

PROFESSOR INGRID RIEDLE'S POLITICAL SCIENCE 201



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Professor Ingrid Riedle's Political Science 201

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Licensing

1: Political Ideologies

- 1.1: Political Ideologies - Readings and Media
- 1.2: Political Ideologies - Classroom Activity
- 1.3: Political Ideologies - Homework

2: The Constitution's 14th Amendment

- 2.1: The Constitution's 14th Amendment - Readings and Media
- 2.2: The Constitution's 14th Amendment - Classroom Activity
- 2.3: The Constitution's 14th Amendment - Homework

3: Federalism

- 3.1: Federalism - Readings and Media
- 3.2: Federalism - Classroom Activity
- 3.3: Federalism - Homework

4: Congressional Institutions

- 4.1: Congressional Institutions - Readings and Media
- 4.2: Congressional Institutions - Classroom Activity
- 4.3: Congressional Institutions - Homework

5: The Legislative Process

- 5.1: The Legislative Process - Readings and Media
- 5.2: The Legislative Process - Classroom Activity
- 5.3: The Legislative Process - Homework

6: Presidential Institutions

- 6.1: Presidential Institutions - Readings and Media
- 6.2: Presidential Institutions - Classroom Activity
- 6.3: Presidential Institutions - Homework

7: Presidential Power

- 7.1: Presidential Power - Readings and Media
- 7.2: Presidential Power - Classroom Activity
- 7.3: Presidential Power - Homework

8: Supreme Court Selection Process

- 8.1: Supreme Court Selection Process - Readings and Media
- 8.2: Supreme Court Selection Process - Classroom Activity
- 8.3: Supreme Court Selection Process - Homework

9: Supreme Court - Ruling Process

- 9.1: SCOTUS Ruling Process - Readings and Media
- 9.2: SCOTUS Ruling Process - Classroom Activity
- 9.3: SCOTUS Ruling Process - Homework

10: Political Economy - Fiscal and Monetary Policy

- 10.1: Political Economy - Readings and Media
- 10.2: Political Economy - Classroom Activity
- 10.3: Political Economy - Homework

11: Economic Theory

- 11.1: Economic Theory - Readings and Media
- 11.2: Economic Theory - Classroom Activity
- 11.3: Economic Theory - Homework

12: Elections and Voting

- 12.1: Elections and Voting - Readings and Media
- 12.2: Elections and Voting - Classroom Activity
- 12.3: Elections and Voting - Homework

13: Interest Groups and Lobbying

- 13.1: Interest Groups and Lobbying - Readings and Media
- 13.2: Interest Groups and Lobbying - Classroom Activity
- 13.3: Interest Groups and Lobbying - Homework

14: Media and Politics

- 14.1: Media and Politics - Readings and Media
- 14.2: Media and Politics - Classroom Activity
- 14.3: Media and Politics - Homework

15: Public Opinion

- 15.1: Public Opinion - Readings and Media
- 15.2: Public Opinion - Classroom Activity
- 15.3: Public Opinion - Homework

[Index](#)

[Glossary](#)

[Detailed Licensing](#)

[Detailed Licensing](#)

Licensing

A detailed breakdown of this resource's licensing can be found in [Back Matter/Detailed Licensing](#).

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: Political Ideologies

Why start this collection of learning modules with **political ideologies**, you may ask? Because clear definitions and a comprehensive understanding of them are **fundamental to navigating political systems, personalities, and events**.

Notice how the term **ideology** itself, is composed of the Greek *idea* (ideas, ideal) and *logos*, indicating this working definition:

an ideology is a set of ideas that are logically related, and guide action toward an ideal.

In political science, the ideal that is sought after concerns government, governance, and society.

A more substantial and elegant definition is this:

*Political ideology refers to a coherent set of beliefs, values, and ideas that provide a framework for understanding the role of government, the organization of society, and the goals of political action. It influences individuals' perceptions of justice, equality, authority, and economic systems, and often shapes policy preferences and partisan affiliations (Heywood, 2021).**

Thus, the framework ideologies provide enable citizens and governments to comprehend, explain, and to some extent even predict their political environments which may keep us engaged and our democracy vibrant.

