepared to discuss:
  - a. Where did you find the article? How many reactions or likes did it have?
  - b. What is the headline?
  - c. When was the article written?
  - d. Who wrote the article? Who is this person and what expertise do they have?
  - e. What is the publication?
  - f. Why do you think the article was written?
  - g. Search the Internet to find a different article on the same topic. What information can you verify is common between the two articles?

# CHAPTER 9: POLITICAL PARTIES

## THREE WAYS OF SEEING PARTIES

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Define and distinguish between the three main perspectives for analyzing political parties: **in the electorate**, **as organizations**, and **in government**.
- Describe the major functions of political parties within a democratic system.
- Apply the assigned approach to evaluate how political parties shape and are shaped by electoral behavior, institutional structure, and public policy.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 9.1. [What Are Parties and How Did They Form?](#)

Chapter 9.3. [The Shape of Modern Political Parties](#)

Chapter 9.4. [Divided Government and Partisan](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: In-class work: 40–45 minutes; Group presentations: 5–7 minutes per group (15–25 minutes total); Optional reflection or discussion: 10 minutes.
- Class Size: Ideal for small to mid-size classes (10–35 students).

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

Begin by introducing the **three lenses** through which political scientists understand political parties:

- **Party in the Electorate:** how citizens align with and identify with parties.
- **Party as Organization:** the formal structure, fundraising, recruitment, and outreach.
- **Party in Government:** how parties operate within legislative bodies to enact policy.

Explain that these are **complementary, not competing** perspectives.

- Divide students into 3 groups, each assigned one approach to political parties.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- For large classes, create multiple parallel groups for each approach and rotate presentations.

### TIPS:

- Encourage students to use current events (e.g., 2024 election coverage, intra-party conflicts, party conventions).

- Offer examples of what each lens might focus on:
  - *In the electorate*: voter registration trends, identity politics.
  - *As an organization*: recruitment of young candidates, grassroots mobilization.
  - *In government*: party-line votes, divided government.
- Provide a simple **rubric**: clarity of explanation, use of examples, quality of visual aid, presentation engagement.
- Ask reflective questions during the debrief:
  - Which lens seems most influential in today's politics?
  - How do the three perspectives overlap?

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### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: THREE WAYS OF SEEING PARTIES

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In your assigned group, you'll explore one of the **three major approaches** to understanding political parties:

- **Party in the Electorate**
- **Party as an Organization**
- **Party in Government**

You will define your approach, describe what functions political parties serve through this lens, and analyze a current or historical example that illustrates your perspective.

#### **Your Group Must:**

1. **Define your assigned approach.**
2. **Describe how political parties function** within your approach. Focus on those that apply most directly:
  - recruit and train leaders
  - bring citizens and leaders together in electoral coalitions
  - foster political participation
  - teach democratic habits
  - constrain and channel political conflict
  - organize government activity
  - allow citizens to hold government accountable
3. **Apply your approach to real-world politics**—use data, party platforms, media coverage, or legislative examples.
4. **Create a visual aid** (e.g., Google Slide, Canva graphic, infographic, whiteboard photo, chart, or handout).
5. **Present your findings to the class in a 5–7 minute presentation.**

#### **Be sure to:**

- Record your group's **key talking points** on your worksheet
- Include a **link or screenshot of your visual aid**
- Be prepared to answer **peer questions** during discussion

#### **Party-in-the-Electorate:**

- Gallup: Party Affiliation Trends
- Pew Research Center: Party Identification and Trends
- Secretary of State Office

**Party as Organization:**

- [Democratic National Committee](#)
- [Republican National Committee](#)
- [Federal Election Commission](#) – party fundraising data
- [Ballot Access News](#) – third-party & ballot access issues

**Party in Government:**

- U.S. House Party Voting Statistics
- U.S. Senate Party Division History
- [Congress.gov](#) – search legislation by party sponsors
- Brookings Institution: Partisan Polarization in Congress

## PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEMS

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the differences between single member district and proportional electoral systems.
- Describe how parliamentary coalitions work.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 9.2. [The Two-Party System](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 10-15 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Obtain a graphic that represents a simulation of what U.S. Congressional representation would look like if the U.S. had a parliament.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Display a graphic that represents a simulation of what the U.S. Congress would look like if the U.S. had a parliament.
2. Describe single member district and proportional electoral system and how they relate to the ways in which a parliament can be elected.
3. Given the parliament simulation results, ask students to consider how coalitions might form within a parliamentary system.
4. Discuss how constituents would obtain constituency service in a parliamentary system.
5. Ask students to write on whether they think a parliament or the current U.S. Congress is a better system.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- This activity could be expanded to include small group work constructing coalitions.
- Students could be assigned to read arguments in favor and against parliamentary systems as a pre-class reading.

### TIPS:

- A graphic is necessary as students have difficulty visualizing what a multi-party system would look like.
- Encourage students to think about electoral competition on multiple dimensions when they consider coalition formation.

## PARTY PLATFORMS

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Describe what a party platform is and how it is different from the content of a political campaign.
- Analyze party platforms and make a judgement on the degree to which parties are socially polarized or issue polarized.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 9.3. [The Shape of Modern Political Parties](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 20-25 minutes.
- Class size: Any.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ask students to form a group.
2. Provide links to the DNC and RNC platforms from the most recent presidential election.
3. Ask students to complete the activity.
4. Invite each group to share their results. Make a table on the board with the issue the group looked for and what they found in each platform.
5. Discuss issue polarization: were the written platforms more similar than students expected?
6. Highlight any issues that were hard to find in the platform. Why were they hard to find? Did the authors run out of time or space on the Internet to discuss the issue? Talk about diversity of issue positions within the party and how party platforms promote issue coherence or not.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- Ask students to consider a U.S. third party or a party from another country in their comparison.
- Extend the activity by then making a direct comparison between the party platform and a candidate's website.
- Assign groups to examine one party platform and then pair them with a group examining the other party platform. This works best if groups are examining the same issue.

### TIPS:

- Provide the party platform links. Otherwise, students will tend to read content from the RNC or DNC website or news sources.

- Check to see if the party platforms are OCR'd prior to starting the activity. Tell students that they need to go through the platform manually if the search function does not work.

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#### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: PARTY PLATFORMS

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1. Form a small group.
2. In your group, choose a political issue in the U.S. that you would like to investigate.
3. Using the links to the party platforms provided, search through the party platforms to see if and how the issue is addressed.
4. Answer these questions:
  - a. How is the issue discussed in each platform?
  - b. How important does the issue seem to each party? Why?
  - c. Is the emphasis on the issue (or lack of emphasis) surprising? Why?

## LOCAL REDISTRICTING

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Apply redistricting knowledge to redistrict a local elected body.
- Understand geographic and residential segregation and their impact on drawing district boundaries.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 9.4. [Divided Government and Partisan Polarization](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 25-30 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Obtain a district map for a local council or board that has single member district representation (e.g., city/town council, school board, county commission).

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ask students to form small groups.
2. Provide a link to the district map selected above.
3. Introduce the principles of redistricting: roughly equal population, contiguous, and (in some states/locations) bringing together communities of interest.
4. Ask students to follow the instructions below.
5. Invite each group to describe the strategy that they used to draw the district lines.
6. Discuss as a class and identify strengths and weaknesses of each strategy.
7. Ask whether one of the strategies is “more fair” than the others. Invite a discussion about the “fairest” strategy.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- This activity assumes some level of knowledge about redistricting and is a good activity to follow a discussion about what redistricting is and how it works. There are a number of redistricting games (e.g., [Game Theory Test](#)).
- For a longer activity, ask students to redistrict based on some principles that they establish. For example, do they want to divide the districts to have relatively equal incomes or other demographics? This modification requires access to Census demographic information which is available, but does not neatly map onto districts.

### TIPS:

- Encourage groups that do not have an immediate idea of how to redistrict to draw districts based on “fairness.” This helps to set up the fairness discussion later in the activity.

- In the fairness discussion, prompt students to develop the “fairest” method. This usually consists of horizontal lines, vertical lines, or spokes radiating from a center point (like a bicycle wheel). Discuss how geographic and residential segregation mean that these “fairest” methods actually have significant impacts on how districts are constructed.
- Create groups so that each group has a student from the area in it (if possible). That student can help to provide context about different geographic areas.
- Indicate to students the level of detail you expect on the new district map by drawing key features on the board to show that the map can be simple and very approximate.
- This activity can be completed more precisely if students draw directly on a blank city map. You could print out these maps. Providing the map electronically and asking students to draw on it may take too much set-up time.
- If the classroom has a document camera, you could display the different district maps using the document camera.

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#### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: LOCAL REDISTRICTING

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1. Form a small group.
2. On a piece of paper, draw out the major landmarks in the elected body assigned to you.
3. As a group, investigate the demographic characteristics of the people who live in the area you are redistricting. Discuss both information you find online and your own knowledge of the area.
4. Establish a strategy for redistricting with your group.
5. Draw out the new districts on your map. The district lines can be approximate. Do not worry about ensuring that population is exactly equal, but do ensure that all districts are contiguous.

