

The Ideas

Constitutional Democracy	American Political Beliefs	Citizen Participation	Interaction Among Branches	Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
<p>...How have theory, conflict, and compromise influenced the US Constitutional System?</p> <p>...How have constitutional and political developments affected public policy today?</p>	<p>...How are American political beliefs formed and how do they evolve over time?</p> <p>...How do political ideology and core values influence government policy making?</p>	<p>...How have changes in technology influenced political communication and behavior?</p> <p>...Why do levels of participation and influence in politics vary?</p> <p>...How effective are the various methods of political participation in shaping public policies?</p>	<p>...How do the Branches of the national government compete and cooperate in order to govern?</p> <p>...To what extent has the power of each branch changed over time?</p>	<p>...To what extent do the US Constitution and amendments protect against undue government infringement on essential liberties and from offensive discrimination?</p> <p>...How have Supreme Court rulings defined civil liberties and civil rights?</p>

Big Idea #1: Constitutional Democracy

...What are basic premises of the following theories of democracy? (Participatory, elite, pluralist)

...In what ways did the debate between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists represent the tensions between these theories? How did the Framers address these theories in our Constitution?

...What evidence can you point to illustrating the Framers' fear of participatory democracy in our system of government as outlined in 1787?

...How did Enlightenment ideas about politics and government impact US foundational documents?

...What are the basic comparisons between the Federalist and Anti-Federalist views on central government and democracy?

...Explain the major weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation

...How did constitutional compromises respond to political, economic, and regional divisions?

...How does the ratification debate foreshadow the ongoing philosophical disagreements about democracy and governmental power?

...What is the relationship between separation of powers and checks and balances as featured in the Constitution? What are the consequences of this system?

...What is the purpose of checks and balances?

...What are the basic tenets of Dual Federalism, Cooperative Federalism, and New Federalism/Devolution?

...How has the balance of power between state and national governments been interpreted over time? (cases? Clauses?)

...What are the roots of the tensions over the scope of central power within our federal structure?

Big Idea #2...American Political Beliefs

...How do the different applications and interpretations of political values like individualism, equality of opportunity, rule of law, and limited government define the relationship between citizens and government and citizens with each other?

...How does the structure of the federal system (represented by separation of powers, checks and balances, and bicameralism) define the relationship between citizens and government?

...How do the following factors influence political socialization?

...family, school, peers and social environments ...relative importance of political events on individual attitudes

...To what extent do the principles of freedom and individualism as part of our political culture influence public policy formation? Provide examples.

...How does the debate over the social safety net reflect the tension between individual liberty and the use of government to ensure public order and economic stability?

...How do the various political ideologies vary on the role of government in regulating the marketplace?

...Liberal ideological positions and policies? ...Conservative ideological positions and policies?

...What are the differences between activist and laissez-faire perspectives on regulating the economy and the role of the government in the marketplace?

...In what ways do political ideologies vary with regard to the role of government in addressing social inequalities and the conduct of individuals in their private lives?

...How do political ideologies vary on the role of the US in world affairs? What are the theories of moral idealism and political realism?

...How have fluctuations in political ideology influenced trends in public policy? Namely the Great Society and modern liberalism and New Federalism/devolution and the transferring of powers from national to state and local governments.

Big Idea #3 ... Citizen Participation

...How does public opinion impact elections and how are policy debates affected by scientific polling methods? (i.e. sampling error, type and format of questions, identification of respondents)

...To what extent does public opinion affect public policy debates? To what extent does the media measuring and reporting on public opinion affect the policy debate?

...How does the media play a role in providing citizens with political information? To what extent does media bias, if it exists, play a role?

...What is the impact of the customization of news (from such sources as blogs, ideologically-oriented programming, and other interactive platforms) on the political process and citizen participation?

...In what ways does the fact that there are more media choices and uncertainty over the credibility of news sources/information have consequences for the nature of democratic debate, level of political knowledge, and openness to other viewpoints among the citizens?

...How do political parties impact the electorate and encourage participation?

...To what extent do political parties and political identities affect the government decision making process, committee and party leadership within the legislature?

...Why has the candidate-centered campaign and campaign organizations weakened the role of the party in the political process?

...How have political parties changed and adapted to the new communication platforms, campaign finance laws, and regional realignments?

...What are the structural and cultural barriers to third party and independent candidate success?

...In what ways do interest groups influence elections and policy making? What are the benefits and potential problems of interest groups in our system?

...Explain historical examples of social movements and protest politics and their impact on policies. (i.e. Women's movement after the 15th Amendment was ratified, Pro-Life movement after *Roe v. Wade*, Civil Rights movement in reaction to Jim Crow laws, Tea Party movement)

...What are concrete examples of the power of iron triangles and issue networks in the policy making process?