Key Ideologies and DEI

Specifically, in this module we examine the core underpinnings of the major political ideologies with a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI):

[Liberalism](#)

[Socialism](#)

[Marxism](#)

[Anarchism](#)

[Conservatism](#)

[Libertarianism](#)

[Fascism](#)

An analysis of these ideologies reveals where various politicians stand on current DEI debates, where they locate social problems and solutions. For example, **right-wing ideologues** tend to regard diversity with suspicion and favor a more "colorblind" disciplinarian approach to social problems (sometimes more equality driven), whereas **left-wing ideologues** tend to embrace DEI and work towards an equal playing field (more equity driven). Learn more about the intricacies and controversies in the readings to follow.

Generally, we ask:

How does each ideology interpret the **fundamental democratic values** of freedom, equality, participation, majority rule and minority rights, and order and stability?



Freedom for whom? Rights over order, or order over rights? How do Marxists perceive of minority rights, for example, compared to fascists? What kind of society do they want to create, and how does it differ from the goals of a socialist, conservative, or a libertarian?

These are only some of the fundamental questions that political ideologies seek to answer, each with their own coherent world view.

By engaging with the readings and the classroom activity, and by analyzing your own political ideology in the homework assignment, you will deepen your understanding of ideologies in general and their effect on our society's DEI efforts in particular.

Student Learning Outcomes

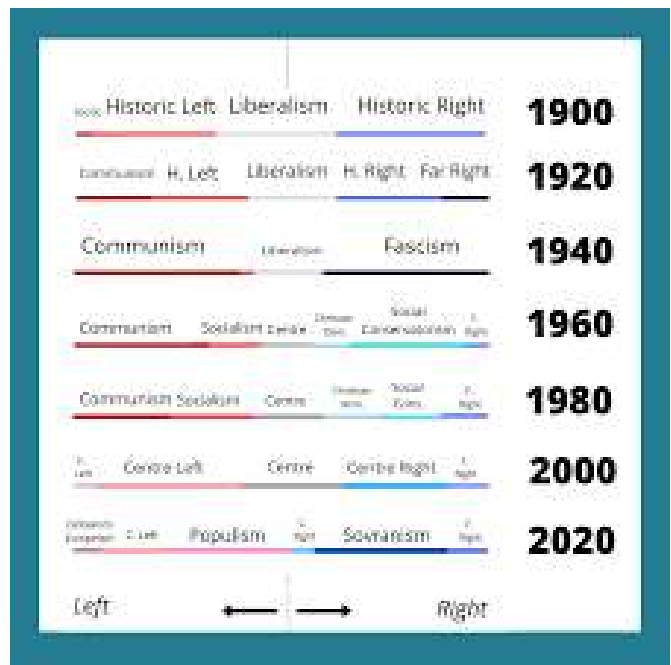
1. Explain the basics of major political ideologies (liberalism, conservatism, socialism, etc.) in your own words.
2. Compare different ideologies—how do they view freedom, equality, and power?
3. Connect ideologies to real-world issues, especially debates about fairness, discrimination, and inclusion.
4. Understand how politicians and laws are influenced by these ideologies.
5. Reflect on your own views—which ideologies do you agree or disagree with, and why?
6. Discuss these ideas respectfully, even when people disagree.

*Heywood, A. (2021). *Political ideologies: An introduction* (7th ed.). Red Globe Press.

[1.1: Political Ideologies - Readings and Media](#)

[1.2: Political Ideologies - Classroom Activity](#)

[1.3: Political Ideologies - Homework](#)



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1.1: Political Ideologies - Readings and Media

Engaging with the following media and texts, you learn about ideologies in increasing complexity and depth. First, sign up for a free *Khan Academy* account and view the video which provides you with fundamental concepts and frameworks that help establish a baseline understanding of political ideologies. The *Crash Course* adds other key ideologies to the mix, and discusses how they relate to political issues, offering a more nuanced perspective. After that, the *Greater Good* challenges you to synthesize and critically analyze all this information and evaluate their adaptations and practices in our complex society.