# CHAPTER 10: INTEREST GROUPS AND LOBBYING

## PRISONERS' DILEMMA

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understand decision-making to balance self-interest and the common good.
- Recognize how trust and teamwork affect outcomes in political and social decisions.
- Connect game theory to real-world political and policy challenges.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 10.2. [Collective Action and Interest Group Formation](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 30-45 minutes.
- Class size: 15-45 students.
- Space: Ideally, students should be able to work in a group out of earshot of other groups with 4-10 students able to stand opposed to each other.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- Organize *pairs* of groups of about 3-8 students.
- Instruct the students to behave as a single agent, they must make a decision collectively to either cooperate or defect in each round.
- Ask the students to move away from their opposing group (or purposefully arrange them this way) to allow them to discuss.
- Ask students to assign a “recorder” who will keep score, a “negotiator” who will act out each round, and a diplomat who will meet at conference.
- Instruct the students to make a collective decision about whether to cooperate or defect, give them about 30 seconds per round to make a decision, then ask the negotiators to face their paired opponents.
- Have all negotiator-pairs face each other with their hands at their sides, and after the count of three, either shake hands (cooperate) or turn around and walk away (defect).
- After round 2 and 5, the students have the (optional) opportunity to enter into a conference with the opposing group by sending their diplomat. During conference, they can make a plan for the coming round; however, they are not required to follow through on their negotiated plan.
- After all the rounds, ask the recorder to give the total score and find out which of the opposing teams won and which team was the overall winner in the class. Then debrief by discussing strategies and how cooperating or defecting affected their score.

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### MODIFICATIONS:

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- For time, consider reducing to three or four rounds with a single conference.
  - For very large classes, consider having students play the game individually with a single seatmate, perhaps rock-papers-scissors style.
- 

### TIPS:

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- If you give the teams meaningful application names, students will have more fun and their reflections will be more applicable. Some examples include Congress-President; Syria-ISIS; Business-Union, et. cetera.
- 

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: PRISONERS' DILEMMA

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This is a group activity to teach you about individual gain vs. public goods. The Prisoner's Dilemma is a thought experiment...

The goal of the activity is to earn as many points as possible.

The set up for the activity is as follows:

- a. You are a member of a team playing against another team, though there may be other pairs of teams also playing
- b. You will choose to play Cooperation or Defection
- c. You will be scored as per the Score Table:

Group A	Group B	Score A	Score B
Cooperate	Cooperate	+3	+3
Cooperate	Defect	-6	+6
Defect	Cooperate	+6	-6
Defect	Defect	-3	-3

- d. There will be 5 total rounds of 2 minutes each
- e. You can have a conference, via representatives, with your opposing group for the third and fifth rounds (however, this can only take place at the request of both groups), you will be given an extra minute to conference.
- f. Use the score sheet to keep track of your points and your opponents'

	Strategy		Score		Cumulative Score	
Round	A	B	A	B	A	B
1						
2						

**Conference (if both teams agree)**

3						
4						

**Conference (if both teams agree)**

5						
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

## JOINING ORGANIZATIONS

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understand ways that organizations solve collective action problems to protect individual rights.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 10.2. [Collective Action and Interest Group Formation](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 15-20 minutes.
- Class size: Any.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ask students to form small groups.
2. Each group should select one right and one liberty to research together.
3. For the right and liberty, groups should find an organization working to protect, eliminate, or change that right or liberty.
4. After groups have found the organizations, ask them to complete the questions about benefits to joining.
5. List individual benefits on the board. Make it a contest to see which groups can find the most unique and interesting individual benefits.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- Define rights and liberties prior to starting the activity if this has not already been extensively taught.
- Extend the activity by transitioning to talk about stickers that students have on their laptops or other devices and how these too are obtained by groups providing individual incentives.

### TIPS:

- This activity can stand on its own, but it pairs well with a class on collective action problems, as the focus here is on organizations providing individual incentives to solve a collective action problem.
- During the discussion, encourage students to list and describe the most interesting benefits they find. This helps them think about individual incentives. Hotel and car rental discounts, wine or food club memberships, and other non-sequiturs that have nothing to do with the organization work well.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: JOINING ORGANIZATIONS

1. Form a small group.
2. In your group, choose one right and one liberty to research together.

3. For the right and the liberty, find an organization working to protect, eliminate, or change the right or liberty.
  - a. List the organization's name.
  - b. Describe the organization's mission according to their website.
  - c. Can you join the organization? If so, how? How much does it cost to join?
  - d. What are the benefits for joining? List all of them.

## LOBBYING WITH STICKERS

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Describe how everyday organizations engage in lobbying activities.
- Understand why organizations engage in lobbying.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 10.3. [Interest Groups as Political Participation](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 30-40 minutes.
- Class size: Any.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Create groups to ensure that one student per group has a sticker of some kind on their laptop.
2. Provide a brief (5 minute) demonstration of the OpenSecrets website.
3. Give students 20-25 minutes to conduct their research and create their flowchart. Transition students to writing their flowchart after about 10 minutes.
4. Discuss as a class. Use a jigsaw activity or ask students to write their flowcharts on the board for a more robust discussion.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- At least one student in the class must have stickers on their laptop, phone, water bottle, or something else. The activity can be modified to consider bumper stickers if needed.
- The activity works better if each group investigates a different organization and, therefore, has one student with stickers on something, but the entire class can work with the same organization if needed.

### TIPS:

- Be careful when explaining the OpenSecrets website. Some students may confuse who is donating (individuals or corporate donations) and to whom (candidates or PACs).

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: LOBBYING WITH STICKERS

1. Get into groups as assigned by the instructor.
2. Look at the stickers members of your group have on your laptops, phones, water bottles, or other devices. Which companies or organizations do these stickers support? List the companies or organizations.
3. Select two or three companies or organizations from your list.

4. Visit [OpenSecrets](#) and enter the name of each of the companies or organizations you selected. You may need to try different naming variations to find a result.
5. Spend 15 minutes looking at the results. Your job is to learn about different lobbying practices. Explore the different tabs trying to answer the question “why is this company or organization lobbying this politician, for this bill, et. cetera?”
6. Create a flowchart linking the pieces of information you learn together. Start with the company or organization name and end with where lobbying money is spent (politicians or bills). Place the pieces of information you learn into the flowchart and explain how this information fits together.

# CHAPTER 11: CONGRESS

## CONGRESS INFOGRAPHICS

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Research and explain a key aspect of the U.S. legislative branch, including its structure, processes, behaviors, and demographics.
- Apply knowledge of Congress to evaluate its responsiveness, effectiveness, and representative quality.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 11.1. [The Institutional Design of Congress](#)  
Chapter 11.2. [Congressional Elections](#)  
Chapter 11.3. [Congressional Representation](#)  
Chapter 11.4. [House and Senate Organizations](#)  
Chapter 11.5. [The Legislative Process](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: Two class periods recommended.
  - Day 1: Topic selection, research, and infographic design (~50 minutes).
  - Day 2: Short (3–5 min) presentations from each group or individual (~30–45 minutes, depending on class size).
  - Optional: Assign part of the research or design as homework.
- Class size: any, though consider modifications depending on class size.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- Assign single, paired, or small groups of students to each topic, ideally without overlap.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- For online or hybrid classes: Students work individually or in virtual breakout rooms; Submit infographic links to the LMS or discussion board.
- For large classes: Use gallery walk (printed or digital) to view infographics instead of formal presentations; Break presentations into two class sessions.

### TIPS:

- Showing students examples of infographics prior to starting is often helpful.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: CONGRESS INFOGRAPHICS

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Your task is to create a **visually engaging, evidence-based infographic** on an assigned topic related to the national legislative branch. You will use class time to research, design, and prepare your infographic. You'll also give a brief (3–5 minute) presentation explaining your infographic to the class.

#### **Your Infographic Should:**

- Clearly **define and explain** your assigned topic
- Include at least **3 credible sources** (cited on the infographic or in a notes section)
- Use **data, examples, and visuals** (charts, diagrams, timelines, etc.) to explain key concepts
- Be **visually appealing, organized, and readable**
- Be submitted digitally (link or file) and shared in class

#### **Presentation Expectations:**

- Brief (3–5 minute) summary of your topic and visual
- Highlight 2–3 key takeaways
- Be ready to answer 1–2 classmate questions

#### **Infographic Tools:**

- [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) (*free and user-friendly*)
- [Piktochart.com](https://www.piktochart.com) (*good for charts and timelines*)
- [Venngage.com](https://venngage.com) (*requires free account*)
- Google Slides (using a tall slide as an infographic format)

#### **Available Topics:** (You'll be assigned one of the following. No overlap.)

- Institutional Design
- Member Activities
- Incumbency, Reelection & Political Ambition
- Goals & Constituencies
- Congressional Organization
- Congressional Polarization
- Demographic Composition
- Leadership and Organization
- Committee System

#### **Core Sources (don't forget your textbook!):**

- U.S. Constitution – Article I
- [OpenStax American Government, Ch. 11](#)
- [U.S. House of Representatives](#)
- [U.S. Senate](#)
- U.S. Capitol Visitor Center: How Laws Are Made

#### **Topic-Specific Resources:**

- **Incumbency & Reelection:** OpenSecrets Reelection Rates

- **Congressional Polarization:** Washington Post Polarization Graphic
- **Demographic Composition:** Pew Research: 118th Congress Demographics
- **Congressional Data:** Vital Statistics on Congress – Brookings
- **Leadership/Committees:** Congress.gov – Leadership and Committees
- **CAWP (Women in Politics):** Center for American Women and Politics

## HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW: THE BOARD GAME

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Reinforce students' understanding of the formal legislative process in Congress.
- Illustrate the complexity and unpredictability of bill passage using a simulated, gamified model.  
Identify key stakeholders (players) involved in the policymaking process and their influence.
- Reflect on institutional, procedural, and strategic challenges to lawmaking in the U.S.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 11.5 [The Legislative Process](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- **Time:** 25-50 minutes total. The game tends to move very quickly, so encouraging students to play multiple rounds is recommended.
- **Class size:** Depends on the number of game boards available, but each game includes up to five players.
- Consider your classroom space, this may be challenging in a lecture hall for example, however, students will find ways to play, either sitting on the floor, a space outside the classroom, or by having one person in charge of the game board.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- **Introduction (5 minutes):**  
Remind students that the U.S. legislative process is rarely linear or simple- a bill can die at ANY step of the game (process). This board game simplifies many aspects, but it also captures the **randomness**, **barriers**, and **multiple actors** involved in turning a bill into law. Reiterate that the game simulates **steps in the process**, not just Congressional procedure, but also influences from lobbying, public opinion, and executive action. Let students know that the game moves quickly, and that they will play the game several times.
- **Distribute Materials:**
  - [One game board](#) per group
    - Use [the link](#) to open the game board and pieces to print
      - We recommend printing as a poster size
  - One die and five tokens per group
  - Something to take notes on
- Students should play the game at least about three times:
  - A first round to just play!