...What are the voting rights protections in the Constitution and in legislation?

...What are the factors that influence voter choices?

...How does US voter turnout compare with other democracies? Why is this the case?

...Explain the following models of voting behavior...

...rational choice ...retrospective voting ...Prospective voting ...Party-line voting

...What are the components in US Federal elections (Open/closed primaries, Caucuses, Party conventions, general elections)

...What are the benefits and drawbacks of candidate-centered campaigns as seen in the 21st century?

...How do the following cases and pieces of legislation affect the campaign financing process?

...*Buckley v. Valeo* ...Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (McCain-Feingold)

...*Citizens United v. FEC*

...*Does the Electoral College facilitate or impede democracy?*

Big Idea 4 – Interaction among Branches...

...What are the expressed powers of Congress? What is listed in Article 1, Secs. 7 and 8?

...What role does the budget resolution process play in the interaction among the branches? What are the controversies associated with this?

...How do the Senate and House of Representatives differ in the lawmaking process? How are they similar?

...How does chamber size and constituencies frame the debate?

...What role do coalitions play? How are they different in the two houses?

...How do chamber-specific rules influence the policy-making process?

...What role do earmarks, pork barrel legislation, and logrolling affect both chambers?

...How do the following undermine the democratic effectiveness and original intended functions of Congress?

...ideological divisions; Gerrymandering; less competitive districts in the House; trustee-delegate-politico accountability

...In what ways does Congress use its oversight power to ensure that executive agencies implement legislation as Congress intended?

...What are the formal and informal powers of the President? How have they been enhanced beyond its constitutional powers?

...What role do bargaining/persuasion, executive orders, signing statements, veto/pocket veto, and treaties and executive agreements play?

...How does the president's domestic and foreign affairs agenda as carried out create tension and frequent confrontations with Congress? (i.e. defense policy and the War Powers Resolution)

...In what ways are the appointment powers of the President an important influence on the policy making process? How does the appointment power to the courts impact a president both while in office and after leaving office?

...What are the different perspectives on presidential power as outlined by Taft and T. Roosevelt?

...How has technology changed elected officials' relationships with constituents and other branches? (social media, rapid political response to political issues, agenda setting, etc)

...What is the principle of judicial review and how does it check the power of other institutions and state governments?

...How do precedents, stare decisis, the supremacy clause, and legal standing play an important role in judicial decision making?

...How does the exercise of judicial review lead to controversy about the legitimacy of the Supreme Court's power? (consider judicial restraint v. judicial activism)

...In what ways do constitutional amendments, judicial confirmations, ignoring Supreme Court decisions, and legislation about court jurisdiction limit the Supreme Court's power?

...Why is the bureaucracy considered by many to be the "fourth branch" of government? Why is the rule making process considered an integral piece of the policy making process?

...How has the civil service and merit system reforms promoted specialization, professionalism, neutrality, and effectiveness of the bureaucracy?

...Why does Congress use the legislative "veto" to control the actions of the bureaucracy?

...What are the conflicts between "smart power" and "hard power" with regards to foreign policy, diplomacy, and military action?

Big Idea #5... Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

...How does the Bill of Rights reflect the commitment to individual liberty as related to the 1st and 2nd Amendments?

...What do the following cases have to do with the 1st and 2nd Amendment

- ...Engel v. Vitale
- ...Lemon v. Kurtzman
- ...Wisconsin v. Yoder
- ...New York Times Company v. US
- ...Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District
- ...Schenck v. US
- ...Washington and Chicago cases on guns

...What are the constitutional protections against government encroachment on the rights of the accused in the...

- ...4th Amendment?
- ...5th Amendment?
- ...6th Amendment?
- 7th Amendment?
- ...8th Amendment?

...How does the Bill of Rights and our judicial system attempt to balance the tension between majoritarian concerns for social order and claims of individual freedom?

...Why are the cases of *Gideon v. Wainwright* and *Mapp v. Ohio* good examples of the due process clause being used to limit states from impermissibly infringing upon fundamental rights essential in our system?

...Why are the cases of *Griswold v. CT* and *Roe v. Wade* good examples of the due process clause being used to protect the fundamental right of privacy from state infringement?

...How is the case *Gitlow v. NY* related to the first amendment and the 14th Amendment? What are the implications of the doctrine of selective incorporation for the balance of power in the federal system?

...How have constitutional provisions advancing equality supported social movements and motivated policy responses? Explain the implications of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX, Voting Rights Act of 1965, *Brown v. Board I* and *Brown v. Board II*.

...How does the Court's decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* compare to the Court's decisions in *Brown v. Board I*, *Brown v. Board II*?

...What are other examples of how the Court has at times protected the rights of minority groups and at other times allowed the restriction of minority rights by the majority?