Each new exposure deepens your comprehension, links earlier knowledge with more sophisticated insights, and ultimately seeks to foster a well-rounded intellectual foundation of how political ideologies work in our country, and what some inherent complications are when they are applied.

1. Khan Academy

Khan Academy. (n.d.). *Federalism in the United States*. Retrieved from <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-government-and-civics/us-gov-foundations/us-gov-federalism-in-action/a/federalism-in-the-united-states>

This video reinforces the underpinnings of liberal and conservative ideologies in the United States. You will be learning about specific policy preferences of either ideology and how they relate to the Democrat and Republican parties.

2. Crash Course

CrashCourse. (2015, February 14). *Federalism: Crash Course Government and Politics #4* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_k_k-bHigM

Learn more about liberals and conservatives, and think about the influences of both of these viewpoints. Pay close attention (and take notes on) the concepts and ideas that underpin each ideology discussed. You may also tune in to why certain groups of people (such as African Americans, or women) gravitate to certain ideologies.

Which socio-economic factors (i.e., age, gender, education, etc.) tend to lead to which ideologies? In your homework, you will to apply these insights to the analysis of your personal ideology.

Keep in mind that the generalizations in this video summarize the most commonly held viewpoints for each of these positions, those most commonly held in our political culture; feel free to note your questions on them.



3. Greater Good Science Center

Greater Good Science Center. (n.d.). *The scientific case for diversity, equity, and inclusion*. Greater Good Magazine. https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/the_scientific_case_for_diversity_equity_and_inclusion

Find several links to articles on the various benefits of DEI initiatives in this article. It contains a wealth of resources! Click on the ones that interest you most to learn more. Overall, the authors present scientific evidence that DEI strengthen our society and organizations, but that political ideologies affect how we understand and apply these findings. While liberals and socialists tackle systemic barriers to fairness, for example, conservatives call a merit-based approach “fair” because to them the system itself largely works. Take notes on how each ideology discussed perceives this debate, and think about which perspectives you resonate with the most.

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1.2: Political Ideologies - Classroom Activity

Debate: Do We Need Universal Healthcare in Our Country?

1. Form 7 **groups** (one for each ideology considered here).
2. Choose ONE **ideology** for your group: liberalism, socialism, Marxism, anarchism, conservatism, libertarianism, or fascism.
3. Each group reviews the **main tenets** and key ideas of their chosen ideology.
4. Groups develop 5 **arguments** for and/or against the debate question, depending on their assigned ideology, making sure that their arguments are true to their ideological principles:

Should the government provide universal healthcare for all?

5. Groups prepare a **brief statement** introducing and outlining their stance.
6. Each group **presents** their arguments to each other.
7. Engage in **rebuttals**.
8. **Class Reflection**
 - A. How did your assigned ideology shape your perspective on the issue?
 - B. Which ideological arguments did you find most convincing?
 - C. Which ideology would ultimately create a fairer, just, and inclusive society?
 - D. Did any perspective challenge your personal beliefs?



Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Exemplary (4 pts)	Proficient (3 pts)	Developing (2 pts)	Beginning (1 pt)	Score
1. Ideological Accuracy (Step 3)	Arguments perfectly reflect core tenets of assigned ideology; no contradictions.	Arguments mostly align with ideology; minor inconsistencies.	Some alignment, but several arguments stray from ideological principles.	Little or no connection to assigned ideology.	/4
2. Quality of Arguments (Step 4)	5 strong, well-researched arguments; clear logical structure; uses evidence or reasoning appropriate to the ideology.	5 arguments present; mostly logical and relevant.	Fewer than 5 arguments or weak/irrelevant points.	Arguments missing or completely off-topic.	/4
3. Opening Statement (Step 5)	Clear, compelling, and concise introduction of stance; outlines key arguments effectively.	Clear introduction but lacks some clarity or impact.	Unclear or disorganized opening.	No coherent opening statement.	/4
4. Presentation & Delivery (Step 6)	Engaging, confident, audible; maintains eye contact; uses time well (e.g., 3–5 min).	Good delivery with minor issues (e.g., pacing, eye contact).	Poor delivery, hard to follow, or too short/long.	Inaudible, unprepared, or no presentation.	/4
5. Rebuttal Skills (Step 7)	Directly addresses opposing arguments; uses ideological logic to counter; respectful and sharp.	Addresses some arguments but misses key points; generally respectful.	Weak or off-target rebuttals; defensive or aggressive tone.	No rebuttal or irrelevant responses.	/4