- A second to critically consider and discuss the actions on the board (for example, why would public hearings result in skipping a turn- what is that attempting to reflect?).
- A final round to with more detailed note-taking and strategic consideration.
  - Have students make a list of each item on the game board (or you can provide a list), and have them identify each step.
- **Group Debrief and Class Discussion (10–15 minutes):**

After all groups complete at least two rounds, bring the class together to discuss:

  - Which parts of the game best represent real processes? Which don't?
  - What institutional barriers became visible through the game mechanics?
  - How did chance (the dice roll) reflect or distort political reality?
  - Who won the game (which role)? How did it feel when a non-representative won?

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#### MODIFICATIONS:

##### For online, hybrid, or very large classes:

- Use a digital version of the board
- Assign each group to a breakout room and have one player act as the "roller"
- Use a shared die-rolling simulator and editable game board

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#### TIPS:

- Allow students to role-play lightly while playing (e.g., lobbyist pitching their case, executive threatening a veto) (this sometimes happens naturally!).
- Use the debrief to introduce more complexity: committee work, reconciliation, rule-setting.
- Consider offering a **bonus card deck** with real-world amendments (e.g., "filibuster," "media scandal," "interest group ad campaign") for advanced gameplay.
- Encourage connections to **current bills** being debated in Congress or historical legislative challenges.

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#### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW: THE BOARD GAME

How a bill becomes a law the board game is a very simple game. There can be up to five players (Representative, Executive Branch, State Legislator, Lobbyist, and the People). Each player takes turns rolling one die and moving the number of pips shown. When landing on a spot, follow the action instructions for the following turn. Note that you must roll precise to win/end the game.

##### Class instructions:

1. Play the game!
2. Play the game again, but this time take notes about each step of the process
3. Consider the action instructions on the board, why were these actions taken? Are there other spaces where you might consider other actions?

4. Discuss some of the challenges in playing the game, and some of the challenges in passing legislation.
5. Discuss the players, why are these the players? Who won your game?
6. Play the game again if you have time :)

## CONGRESS SIMULATION

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the content of legislative proposals.
- Interact and negotiate over legislative proposals from the perspective of a legislator.

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### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 11.5. [The Legislative Process](#)

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### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 100-125 minutes.
- Class size: At least 15. Works best with classes of 50-75.
- Choose a piece of legislation that has recently passed the U.S. Senate. The piece of legislation should be of at least some interest to students. It should also have received bi-partisan support.
- Read through the history of the legislation and determine which committees the bill was assigned to. Generate a list of members of those committees. If a Senator is a member of multiple committees, place them on one committee. Include party leadership.
- Assign pre-class reading consisting of at least the CRS report on this bill.
- Find the roll call vote information for this bill.

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### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ask students to sign-up to personify one of the members of the list generated earlier. Require students to sign up to be party leaders and committee chairs and ranking members before any general sign up.
2. Once students have signed up, give them the handout and instructions below. Walk students through each part of the handout.
3. Member research: Ensure that students make a name tag and call them by their Senator's name. Assist students with finding roll call vote information. Remind them that this is an indicator of how they voted, but they do not need to follow this indicator in this simulation.
4. Bill research: After providing some time for students to research the bill, review its major provisions on the board.
5. Committee breakout: Remind students who is in what committee they are in and what party they are in. Party leaders not on one of these committees should just choose a committee. Encourage members to prepare statements and committee chairs and ranking members to effectively control their members.
6. Committee hearing: Depending on class size, several committee hearings may be happening simultaneously.

7. Filing amendments: Require all students to be working on an amendment on their own or with a partner. Amendments should be written, and Senators should sign on to sponsor the amendment.
8. Party caucus meeting: Describe the role of the majority/minority leaders and whips in this meeting.
9. Floor vote: Conduct the floor vote.
10. Reflection: A written reflection is often beneficial.

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#### MODIFICATIONS:

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- Proper committee procedure dictates that witnesses are called and questioned instead of the two parties debating one another. The witness approach is more accurate, but significantly more challenging to implement, especially for the witnesses. If this approach is adopted, select several students to be one witness so that they can prepare together.

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#### TIPS:

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- This activity works best in one long class period (2 or 3 hours). If splitting over two class periods, ensure that you have a plan for what to do with students who miss the first class period. One strategy is to assign those students to be “generic Democrats” or “generic Republicans” and then they can participate with this in mind. If working with 50 minute class periods, split the class session into a preparation phase and the actual simulation phase. If working with 1 hour and 15 minute class periods, the same approach can be adopted, but provide more time for committees to strategize on the preparation day prior to the committee meeting on the simulation day.
- If possible, add a news article or a research article to the CRS report for pre-class reading.
- This activity is fun if you encourage students to embrace their roles.

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#### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: CONGRESSIONAL SIMULATION

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##### Day 1:

10 minutes: Introduction and Member Selection

- I will act as the Senate Presiding Officer and guide the simulation.
- Select a Senator to represent for the simulation from the provided list.

15 minutes: Member Research

- Research your member. Your job is to embody his/her decisions for the rest of the simulation.
- Create a name tag illustrating important characteristics of you as a member/witness. Draw pictures of their major political priorities and other characteristics on your nametag.

15 minutes: Bill Research

- Read parts of the bill. You can find a short and readable version here: (link to the CRS report)
- Find out how you voted on this legislation and what their political positions are. You can find your member's vote here: (link to the roll call)
- Write a 1 paragraph speech about your support/opposition to this bill. Conduct Internet research if needed.

#### 25 minutes: Committee Breakout

- Committee members break up by party and prepare for a Committee Hearing. The Committee Chairman or Ranking Member should lead these meetings. Members should be prepared to speak on their position on the bill, and the Chair and Ranking Member should be prepared to give an opening statement.

#### Day 2:

#### 10 minutes: Regroup with your party members

#### 10 minutes: Committee Hearing

- 1 minute: Chairman speech.
- 1 minute: Ranking Member speech.
- 4 minutes: Chairman allocates time to members from his/her party.
- 4 minutes: Ranking Member allocates time to members from his/her party.

#### 15 minutes: Filing Amendments

- Talk with other members to find members supporting an amendment to the bill. Amendments need the support of 11 Senators for a roll call vote.
- Submit your amendments with the names of supporting Senators to the presiding officer on paper.

#### 15 minutes: Party Caucus Meeting

- Majority Leader and Majority Whip and Minority Leader and Minority Whip convene their caucus. Witnesses choose to attend the caucus of their choice.
- Leaders review amendments and bill and discuss how members should vote.
- Whips count party votes for amendments and bill passage. Record whipped votes on paper.

#### 15 minutes: Floor Vote

- Vote on amendments.
- Vote to invoke cloture (3/5<sup>ths</sup> support required).
- Vote on bill passage (1/2 support required).

#### 10 minutes: Reflection

# CHAPTER 12: THE PRESIDENCY

## PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES JIG-SAW

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Research and analyze the policy positions and political strategies of presidential primary candidates.
- Understand intra-party dynamics and ideological diversity within U.S. political parties.
- Practice persuasive speaking and political communication by role-playing a candidate.
- Compare and contrast candidate platforms across key policy areas in an engaging, interactive format.

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### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 12.2. [The Presidential Election Process](#)

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### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 35-50 minutes.
  - 15-20 minutes for initial group research.
  - 20-25 minutes for “role-play roundtables” in mixed groups.
  - 10-15 minutes for whole-class discussion or debrief.
- Class size: ideally 15-30 students, but can be modified for a variety of sizes.

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### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduction (5-10 minutes): Introduce the primary process as a way that political parties select nominees, and explain that this activity will help students explore how ideological diversity and campaign strategy function within parties, especially during primaries.  
Emphasize:
  - The importance of understanding platforms, policy priorities, and messaging
  - The skill of communicating from a political point of view, not necessarily personal agreement
- For this activity, there are two stages of two different groups; each original group should be assigned a different candidate; new groups should include one representative from each candidate group (these are “jigsaw” groups)
  - In step 1, assign students into group based on the number of candidates you have available (number of students in each group doesn’t matter)

- In step 2, assign students to form groups that are the size of the number of candidates, where the new group includes a single student from the original groups
- Consider concluding with an overall debrief with some discussion questions, such as:
  - What surprised you about the candidates' differences within the same party?
  - Which issues caused the most divergence?
  - What challenges do parties face when trying to unify after primaries?

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#### MODIFICATIONS:

For online or hybrid classes:

- Use breakout rooms for candidate research and role-play.
- Assign candidates ahead of class to allow for deeper preparation.
- Role-play via Zoom with screen name as candidate name.
- Collect short written summaries or reflections after the role-play session.

For large classes:

- Assign multiple groups to the same candidate with slight variations (e.g., focus on different policy areas).
- Use a “fishbowl” format where one mixed group role-plays for the whole class while others observe and evaluate.
- Allow students to role-play campaign advisors if the candidate field is limited.

---

#### TIPS:

- Ideal for a campaign season year, otherwise use a previous election with a large primary field (e.g., 2020 Democrats, 2024 Republicans).
- Encourage students to **stay in character** – mimicking tone, slogans, or rhetorical style adds engagement.
- Offer a **template** for notetaking during research (e.g., “My Candidate’s Top 3 Issues”).
- Provide light **structure for Q&A** (e.g., “What makes you the most electable?” or “How will you appeal to independents?”).
- Encourage respectful interaction, emphasizing this is about **understanding**, not endorsing.
- Here are some suggested resources:

#### Candidate Information & Issue Trackers:

- BallotPedia Presidential Candidates
- C-SPAN Debate Archives
- FiveThirtyEight Candidate Coverage
- Pew Research Center – Voter & Party Attitudes
- [RealClearPolitics Candidate Polling & News](#)
- [OpenSecrets – Candidate Fundraising](#)

**Historical Resources:**

- Miller Center Presidential Profiles
- American Presidency Project – Campaign Speeches

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**STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES JIG-SAW**

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This activity will allow you to explore the views and campaign strategies of real-world presidential primary candidates—and to practice persuasive political communication by role-playing your assigned figure.

**Step 1: Candidate Research**

In your first group, you (the whole group) will be assigned a **real or recent presidential primary candidate**. Each member of the group will research your candidate’s **policy platform, campaign strategy, key issues, and personality**. Your goal is to understand the candidate well enough to act as them/on their behalf in the next stage. Be sure to use credible sources such as, but not limited to: the candidate’s official website, debate videos or transcripts, major news outlets (NPR, Politico, CNN, NYT, WSJ, BBC, AP), issue trackers (e.g., BallotPedia, FiveThirtyEight, Pew Research).

**Step 2: Role-Play & Discussion**

You will be **reassigned into new groups**, each with one “candidate” from the earlier groups. In this roundtable, you will **role-play your candidate** by:

- Introducing yourself and your campaign
- Explaining your policy vision and priorities
- Responding to one or two questions from your groupmates (stay in character!)

Your goal is to **teach the others about your candidate** while representing their tone, voice, and platform as accurately as possible.

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**CANDIDATE ROLE-PLAY RESEARCH & ACTIVITY SHEET**

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Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Assigned Candidate Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Party: \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 1: CANDIDATE RESEARCH NOTES**

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Use reliable sources, such as the candidate’s website, debate transcripts, news coverage, or political analysis sites (e.g., BallotPedia, FiveThirtyEight, Pew, C-SPAN). Try to find direct quotes or platform language when possible.

**1. Campaign Slogan / Catchphrase (if applicable):**

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**2. Top Three Policy Priorities:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Economic Plan (e.g., taxes, jobs, inflation, student debt):

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4. Healthcare Plan (e.g., public option, Medicare for All, market-based reforms):

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5. Social & Cultural Issues (e.g., abortion, gun policy, LGBTQ+ rights, education):

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6. Foreign Policy / National Security:

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7. Campaign Style & Persona (tone, speaking style, key phrases):

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8. Strengths of the Campaign:

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9. Weaknesses or Controversies:

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Sources Used:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 2: ROLE-PLAY PREP – TALKING POINTS FOR ROUNDTABLE**

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**Opening Statement (introduce yourself in character):**

*"Hi, I'm [Candidate Name], and I'm running for president because..."*

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**Key Talking Points to Emphasize During Role-Play:**

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- 

**Memorable Quote or Slogan to Share (optional):**

## PLATFORM TO AGENDA: ACTION PLAN

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Evaluate the formal and informal powers of the U.S. President to advance a political agenda.
- Analyze how campaign promises translate (or don't) into governing outcomes.
- Assess the role of institutions, political context, and public expectations in shaping executive power.
- Apply Neustadt's theory of presidential power to real-world agenda-setting challenges.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 12.3. [Organizing to Govern](#)

Chapter 12.4. [The Public Presidency](#)

Chapter 12.5. [Presidential Governance: Direct Presidential Action](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

Time:

- In-class individual or partner work: 20–25 minutes.
- Class discussion: 20–25 minutes.
- Optional: Assign as a take-home written response for more depth.

Class Size:

- Flexible for small or large classes.
- Students can work individually or in pairs.
- In large classes, group similar agenda items and assign groups to report back on themes.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- **Introduction (5–10 minutes):**
  - Begin by asking students: *What does it mean when a presidential candidate promises to do something in their “first 100 days”?* Emphasize that **presidents are often constrained**, not just by the Constitution, but by Congress, courts, bureaucracy, the media, and public opinion.
  - Briefly introduce **Richard Neustadt's theory** that presidential power is not command, but the “power to persuade” and to bargain.
- **Assign students to a (or multiple) president's campaign platform.** A great place to start is Donald Trump's 2016 “First 100 Days” agenda: [Trump's 100-Day Plan - NPR Summary](#) this plan is very clearly outlined and offers an easy activity, however, of course any presidential campaign platform would work.

- Alternatively, consider tasking students with first outlining what they think the campaign platform is based on campaign materials
- **Class Discussion (20–25 minutes):**  
After students have completed their responses (or submitted them), open a discussion around the following questions:
  - Which agenda items were feasible? Which weren't? Why?
  - Did presidential promises depend more on **Congress** or **executive power**?
  - What lessons do we learn about democratic expectations vs. institutional constraints?
  - How do modern media and political polarization influence a president's ability to lead?
  - How persuasive is Neustadt's argument today, especially in an era of executive orders?

#### MODIFICATIONS:

For online or hybrid classes:

- Use discussion forums or Google Docs for students to post their agenda item and responses.
- Host asynchronous or synchronous Zoom discussions using breakout rooms.
- Consider turning this into a blog-style assignment with peer comments.

For large classes:

- Assign agenda items individually, then do a jigsaw share-out.
- Collect short responses digitally before class, then use selected examples to launch discussion.

#### TIPS:

- Consider providing a short Neustadt reading excerpt or summary beforehand to reinforce the theory.
- Encourage students to use real-world evidence (e.g., Trump's wall funding challenges, Biden's student loan relief limits).
- Push students to distinguish between campaign rhetoric and governing reality ("what does that *actually* mean in practice?").
- Have students create a table of "Presidential Promises vs. Results", e.g.:
  - Promise (e.g. Build a wall)
  - Source (if not provided)
  - Type of action required (e.g., Executive Order, Congressional action)
    - Branch required for action
  - Status (if reviewing historical example)
    - implementation date (time from inauguration)
  - Constraints & Opportunities

#### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: PLATFORM TO AGENDA: ACTION PLAN

Presidents often enter office with bold agendas—but how much of that can they actually accomplish? In this activity, you'll evaluate how realistic presidential goals are by analyzing **agenda-setting through the lens of power and politics**.

**Step 1:** Choose **one major agenda item** (or a few smaller items) from a recent president's campaign platform. A great place to start is Donald Trump's 2016 "First 100 Days" agenda:

[Trump's 100-Day Plan – NPR Summary](#)

**Step 2:** Using your textbook, class notes, and other reliable sources, respond to the following questions. Write in short paragraphs (2–3 sentences each), or answer in two developed paragraphs.

- Does the president have the ability to execute this agenda item?
  - Consider whether this requires a law, executive order, bureaucratic change, or constitutional amendment.
- Which specific powers give the president the ability (or inability) to do so?
  - Is this a formal power (Article II) or informal? What obstacles exist?
- What is the *probability* that this agenda could realistically be accomplished?
  - Consider public opinion, partisanship in Congress, interest groups, media, et. cetera.
- What discrepancies do you see between campaign platforms and actual governing agendas?
  - Do candidates set overly ambitious goals—or do voters expect too much of them?
- What would *Richard Neustadt* say about the president's ability to accomplish this agenda?
  - Use his idea of persuasion and bargaining to assess the president's real power.

## CABINET SECRETARY DEMOGRAPHICS

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Consider what it means to have effective representation.
- Learn about typical paths to prominent leadership positions.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 12.3. [Organizing to Govern](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 15-25 minutes.
- Class size: Any.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ask students to form small groups.
2. Ask students to complete the activity.
3. Once completed, invite students to discuss how well their characteristics were met by the cabinet secretaries.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- This could be modified to look at state cabinet secretaries or all manner of elected or appointed officials.

### TIPS:

- Encourage students to think about several key demographic characteristics including expertise in the cabinet department they are leading and personal wealth. Personal wealth is often substantially different from students' experiences.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: CABINET SECRETARY DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Form a small group.
2. In your group, develop a list of characteristics you think are important in a cabinet secretary for you to feel represented by that secretary.
3. Create a table listing each characteristic and several cabinet departments. Research the current officeholders of those departments and complete the table.

## PRESIDENTIAL DAILY DIARY

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Describe different presidential powers.
- Compare and contrast the nature of presidential powers with how frequently those powers are used.
- Discuss informal presidential power and influence.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 12.5. [Presidential Governance: Direct Presidential Action](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 20-30 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Select a presidential daily diary or schedule. Presidential daily diaries (e.g., [George Bush's Diary](#)) are more effective because they are more descriptive. The daily diary on 9/11 is a good choice to see whether and how presidential power was exercised.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ask students to form small groups.
2. Ask students to follow the below instructions.
3. Invite students to list different activities that the president did during the day. List those activities on the board.
4. For each activity, conduct a vote among students as to whether the activity exercised presidential power or not. Describe informal presidential powers in this context.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- Add a discussion of the types of presidential power to either the beginning or end of this activity.

### TIPS:

- Give students adequate time to read through the schedule or diary.
- Ensure that students are aware of who key individuals in that schedule or diary are and why they are involved or being consulted.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: PRESIDENTIAL DAILY DIARY

1. Form a small group.
2. In your group, access the presidential daily diary. Read through the diary as a group. List as many of the different activities that the president engaged in. How

would you characterize the different things that the president did during the day?  
Which of these activities involved exercising presidential power?