Criteria	Exemplary (4 pts)	Proficient (3 pts)	Developing (2 pts)	Beginning (1 pt)	Score
6. Group Collaboration	All members participate actively in prep, presentation, and rebuttals.	Most members participate.	Only 1–2 members do most work.	Group dysfunction; minimal collaboration.	/4
7. Overall Ideological Diversity	Group shows clear contrast with other ideologies; enriches debate.	Good contrast but some overlap with others.	Limited contrast; arguments resemble another ideology.	No distinct ideological voice.	/4

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1.3: Political Ideologies - Homework

Analyzing Your Own Ideology: Where Are You Located On the Ideological Spectrum?

By conducting this assignment, you may become clearer on where you stand when it comes to your own views on DEI, as well as on issues of government, policy, and democratic values more generally.

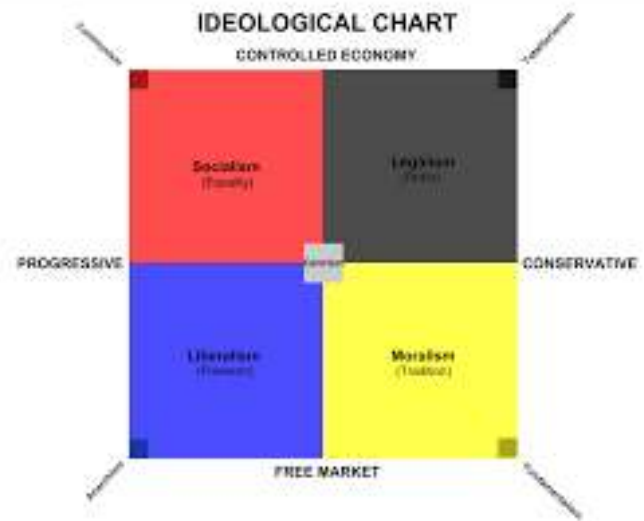
1. Take the Ideology Quiz

You will be asked to answer 16 policy questions. Take your time answering them but try not to overthink: <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics...ical-typology/>

2. Write a Reflection Paper

In 400 words minimum, respond to the political ideology the Pew Research Center ascribed to you.

- Are you surprised? Why or why not?
- Reflect on our classroom activity topic of universal healthcare. What is your personal opinion on it, and does it correlate with your ideology 'diagnosis'?
- What specific policy recommendations would you champion so that our society becomes fairer, more diverse, and more inclusive?
- What about your socio-economic background -and your political socialization-correlates with your results, and what does not? Particularly think back to the *Crash Course* video and whether or not the categories fit nicely.



Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (5 points)	Meets Expectations (4 points)	Approaches Expectations (3 points)	Needs Improvement (0-2 points)
Completeness	Clearly and completely answers the assignment prompt. Adheres to required length.	Almost completely answers the assignment prompt. Adheres to required length.	Partially addresses the assignment prompt. Adheres to required length.	Does not address the assignment prompt.
Analysis	Rich, detailed description of the case, conflict, challenge, or issue of concern.	Full description of the case, conflict, challenge, or issue of concern.	Partial description of the case, conflict, challenge, or issue of concern.	No description of the case, conflict, challenge, or issue of concern.
Evidence	Clear attempt to integrate relevant facts, relationships, and the student's self. Includes conclusions based on synthesis of the description.	Clear attempt to integrate relevant facts, relationships, and the student's self.	Slight or unclear attempt to integrate relevant facts, relationships, and the student's self.	No attempt to integrate relevant facts, relationships, and the student's self.