# CHAPTER 13: THE COURTS

## ABSTRACT AND CONCRETE REVIEW

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Describe how the U.S. Supreme Court relies on concrete constitutional review.
- Compare and contrast abstract and concrete review.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 13.4. [The Supreme Court](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 25-30 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Select a recent U.S. Supreme Court case that involves higher education or is otherwise relevant to students.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Explain the concept of judicial review and the fundamental differences between abstract and concrete review.
2. Ask students to form groups and follow the instructions to review the case.
3. Create a table on the board and ask groups to contribute items from their comparison table to this table.
4. Discuss advantages and disadvantages of abstract and concrete judicial review.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- This type of activity can be used when considering the role of elected versus appointed judges, the existence or not of separate constitutional courts, or civil versus common law.

### TIPS:

- It is worthwhile to use one extended example of a Supreme Court case for students to analyze throughout the discussion of the Supreme Court.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: ABSTRACT AND CONCRETE REVIEW

1. Form groups and review the basic facts of the case your instructor selected using [Oyez](#) or another, similar resource.
2. Spend ten minutes making a list of the concrete injuries that were claimed as part of the case. Pay particular attention to document the quantities of each injury (money, lives, et. cetera).

3. Using this case, spend ten minutes considering how the case would have been adjudicated using abstract review. Make a table comparing advantages and disadvantages of abstract and concrete review as they apply specifically to the case your instructor chose.

## JURY DUTY SIMULATION

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Describe different decision-making processes involved with being on a jury.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 13.5. [Judicial Decision-Making and Implementation by the Supreme Court](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 50-75 minutes.
- Class size: Any. Works better in smaller classes.
- Select a case for a jury to decide. Generally, somewhat generic civil cases are the best. If you have served on a jury select a generic version of the case you served on if you are comfortable doing so.
- Research jury selection and compensation procedures in your state or particular court.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Describe eligibility for jury duty selection. Describe compensation procedures. Ask how many students are excited about serving on a jury for the given compensation.
2. Present an overview of the jury duty process. Some states and court systems have videos that serve as training for prospective jurors. Otherwise, present a basic overview of the process as it works in the local court system.
3. Describe the basic facts of the case you selected above.
4. Engage in the voir dire process. Ask students to start listing who the plaintiff and defense attorneys should try to exclude from the process. Push students until they have eliminated basically all potential jurors. Then have them consider how jurors are selected given that everyone has some reason for being disqualified. Discuss peremptory challenges.
5. Present a jury verdict sheet for the case you selected. Tell the students that they are now in the jury deliberation room. Though they did not see the trial, they can ask you any questions they might have about the case. Otherwise, emphasize that they need to complete the verdict sheet.
6. Depending on the class, a student may immediately try to take charge of the process. More likely, students will talk over one another or have no form of organization. Let this continue and answer any questions students might have. Distinguish between statements and documents introduced into evidence (which you can describe and “provide” to students), what people said at the trial (which you can summarize, but not explain further), and fact finding (which you cannot engage in).
7. At some point, the students will either get frustrated in the process to the point that they are unwilling to go further, or they will reach a verdict.

8. Discuss the process. Emphasize the difference between trying to find the truth and evaluating the evidence.

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**MODIFICATIONS:**

- If you have a large class, you could split the class into large groups and conduct multiple simulations at once.

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**TIPS:**

- This activity works when you work to engage students in the simulation as much as possible.
- Most students want to find the truth in the case when their role on the jury is to evaluate the evidence as presented. Emphasizing this is helpful.

# CHAPTER 14: STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

## SPEED LIMITS

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Consider the impact of federalism on everyday tasks.
- Explain reasons for delegation to state governments.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 14.1. [State Power and Delegation](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 10 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Find a convenient map of maximum speed limits by country. [Here is an open-source map.](#)

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ask students to view the map and to answer the questions.
2. Invite some students to write their hypotheses on the board. Perform a check of those hypotheses by looking at different countries that do or do not fit the hypothesis.
3. Turn to the idea of devolving speed limit-setting to state or provincial governments in federal countries. There is no clear-cut reason why some federal countries devolve this power and others do not, so discuss possible rationales for this decision. How are state or provincial governments empowered when this power is devolved? What responsibility do they gain?

### MODIFICATIONS:

- Make this an activity with a more American politics only focus by including only a U.S. map of maximum speed limits.
- This can be small group activity where students spend time learning about characteristics in different states or countries that may back up their intuitions about why those states or countries have lower or higher maximum speed limits.

### TIPS:

- Be prepared to help students identify the names of countries with very high or very low maximum speed limits.
- Test students' geography by giving hints about countries with different policies only by pointing to them on the map instead of naming them.

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### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: SPEED LIMITS

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1. Looking at the maximum speed limits map, develop a hypothesis about why maximum speed limits differ between countries.
2. Recall (or look up) a list of federalist countries. Which ones have devolved the power of setting maximum speed limits to the states or provinces? Which ones have a national maximum speed limit? Why?

## SYMBOLS OF AMERICA

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Recognize the diversity in what people think of when they think of America.
- Classify symbols of America into like groups.
- Practice and model student participation.
- Relate symbols of America to the construction of the “American dream.”

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 14.2. [State Political Culture](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 5 to 20 minutes depending on set-up.
- Class size: Up to 80. Works best with 20 to 50 students.
- Slide or handout with images of different American symbols.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Prepare a slide or handout with images of different American symbols. An image search results in many possibilities. Choose symbols from different perspectives: official U.S. symbols, company logos, stock illustrations, et. cetera.
2. Ask each student to think of one symbol of America that they would like to share. Encourage students to be creative and to go beyond the examples on the slide. Provide a few minutes for students to think of their symbol.
3. Ask for a volunteer to share. Describe to the class that each student will share their symbol, starting with the volunteer. Students’ can repeat already mentioned symbols.
4. Go around the room and call on each student. If early in the term and you are still learning student names, this can help you practice.
5. Students should write down and remember common themes from the symbols mentioned.
6. Write common themes on the board based on student feedback. Then, discuss what symbols have in common. Draw out what students describe as the “American dream” and compare it to the symbols and themes identified.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- Students split into small groups to identify symbols. Write symbols on sticky notes and trade sticky notes between groups. Works well for medium or large classes.
- Students search for symbols on the Internet instead of prompting them with some potential symbols on a slide or handout.

### TIPS:

- Always include diversity in symbols displayed to students. Encourage students to think creatively about symbols to get appropriate levels of variety.
- Drawing the American dream is important. Students will likely have a clear idea of what the image should look like. There is an opportunity for some interesting discussion around visual elements depending on student demographics, i.e., is one of the two cars an SUV or are they both pickup trucks? Is the white picket fence surrounding a small suburban lot or a farm?

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STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: SYMBOLS OF AMERICA

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Prepare to name one symbol that you think of when you think of America.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONTACT

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Describe the scope of locally elected officials and their job duties.
- Practice communicating with locally elected officials effectively using best-practice communication strategies.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 14.5. [County and City Government](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 20-25 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Prepare a list of local elected officials in your institution's area. Ensure that this list is as complete as possible.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ask students to form a small group.
2. Provide them with the below instructions.
3. Conduct a two part discussion. First, ask students to talk about the local elected officials they researched and what they do. Then, ask students to describe strategies that they used to make their phone script more effective.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- Add a section onto the end of the activity asking students if they would actually deliver the phone script and, if not, why not.
- Prior to starting the activity or in the middle of the activity, add a discussion of what good communication strategies are. Students may not know, for example, why calling on the phone is usually the most effective communication method or how to select the best city councilperson to contact when there are many options.

### TIPS:

- Encourage students to research and write the phone script about positions that they have not heard of before or did not know were elected (e.g., clerk, judges, assessor, tax collector, treasurer, coroner, constable, water conservation district member, et. cetera). This can turn into a good lesson about the scope of elected positions in the United States and whether these positions should be elected or not.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONTACT

1. Form a small group.

2. In your group, select one elected local government position from the list provided.
3. For your selected position, research the current officeholder. Who are they? What are their duties? How would you contact them? What would you contact them about?
4. For your select position, choose an issue you think is appropriate to contact this individual about.
5. Work with your group to write a phone script to the official using strategies that you think will increase their likelihood of responding to you. Your phone script should be about a paragraph long.
6. Discuss the strategies you used to make the phone script effective.

# CHAPTER 15: THE BUREAUCRACY

## ADMISSIONS HIRING

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understand different types of representation.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 15.2. [Toward a Merit-Based Civil Service](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 15-25 minutes.
- Class size: Any.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ask students to form groups.
2. Provide time for students to list the ten admissions recruiters.
3. Call on each group to give one of their ten recruiter descriptions and fill out the ten spaces on the board.
4. Introduce the definitions for descriptive, substantive, and symbolic representation.
5. Based on these definitions, ask students to identify which spots were assigned to each form of representation.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- This activity pairs well with an overview of who bureaucrats are and how most state and local bureaucrats are K-12 school or university employees.

### TIPS:

- Most spots will be filled by descriptive representatives. Help students convert a descriptive representative into a substantive one to illustrate the difference. Students will rarely mention symbolic representation. A good symbolic representative at most institutions is a student from a far away state. Hiring that student as an admissions recruiter will not recruit more students from that state, but symbolizes the fact that all kinds of students from all over want to come to the institution.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: ADMISSIONS HIRING

1. Form a small group.

- 
2. In your group, prepare to hire ten admissions recruiters to work at the institution. Write a description of the characteristics of each person you would hire for each of the ten spots. The description should be one or more characteristics of the person.

## BUREAUCRATIC FALLACIES SKITS

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze the structure and function of the federal bureaucracy in the United States.
- Identify and explain common criticisms of bureaucracy, including duplication, waste, conflict, imperialism, and red tape.
- Apply conceptual knowledge to real-world examples through collaborative, creative expression.
- Practice public speaking, teamwork, and critical thinking skills in a group setting.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 15.3. [Understanding Bureaucracies and their Types](#)

Chapter 15.4. [Controlling the Bureaucracy](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: ~30 minutes total.
  - 2–3 minutes for forming groups and assigning fallacies.
  - 15 minutes for discussion and sketch preparation.
  - 1–2 minutes per group for performing the sketch.
  - 5 minutes for debrief and wrap-up discussion.
- Class size:
  - Ideal: 20–30 students.
  - Divide evenly into 5 groups (1 per fallacy).
  - For larger classes: form subgroups to perform simultaneously or rotate performances.
  - For smaller classes: allow pairs or use written/recorded skits instead.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Introduction (2–3 minutes):**  
Begin by briefly reviewing the five common bureaucratic fallacies: **Duplication, Waste, Conflict, Imperialism, and Red Tape** (15.5). Define each one with a short example.
2. **Group Formation:**  
Assign or allow students to form **5 groups**, one per fallacy. Assign each group a fallacy or let them draw from slips of paper to ensure randomness.
3. **Read Task Instructions** (see below)
4. **Preparation (15 minutes):**  
Encourage groups to brainstorm quickly, assign roles, and rehearse at least once.

Circulate among groups to answer questions and ensure understanding.

**5. Performance (5–10 minutes):**

Have each group perform their sketch. Optionally, allow brief (1-minute) peer or instructor feedback after each.

**6. Wrap-Up Discussion (5 minutes):**

Lead a reflection discussion:

- Which fallacy seemed most familiar or realistic?
- How do these fallacies affect public trust in government?
- What might be some reforms to address these issues?

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**MODIFICATIONS:**

- Consider your classroom space prior to the activity, ensuring you have enough space for students to move around. If there is not enough space for this activity, consider doing drawn cartoons or storytelling a scenario.

For online and hybrid classes:

- Have students meet in breakout rooms to prepare a 1–2 minute video sketch or live performance over Zoom.
- Use shared documents for scripting and coordination.
- Videos can be uploaded to the LMS or shared in class for discussion.

For very large classes:

- Assign **multiple groups per fallacy** and select 1–2 representative groups to perform.
- Alternatively, have groups submit video sketches asynchronously, then vote on the most effective ones.

For very small classes:

- Allow individual or pair performances.
- Use discussion-based analysis of case studies if sketches aren't feasible.

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**TIPS:**

- Remind students that the goal is **conceptual clarity**, not theatrical perfection.
- Encourage minimal props if available (folders, red tape, multiple "agencies").
- Emphasize participation and creativity over performance quality.
- Offer a brief **rubric** for clarity, accuracy, creativity, and group participation.
- Optionally, award small incentives (extra credit, "best sketch" vote) to increase engagement.

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**STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: BUREAUCRATIC FALLACIES SKETCHES**

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Your group will have 15 minutes to create a **brief sketch (1–2 minutes)** that creatively illustrates your assigned bureaucratic fallacy: **Duplication, Waste, Conflict, Imperialism, or Red Tape.**

**Your sketch must:**

- Clearly depict the fallacy in a way your classmates can understand.
- Involve **every member** of your group in the performance.
- Be performed **live** and stay under 2 minutes.

Consider using humor, exaggeration, or real-world references to make your skit memorable and effective.

# CHAPTER 16: DOMESTIC POLICY

## MULTIPLE POLICY ARENAS

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Identify key aspects of different policy arenas.
- Compare and contrast policy approaches using different policy arenas.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 16.3. [Policy Arenas](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 30-40 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Select a public policy issue of interest to the class. Good options include whatever local issues are in the news, as students may have some familiarity or personal experience with these issues.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ask students to complete the activity, checking in with each group as they transition between researching the local policy issue and writing their pieces of legislation.
2. Once students have written the titles of their pieces of legislation on the board, ask them to see if the titles suggest common themes that were addressed across policy arenas. For some legislation, groups may need to briefly describe the contents of the legislation.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- If the classroom does not have a board of sufficient size to write the legislation titles, students can share them in a jigsaw or to the entire class.

### TIPS:

- The book lists a small number of policy arenas. Providing a list may help students better understand different types of policy.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: MULTIPLE POLICY ARENAS

1. Form a small group.
2. Listen to the policy issue described by your instructor. Write down the details provided.

3. In your group, decide on questions related to background information that you need to know about the issue before proceeding. Spend five minutes writing down your questions.
4. Split up into pairs and take ten minutes to research the answers to your questions using local news websites, local government websites, and other resources.
5. In your group, visit the list of [policy areas](#). Choose three or four policy areas of interest and read the description of each area.
6. Now, make up the title and summary of a piece of legislation (local ordinance or state bill) that addresses the policy area as it applies to the policy issue. Take about 15 minutes to create these pieces of legislation.
7. Choose your favorite title and write it on the board. Be prepared to share.

## ORGANIZATION ISSUE SOLUTIONS

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Practice the basic policymaking process.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 16.4. [Policymakers](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: Varied. Can be a 10-15 minute activity (as written here) or extended to a semester-long project.
- Class size: Any.
- Select a well-known local organization.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. As a class, brainstorm issues that organization faces. Select one issue of interest to the class.
2. Ask students to form pairs to complete the activity.
3. Discuss the process of demonstrating that an issue is a problem and the range of possible solutions that do and do not involve government intervention.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- The activity can be extended in many ways. One is to invite the community partner to class to discuss the issue or for the class to visit the community partner.
- Students could engage in a long-term project studying the community partner and proposing solutions to the issue (or issues that they identify) based on research that they conduct.

### TIPS:

- This activity can be completed in this short timeframe if the instructor chooses a familiar organization. If there are not familiar organizations, provide time for students to research the selected organization in their pairs.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: ORGANIZATION ISSUE SOLUTIONS

1. Form pairs.
2. In your group, write down the organization and the issue it faces. Brainstorm how you can demonstrate the extent to which the issue is a problem. What would you need to measure and why?
3. List possible solutions to the issue. For each solution, list what would be required for the solution to be adopted. Be sure to list the actors involved and to include at least one solution that requires government involvement.



## UNIVERSITY SPENDING

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Describe basic budgeting techniques and how institutions balance revenue and expenses.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 16.5. [Budgeting and Tax Policy](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 25-30 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Access your university's 990 using the [ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer](#).

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Provide some basic instructions to students about how to view the full 990 filing and sections to analyze.
2. Give students 15-20 minutes to complete their review of the university's 990.
3. Discuss findings as a group. Provide any institutional knowledge you have regarding reasons for different financial outlooks in a given year (e.g., major property sale or endowment draw).

### MODIFICATIONS:

- If you have access to your university's budget, this can be used in place of the 990, and it can provide additional details not found in the 990.
- If your university has a student newspaper that reports on budget issues, consider extending the activity to include students setting expectations for what university spending will look like before they examine the 990. If not, you can still complete this brainstorming session based on students' consensus about university spending.
- To extend the activity further, consider discussing the university's reliance on state and federal funding and grants and how these revenue streams are integrated into spending. Similarly, discuss endowment spending and how it can work.

### TIPS:

- Be sure you understand your university's financial picture ahead of time and can provide more details on different categories of revenue and spending.

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: UNIVERSITY SPENDING

1. Form a small group.

2. In your group, visit the [ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer](#) and find the most recent 990 report for your university.
3. Following any specific guidance from your instructor, review the report. Make a spreadsheet as a group with four columns: item name, amount (positive for revenue, negative for expense), whether the amount is revenue or an expense, and a description. If possible, breakdown major revenue and expense categories into sub-categories based on the report.
4. Using the information you found, explain how the university earns revenue each year.
5. Compare your analysis for the most recent year to at least one previous year. What is similar or different about the report in the previous year. Why?

# CHAPTER 17: FOREIGN POLICY

## UN RESOLUTION WRITING

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Describe how international organizations like the United Nations influence and are influenced by U.S. foreign policy.

### COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 17.1. [Defining Foreign Policy](#)

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 25-35 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Choose a foreign policy topic that you have been discussing during the course and about which students have some baseline level of knowledge.

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Form groups of students with each group representing the United States.
2. Ask students to complete the resolution writing instructions. Provide 15-20 minutes for students to draft a resolution in their groups.
3. Each group should submit their resolutions so that they can be displayed on the projector. Groups should read the resolutions to the class while they are displayed.
4. Discuss whether a given resolution is written in a way that represents current U.S. foreign policy interests. Vote on whether the resolution does represent these interests.
5. For resolutions that the class decides represent current U.S. foreign policy interests, discuss the extent to which the United Nations has the power to act on the components of the resolution and whether the resolution would address the foreign policy problem.

### MODIFICATIONS:

- This activity focuses only on UN resolution writing, but it can be extended to simulate the General Assembly or Security Council.
- This activity is more interesting if groups write resolutions representing different country delegations, but students need to have been taught some existing country knowledge during the course for this to work.

- While this shorter version of resolution writing establishes a single issue for which each group writes a resolution, a longer version could include groups writing different resolutions.

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#### TIPS:

- Prepare a draft resolution template to shorten time students spend working with the UN drafting resolutions website. Working with the website is useful, but may exceed the desired activity time.