Criteria	Excellent (5 points)	Meets Expectations (4 points)	Approaches Expectations (3 points)	Needs Improvement (0-2 points)
Writing	Impressions plus critical reflection (i.e. exploration and critique of assumptions, values, beliefs, and/or biases; multiple perspectives; alternatives; and the consequences of actions). Includes discussion of how behavior may change based on new insights.	Impressions plus reflection (i.e. attempting to understand or question the case).	Impressions without reflection.	No impressions, reflection or introspection.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: The Constitution's 14th Amendment

Engage with the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution in this learning module as it became **the foundation** for anti-discrimination, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) legislation.

Ratified right after the Civil War (1860-1865), the 14th Amendment presents three main clauses:

Equal Protection

Citizenship, and

Due Process.

Initially sought to establish fundamental rights and equal legal protection for former slaves, these three clauses subsequently became important touchstones for civil rights law.

Let's look at each clause in some detail:

1. The Equal Protection Clause, prohibits states from **denying to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws**. Aside from playing a significant role in the abolition of legal segregation, it has served as the foundation for significant Supreme Court rulings like *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), which helped end legal discrimination and segregation in schools, by maintaining that separate can never be truly equal.

Later, the amendment became the basis for affirmative action laws, seeking to alleviate past injustices in the workplace and in education. Today, its interpretation is still hotly contested: some think that it is proactive in establishing equity (such as in race-conscious higher education admissions) while others think that it can lead to reverse discrimination. For an example of the latter, review the Supreme Court's ruling in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* (2023), and for an example of the former, see *United States v. Virginia* (1996), which combated gender discrimination.

2. The Citizenship Clause declares that **all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States**. Over the two plus centuries that we have been a nation, this clause has helped grow our society and make it one of the most diverse on the planet. In recent years, though, the guarantee of birthright citizenship has been contested, especially that of children of undocumented immigrants, even if they were born in the United States. Decrying them as "anchor babies," right-wing ideologues are currently seeking to withdraw their citizenship and erase this clause's protection.

3. The Due Process Clause (also found in the 5th Amendment) is an equally important safeguard of civil liberties, yet equally contested. Prohibiting states from **depriving any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of the law**, it requires that all people's legal rights be respected and not arbitrarily denied or altered based on prejudices. What do you think: has due process historically applied to all Americans equally? Whatever your answer, the overall trend today is negative. Increasingly, people find themselves falling through the cracks, not receiving the legal treatment Due Process is to guarantee in the Constitution.

In the readings to follow, our class activity, and your homework assignment, analyze and evaluate 14th Amendment protections more deeply, and critically assess what needs to be done to maintain them for us all.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Explain the historical context and original intent behind the 14th Amendment.
2. Analyze the Supreme Court decisions which have interpreted the amendment.
3. Evaluate the amendment's current impact on civil rights matters.
4. Assess present-day obstacles and disputes regarding equal protection and due process.



5. Demonstrate knowledge by applying it to real-life situations through critical thinking and reflection.

[2.1: The Constitution's 14th Amendment - Readings and Media](#)

[2.2: The Constitution's 14th Amendment - Classroom Activity](#)

[2.3: The Constitution's 14th Amendment - Homework](#)

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2.1: The Constitution's 14th Amendment - Readings and Media

By engaging with the following readings and media, you develop an increasingly complex understanding of the 14th amendment to our Constitution and how it impacts our civil rights.

1. Library of Congress

Library of Congress, "14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Primary Documents in American History," <https://guides.loc.gov/14th-amendment>

Find the original text of the 14th amendment here along with other resources on this issue. Carefully read through the whole document and take note especially of Section 1, the cornerstone of civil rights and constitutional law.

2. National Constitution Center

The National Constitution Center, "The Equal Protection Clause,"

<https://constitutioncenter.org/the-c...tection-clause>

Here, you have a more thorough explanation of the amendment and how it has been applied in seminal court cases over the decades, such as *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), or *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). This guide also provides access to digital collections, websites, and print materials related to the amendment. You are encouraged to browse and learn more.

3. Khan Academy

(Social Movements and Equal Protection. (n.d.). In *Khan Academy*. Retrieved July 20, 2025, from <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-us-government-and-politics/civil-liberties-and-civil-rights/social-movements-equal-protection/a/social-movements-and-equal-protection><https://www.khanacademy.org/humaniti...ual-protection>

For our visual learners, watch the story of the 14th amendment unfold in this video.