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#### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: UN RESOLUTION WRITING

1. Form a group.
2. Brainstorm potential resolutions that the United States would introduce to address the issue described by your instructor.
3. Visit the [United Nations Drafting Resolutions](#) website. Create a document on a computer that outlines the major components of a draft resolution.
4. Write the resolution, paying particular attention to the key words and phrases to begin preambular and operative paragraphs. Spend about 15 minutes writing your resolution.
5. Submit your resolution electronically to your instructor, and be prepared to present.

# WMD

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## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Describe how intelligence can be used to inform decision-making.
- Explain how foreign policy actors have different roles and objectives.

## COURSE CONTENT LINK:

Chapter 17.3. [Institutional Relations in Foreign Policy](#)

## REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: 20-30 minutes.
- Class size: Any.
- Choose a relevant clip that describes disagreement from different foreign policy actors on key decisions. A particularly relevant example is the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. [60 Minutes produced a useful report.](#)

## FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Select portions of the clip that illustrate different perspectives from foreign policy actors. Much of the aforementioned clip focuses on these perspectives.
2. Show the clip to the class. Ask students to write down the name and title of each actor and their assessment of the situation.
3. Following the clip, ask students to add to their notes and to assess the similarity between the assessments from each actor.
4. Discuss how different foreign policy actors have different roles and the relationship between these roles and the kinds of assessments they are likely to produce.

## MODIFICATIONS:

- Choose any relevant news story that describes different foreign policy assessments from different institutional actors.
- An extended version of this activity can include splitting students into groups and additional group research on institutional actors.

## TIPS:

- Depending on the news story chosen, be sure to introduce who the key actors are, as students are unlikely to know individuals' names or responsibilities.

## STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: WMD

1. As you watch the clip, write down the name and title of each actor and their assessment of the situation.
2. Following the clip, add to your notes and to assess the similarity between the assessments from each actor.

3. Be prepared to discuss how different foreign policy actors have different roles and the relationship between these roles and the kinds of assessments they are likely to produce.

# CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT IDEAS

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Develop civic agency and public problem-solving skills through hands-on, community-engaged learning.
- Apply step-by-step advocacy skills using *America: The Owner's Manual* as a guide.
- Demonstrate critical thinking, teamwork, and real-world policy engagement.
- Analyze institutional processes, stakeholder dynamics, and community impact through direct experience.
- Practice professional project planning, communication, and public presentation.

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Semester-long project
- A few full class periods with some occasional check-ins

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

#### **Introduce the Project (Class Week 2–3):**

- Explain that this is a **semester-long, team-based service learning project** with an emphasis on **applied civic engagement**.
- Frame the project as an opportunity to build both **practical advocacy skills** and **critical academic reflection**.
- Emphasize that *America: The Owner's Manual* is their guidebook, not a supplementary reading.

#### *Sample Timeline*

<b>Week</b>	<b>Task</b>
2–3	Project introduced; groups formed; brainstorming; community partners identified
4–5	Project Plans drafted; tasks and roles assigned; AMOM Ch. 2–3 discussed
6–10	Project execution: outreach, development, media, etc.

11-13	Refinement, community impact, project deliverables
14	Project evaluation; presentation prep
15	(Poster) Presentations

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**MODIFICATIONS:**

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- This can also be done as individual activities

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**TIPS:**

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- Strongly recommend inviting community group leaders to speak with the class in the first week or two
- Strongly recommend requiring or encouraging students to work with existing community partners, if you can build those relationship beforehand to allow students to have a contact to work with that's even better
  - When combining these two points, it can allow for group building and matching very naturally
- Strongly recommend allowing students to choose their own project adventure as this tends to produce better results due to greater intrinsic motivation. You want to avoid "required volunteering," see [Marin Hellwege in JPSE \(2019\)](#) for more details on this project
- **Check-in weekly** with groups: ensure tasks are distributed fairly and milestones are met.
  - This can be part of the assignment
- Use AMOM as a **grading anchor**—did they use strategies for identifying stakeholders, building coalitions, media outreach, and evaluation?
- Encourage **reflection and connection** to political science concepts: legitimacy, representation, accountability, institutional access, etc.
- **Mediate group conflict** only when necessary; encourage peer-led resolution (as outlined).
- Offer **resources and connections** for community partnerships if needed.

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## STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

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*This is a service learning project, as such I expect you to learn from your experience and work to critically assess your experiences in conjunction with the class material; however, it also means that I expect that you, as the semester progresses, will be able to have critical, creative, and significant ideas which can have a genuine impact on your community partner, the policy issue you've selected, your audience, your community, and yourself.*

### Major Engagement Activity

*All must:*

1. Work with a community partner on a specific goal. You may work with any of the community leaders who spoke to class, but this is not necessary. There are hundreds of groups that work in the local community and in the state that you are likely to be able to work with over the course of the semester. You are not required to meet with the group in person, although this might have several benefits.
2. Make specific, deliberate, and significant use of *America: the Owner's Manual* for both planning and evaluation. This means reading the book in advance and taking the steps prescribed, *not* doing a project and then seeing how the book might fit what you did.
3. Create some *deliverable*. You must actually *\*do\** something, create some solution for your problem. It can be an event, a piece of legislation, a proclamation, a service campaign, or anything else or all of the above. BE CREATIVE!
4. Complete all of the required pieces of the assignment AS A TEAM. You must all work together on this project and complete all of the assignments together. To this end, you should complete the required writing assignments directly in this Google Doc, as it shows who entered the information (i.e. don't have one student copy and paste in because then it looks like that person did all of the work).

*Your choice:*

You have a choice in what your goal/solution will look like. Your choice should be extensive to fulfill the worth of one quarter of your semester grade, but do-able within the semester. Some great ideas include: public information campaign, writing draft legislation, a public information event, a community involvement event, new community programming, work as a research assistant or other form of legislative assistant for a public servant, a significant research project, a combination of multiple things (especially for groups!), or some other creative solution to solve your public policy dilemma to the extent you can in one semester.

*To consider:*

1. The *more significant your impact is* and the *more involved your engagement is* the higher your score potential is- assuming you do well on all steps of the project. You can "play it safe" with a smaller project that is done with excellence (such as a prolonged volunteering), but you can get really creative and score high marks for your innovativeness and engagement.
2. Please note that I do not control the group, but rather expect you to manage the group, this means that if you are not pulling your weight, or conversely not considering the worth of others in your group, the group may "fire" you at any time to leave you to work on an individual project.

### Project Plan

You are required to write a Project Plan. **You should write your plan using the *Owner's Manual*** (The Chapter Checklists for action are listed below, but you are expected to show in your Project Plan and in your Presentation that you have read and applied the book's suggestions). Although this will be presented as one document, you will have two separate due dates for the document.

Your Project Plan should have a proper Title Page and should include *at least* the following headers or items:

- Team members & assignments
- Goals (SMART- Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timed)
- Tasks
- Timeline
- Community Partner [Stakeholders] (identification and description)
- Task assignments
- Outreach materials
- Budget

### **Consider the following tasks/positions**

*(It's a great idea to ROTATE these tasks/ positions)*

**Organizer/ Scheduler:** The Organizers primary job is to keep everyone on task, including keeping a calendar of when events and appointments will happen.

**Communications Director:** The Communications director is the point of communication with our community partners, including for emails and meetings. This person is not solely responsible for all meetings, and certainly should not make decisions without the rest of the group, but having one communications director will facilitate communication with and for our community partners.

**Media Outreach/ Public Affairs:** The main responsibility of the media outreach team is to coordinate any media campaigns to raise awareness of our events. This would include printing flyers, setting up and maintaining social media presence. It is the Public Affairs team responsibility to gauge public interest and to coordinate with local government. This team will be expected to research how to best coordinate this event in the public's interest and ensure the (legal) feasibility in accordance with local government.

**Fundraising & Accounting:** This is the money team. This team is responsible for ensuring the financial feasibility of the project. Do we need money for flyers? For permits? For entertainment? Etc....

**Evaluation & Presentation:** It is the responsibility of the Evaluation & Presentation team to gauge the quality of the event and be the main coordinators for the final presentation.

### **Presentation**

You will orally & visually present the process and outcomes of the project at the *Public Service Colloquium* (Fall) or the *IDEAFest* (Spring). The presentation should summarize steps taken (using *The Owner's Manual*), deliverables presented, and an assessment of the project. This is a serious public presentation, to which other students, department faculty, and community members will be invited. You are expected to behave and dress professionally and present a visually and orally appealing and convincing presentation. There may be opportunities for funding for larger, laminated, conference style- posters. Please see me if this is of interest to you. Presentation Requirements below.

### **Helpful resources:**

*Policy Report Instructions:* (template created from this site) [http://www.pep-net.org/sites/pep-net.org/files/typo3doc/pdf/CBMS\\_country\\_proj\\_profiles/Philippines/CBMS\\_forms/Guidelines\\_for\\_Writing\\_a\\_Policy\\_Brief.pdf](http://www.pep-net.org/sites/pep-net.org/files/typo3doc/pdf/CBMS_country_proj_profiles/Philippines/CBMS_forms/Guidelines_for_Writing_a_Policy_Brief.pdf) (YES- YOU CAN FIND REAL EXAMPLES HERE)

Great examples of service: <https://www.everyday-democracy.org/news/civic-engagement-three-examples-where-citizens-had-say>

Writing legislation: <http://sdlegislature.gov/docs/referencematerials/draftingmanual.pdf>

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### PRESENTATION REQUIREMENTS

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For the Civic Engagement project, you will have the opportunity to present your accomplishments to your classmates, faculty, students, and community members (please consider inviting community members who were part of your project). Your poster presentation should be brief (3-6 mins) long to allow for Q&A / conversation at the end.

You should use the checklist below as a way to guide your presentation.