4. ACLU

Parker, Dennis, American Civil Liberties Union, 2018. <https://www.aclu.org/news/racial-justice/racial-justice>

Explore further the importance of the 14th Amendment for contemporary social issues such as same-sex marriage and transgender rights. Take note on how the logic is applied, and think about other civil rights issues it may apply to.



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2.2: The Constitution's 14th Amendment - Classroom Activity

Constitutional Discussion: The Impact of the 14th Amendment

Let's learn more about how the 14th Amendment has been used in major Supreme Court decisions and modern-day problems by dividing up the task.

1. Preparation

The class divides into four groups:

Group 1 defends the historical value and founding purpose of the 14th Amendment.

Group 2 presents arguments about the application of the 14th Amendment in racial equality cases including *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Group 3 examines how the amendment applies to gender equality and LGBTQ+ rights.

Group 4 investigates the voting rights and modern immigration policies that the amendment supports.

Each group researches its assigned topic, creates arguments for it, and prepares an opening statement.

2. Debate

-Each group presents their opening statement and key arguments.

-Other groups ask follow-up questions.

3. Class Reflection

The main points from the presentations are discussed by the class. What was learned? Which group's interpretation of the 14th Amendment was most convincing? Why?



Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Exemplary (4 pts)	Proficient (3 pts)	Developing (2 pts)	Beginning (1 pt)	Score
1. Historical Accuracy & Research	Arguments are well-researched, historically accurate, and reference key cases, amendments, or primary sources.	Generally accurate with minor omissions or vague references.	Some factual errors or missing important historical context.	严重 factual errors or no evidence of research.	/4
2. Alignment with Assigned Topic	Group stays tightly focused on its specific topic (e.g., Group 1 on founding purpose; Group 4 on voting rights/immigration).	Mostly on topic but occasional digressions.	Often strays from assigned focus.	Ignored assigned topic entirely.	/4
3. Quality of Arguments	Arguments are logical, well-structured, and supported by specific Supreme Court cases (e.g., <i>Brown</i> , <i>Obergefell</i> , <i>Shelby County</i>).	Arguments present but some lack case support or depth.	Weak or unsupported arguments.	Arguments missing or irrelevant.	/4
4. Opening Statement	Clear, persuasive, and concise; introduces key arguments and sets up group's stance effectively.	Clear but less compelling or slightly disorganized.	Unclear or overly long/short.	No coherent opening.	/4

Criteria	Exemplary (4 pts)	Proficient (3 pts)	Developing (2 pts)	Beginning (1 pt)	Score
5. Use of Landmark Cases	Integrates at least 2–3 relevant cases naturally into arguments (e.g., Group 2: <i>Brown v. Board</i> ; Group 3: <i>Obergefell v. Hodges</i> ; Group 4: <i>Reynolds v. Sims</i>).	Mentions cases but without deep analysis.	Cases mentioned but irrelevant or misused.	No case references.	/4
6. Responses to Follow-up Questions	Answers questions directly, thoughtfully, and with evidence; maintains respectful tone.	Answers most questions adequately but some evasion.	Struggles to answer; vague or incorrect responses.	Cannot respond meaningfully; hostile or silent.	/4
7. Group Collaboration	All members participate in research, presentation, and Q&A.	Most members participate.	Only 1–2 members contribute.	No teamwork evident.	/4
8. Connection to Modern Issues	Clearly links 14th Amendment to contemporary problems (modern immigration policies, voting rights debates, LGBTQ+ rights, etc.).	Some modern connections but underdeveloped.	Minimal or very general modern references.	No modern application.	/4

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2.3: The Constitution's 14th Amendment - Homework

Current Events Analysis Essay:

The 14th Amendment's Impact Today

This homework assignment may help you deepen your understanding of this important amendment by analyzing its application in current controversies.

Essay

Find a recent news article discussing an issue related to the 14th Amendment (e.g., immigration rights, affirmative action, equal protection challenges), then summarize the article and provide your analysis of how the amendment applies, in 400 words minimum. Be specific, and use as much of our political science terminology as you can.



Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Proficient (3)	Developing (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Content & Analysis	In-depth, insightful analysis of the news topic; clear understanding of context.	Solid analysis with good understanding of the topic; some depth and insight.	Basic analysis; limited depth or insight into the topic.	Superficial analysis; lacks understanding or relevance to the news topic.
Thesis Statement	Clear, concise, and compelling thesis that guides the essay effectively.	Clear thesis that is relevant and guides the essay.	Thesis is present but may be vague or not fully developed.	Thesis is unclear, missing, or irrelevant to the essay.
Evidence & Support	Strong, relevant evidence from credible sources; well-integrated and explained.	Adequate evidence from credible sources; mostly integrated and explained.	Limited evidence; may lack credibility or proper integration.	Insufficient or irrelevant evidence; sources are not credible or missing.
Structure & Organization	Logical flow with clear introduction, body, and conclusion; smooth transitions.	Clear structure with mostly logical flow and transitions.	Some organization issues; flow or transitions may be awkward.	Disorganized; lacks clear structure or logical flow.
Critical Thinking	Demonstrates exceptional critical thinking; evaluates multiple perspectives.	Shows good critical thinking; considers some alternative perspectives.	Limited critical thinking; may overlook alternative perspectives.	Lacks critical thinking; fails to consider alternative perspectives.

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Proficient (3)	Developing (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Clarity & Style	Writing is clear, concise, and engaging; excellent grammar and word choice.	Writing is clear and mostly concise; good grammar and word choice.	Writing is somewhat unclear or wordy; occasional grammar issues.	Writing is unclear or confusing; frequent grammar or word choice errors.
Originality & Insight	Offers unique insights or original perspective on the news topic.	Provides some original thought or insight.	Limited originality; relies heavily on existing ideas.	Lacks originality; no unique insights or perspective.
Citation & References	Proper citation of all sources; accurate and consistent formatting.	Mostly proper citation; minor errors in formatting.	Some citations missing or improperly formatted.	Frequent citation errors or lack of proper references.
Relevance to News	Strong connection to current news events; timely and relevant analysis.	Good connection to current news events; relevant analysis.	Some connection to news events but may lack timeliness or relevance.	Weak or no connection to current news events.
Depth of Research	Extensive research evident; uses a variety of credible and diverse sources.	Adequate research; uses credible sources.	Limited research; relies on a narrow range of sources.	Insufficient research; lacks credible or diverse sources.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Federalism

Another foundational principle of the American political system is that of federalism, which mandates the division of political power between [federal and state governments](#).

Also called "vertical powers," the Constitution spells them out in **Article I, Section 8**, the **Tenth Amendment**, and the **Supremacy Clause**. Power sharing in its various forms allows the central and regional governments to function independently while cooperating in the governing of our nation.

The three main types of federalism we have experienced in our nation's evolution are:

1. **Dual Federalism:** A *layer cake* model where federal and state governments operate in separate spheres.
2. **Cooperative Federalism:** A *marble cake* approach with shared responsibilities.
3. **New Federalism:** A *sliced up cake*, where power is newly decentralized.

Learn more about each of these and other sub forms of federalism -and when they were prevalent in our nation- in the readings to follow.

The Effects of Federalism on DEI

Are DEI goals advanced or impeded by federalism?

Unfortunately, the answer is complex: America's decentralized government both strengthens underprivileged groups *and* upholds structural injustices.

Some states experiment with progressive policies (e.g., Illinois's cannabis legislation), while others roll back protections for minority groups (e.g., Florida's "don't say gay" law). Federal policies sometimes follow, supporting DEI or weakening it in a political landscape that is fractured and polarized.

The result is a patchwork of protections that frequently reflects profound racial, economic, and social inequalities, as well as tensions between the different federal states themselves, and with the federal government.

Nonetheless, among the recent [successes](#) in civil rights aided by federalism are:

- **Marriage Equality:** Same-sex marriage is legal in all 50 states since 2015.
- **Police Reform:** States have adopted varying use-of-force standards
- **Voting Rights:** Some states allow automatic voter registration to boost participation among marginalized groups.