#### Team Project Title & Brief Description

- Members
- Please describe the team goals and team accomplishments
- Team member responsibilities and accomplishments
- What was your motivation for choosing this project? (MUST discuss Owner's Manual)
- Describe the problem are you solving with this civic engagement project
- What was your plan for project management and planning? (MUST discuss Owner's Manual)
- Describe your activity/activities and relate to the idea of civic engagement (ideally with visuals)
- Discuss your evaluation of whether your activity have an impact on the community (MUST include discussion of Owner's Manual)
- What were some of your limitations (MUST include discussion of Owner's Manual)

#### Other must have's:

- Visual element (pictures!)
- Organization
- Attention getting presentation
- Appropriate use of speakers/presenters
- Delivery is poised, controlled, smooth, clear and audible (evidence of practice)
- Visual aid is well prepared, informative, effective and not distracting

## COMMUNITY ENGAGED PROJECT

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Describe how key concepts in political science relate to community issues.
- Learn more about the community where the university is located and how to get involved in that community.
- See how initiative taking and research can combine to make meaningful changes to the community.

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### REQUIREMENTS:

- Time: Five 50-minute class periods plus six to ten weeks to complete the project.
- Class size: At least 5 students. The project can work with the entire class in one group, or it can scale to any size class.

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### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- Devote at least five 50-minute class periods to the project including one class for selecting groups, one class for preparing the project proposal, two classes for working on the project, and one class for project presentations.
- During the class where groups are selected, describe the project and require students to choose one of the project options.
- Provide short check-in times for groups to talk between class periods devoted to the project.

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### MODIFICATIONS:

- Project categories can be easily modified based on your interests and circumstances.
- The project poster session can be open to others to attend, though doing so would require additional class time to prepare and practice poster presentations.

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### TIPS:

- Be clear about prohibiting individual work; this is a group project.
- Encourage students to form groups where they are likely to succeed.
- Forming larger groups helps to maintain an adequate group size. Groups must have at least three remaining members to adequately complete the work, so adjust initial group size based on historical withdraw rates for the course.
- Describe how standards for the improving the university project are higher because access to policymakers is easier.
- Require students to get their project proposals approved before contacting anyone or starting any work on the project. Direct project proposals to ensure that organizations or individuals are not subject to multiple projects at one time or within the last few years.

- Focus on growing existing partnerships within the university and between the university and community partners. If established channels exist, direct students to reach out through them.

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### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS: COMMUNITY ENGAGED PROJECT

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Theories and concepts from political science play out in real ways in local communities. Local political issues and public policy problems often have the most impact on people's lives, meaning that understanding the connection between political science these local issues is of utmost importance. We will work on a community engaged project to help you make this connection and to better understand the needs of the community and how you might contribute.

You will work in groups to implement a community engaged project during the semester. While your group will have a lot of flexibility in determining how you will design and implement your project, your group should choose one project topic from the list below. I have developed these project topics for us to have fruitful discussions about issues in American politics from different perspectives across groups and to ensure that groups do not all work on the same topic and overwhelm local organizations and contacts who are experts on these topics.

After selecting a topic, your group will develop a short project proposal that details how you will implement your project. I will provide feedback on the project proposal. You will then have time to implement the project and to prepare documents and a poster discussing your results.

#### Project Topics:

1. Needs assessment: Choose a public policy issue that your group cares about. Identify community organizations nearby working on this issue. Research these community organizations to find out how they operate, what their programs are, and how university students might get involved in their organizations. Select one organization of particular interest and reach out to the organization (reach out only after your project proposal is approved). Visit the organization and meet with organization staff to talk about their needs. As a group, take one small action that helps to support the organization's needs (i.e., share posts on social media, tell friends about the organization, et. cetera). Then, complete the documents section, poster, and self/peer evaluation.
2. Community contact: Choose a public policy issue that your group cares about. Identify an appropriate elected official to contact to understand their views on this issue. Research the issue and the elected official's views. Contact the elected official (only after your project proposal is approved) and ask them about their views on this issue. As a group, take one small action that supports your group's position on the issue (i.e., share your views with the elected official, talk about the

issue with others to spread awareness, et. cetera). Then, complete the documents section, poster, and self/peer evaluation.

3. Improving the university: Identify a potential problem on campus that your group thinks should be resolved. The potential problem cannot be lack of parking because of the frequency with which this potential problem has already been investigated. Conduct research to show that your potential problem indeed exists and develop a plan to determine a change that could improve the problem. Find out about the process for getting the change implemented, including determining key stakeholders other than the President (she is a stakeholder in every campus issue!). Contact one stakeholder (only after your project proposal is approved) and meet with them to ask them about this issue. As a group, take one small action that helps to address your issue (i.e., report a specific problem to facilities, go to a student government meeting and raise the issue, et. cetera). Then, complete the documents section, poster, and self/peer evaluation.
4. Community walk: Choose a city, town, or village close by of interest to your group and describe why you chose this community. Research what issues people in the community might care about. Then, visit the community and both walk and drive through as much of the community as possible. Record potential issues or problems that you see and explain why what you observe constitutes an issue or problem. As a group, take one small action to address the problem (i.e., report a specific problem to the city government, post about the problem on social media, talk to a club about the problem, et. cetera). Then, complete the documents section, poster, and self/peer evaluation.

#### Timeline:

1. At the appointed time during class, form a group of between 4 and 5 members of the course. Think carefully about with whom you want to work.
2. Project Proposal: Select a project topic and develop a project proposal describing the project your group plans to implement related to this project topic. The project proposal should include the following components and be at least 750 words.
  1. Interest: Why is your group interested in this project topic?
  2. Project goals: Develop a goal that you hope to achieve as a result of this project. What would you like to know about your topic? Ensure that the goal is specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound.
  3. Plan: Create a step-by-step plan to complete your project. This plan should have a list of tasks with each task assigned to a group member. The plan should list the person you are planning to interview and the small action your group is planning to take. The plan should include how your group will complete both the documents and the poster.
  4. Discussion: How does your project relate to American politics? Your group should describe how your project reflects theories and ideas we are

discussing in the course. Specifically mention readings and concepts from class.

3. Turn in the project proposal. Your group cannot complete the project without turning in a project proposal. Only one group member needs to submit your proposal.
4. Implement the project proposal.
5. Poster, Documents, and Self/Peer Evaluation:

Documents: Each project requires submitting a document with four parts described below. This document must be wholly different from the text you put on your poster. The ideas can be similar, but the audience for the poster is students in the class and the audience for your document is someone outside of our class. Submit one document per group to Brightspace.

Your documents section should contain four parts:

1. Policy Memo (minimum 1,500 words): A policy memo is an analytical form of writing that presents information clearly to policymakers. Your policy memo should be crafted to present evidence on your project topic to stakeholders whom you have identified. The memo must present a policy recommendation, provide evidence to support your policy recommendation, and be written in a clear, concise, and comprehensive format. The evidence that your memo will present includes the six political science journal articles you will find and cite, other background research you conduct and information you collect and the following details, which depend on your project topic:
  - a. Needs Assessment: Describe the organization's needs and how you identified those needs. Talk about the representative from the organization that you contacted and what that representative said. Explicitly describe how TLU students could best become involved with that organization. Describe the small action that your group took.
  - b. Community Contact: Describe the elected official you chose to contact and why they were chosen. Discuss what that elected official said about the issue. Describe the small action that your group took.
  - c. Improving TLU: Describe the TLU employee you chose to contact and why they were chosen. Discuss what that person said about the issue. Describe the small action that your group took.
  - d. Community Walk: Describe the route you took to walk around the community you chose. Discuss how you identified public policy problems during the community walk. Describe the small action that your group took.

Your policy memo must be formatted to look like an actual policy memo. This means that it needs to be written using an appropriate structure and be easy for a policymaker to read quickly. This includes having an appropriate header and using strategies to make important parts of the text stand out. [Here is a potential resource for developing a policy memo.](#)

2. References: List at least six political science journal articles that you cite in your policy memo to back up your argument. Citations must be in APSA style. In looking for articles, consider the broader themes of your policy memo. For example, if your memo is about improving infrastructure, you could cite related literature on how local government allocates funding or if people think of infrastructure as a policy priority.
3. Description (minimum 500 words): Describe the research you did on how to write a policy memo and the ways in which you wrote your policy memo to make it convincing.
4. Importance (minimum 500 words): Describe how your policy memo and broader project relate to the three main themes in American politics: power, representation, and engagement. In this description, you should reference specific theories, concepts, ideas, and/or activities from class.

Poster: Create a poster of any size using any medium. If your group wants the chance to win the “best poster” prize of your poster hanging on my office door next semester, it must be a 22x28 paper poster (not foam or a tri-fold). **Submit one poster (or a photograph of it) per group to the LMS and bring the poster to class.** All group members should be prepared to discuss the poster. The poster should include the following elements, written in enough detail that someone can understand the poster just by reading it.

1. Topic description: Describe why you chose your topic and how you decided to take the general topic description and narrow it down.
2. Project goals: Discuss your project goals and whether you met your goals.
3. Plan: Briefly describe your project plan, focusing on why you chose to structure your project in this way. Draw on theories and concepts from class.
4. Interview: Describe the interview you conducted in some detail.
5. Impact evaluation: Describe the small action your group took. Describe what you learned about community needs from this project. What could people potentially do in the future to address these needs?
6. Reflection: Describe your experience conducting the project. Reflect on the limitations of the project and the overall impact that your project had.
7. Discussion: Provide specific connections between the results of your project and concepts from this course. Mention connections to readings, themes, and concepts from class.
8. Visuals: Use pictures, graphics, flowcharts, and other visual aids to help describe parts of your project.