Yet [setbacks](#) also occurred:

- **Restrictive Voting Laws:** Southern states' voter ID laws disproportionately disenfranchise Black and Latino voters (e.g., *Shelby County v. Holder*, 2013).
- **Anti-LGBTQ+ Policies:** Bans on gender-affirming care for minors in Texas and Florida ignore medical consensus, potentially harming transgender youth.
- **Education Censorship:** States like Tennessee banned DEI programs in public universities by, for example erasing histories of systemic racism.



Here is a summary of the Significance of Federalism:

- Policy Innovation: States serve as "laboratories of democracy"
- Checks on Power: Distributes authority to avoid tyranny.
- Representation: Enables local governance in various regions.
- Disparities in rights and services between states (such as funding for education) are a source of conflict.

Via the relevant readings, debating the pros and cons of the federal system based on case studies, and reflecting on how policies are implemented on the state and federal levels, in the readings, activities, and assignments to come, we explore in greater detail how federalism works and how it both promotes and inhibits diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

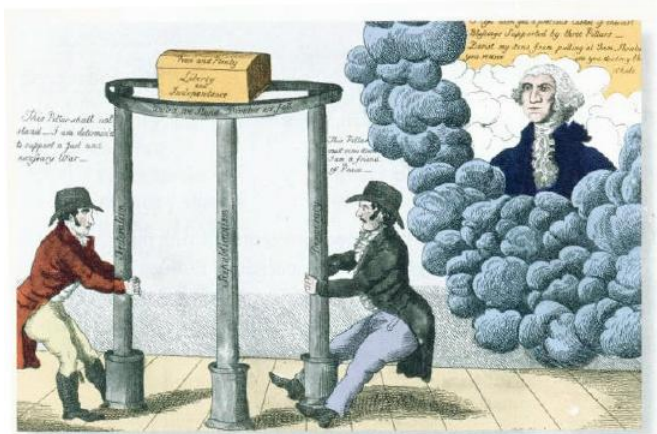
Student Learning Outcomes

1. Determine how the principles of federalism affect social, economic, and political equity.
2. Assess how federalism has shaped state authority regarding racial equity policies such as health care access and education policies.
3. Debate which government level should control equity issues between federal and state authorities.
4. Demonstrate how federalism supports or obstructs equity progress via written and oral arguments.

[3.1: Federalism - Readings and Media](#)

[3.2: Federalism - Classroom Activity](#)

[3.3: Federalism - Homework](#)



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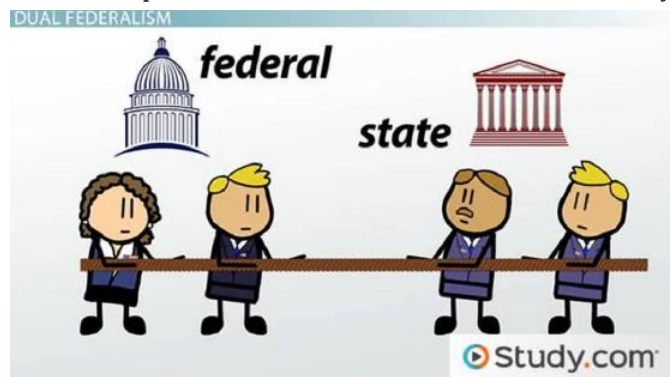
3.1: Federalism - Readings and Media

The following article and video introduces you to American federalism, its components, evolution, and relevance to our democracy and civil rights.

1. Study Hall

Study Hall, (2023, March 15). *Pros and cons of federalism | Power and politics in US government 6 of 30* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YepAnelVEJM>

With this video we further explore federalism in the United States, especially its pros and cons. How does the division of power between the federal government and state governments influence policy-making, governance, and social issues? How can we foster democratic participation and policy innovation while also overcoming challenges related to inequality, inefficiency, and legal complexity? The video provides a historical context and contemporary examples to illustrate the impact of federalism on democracy, efficiency, and individual rights as the debate over the role of federalism continues to shape U.S. politics, particularly in areas like healthcare, civil rights, and environmental policy.



2. Lumen Learning

Lumen Learning. (n.d.). *American government: The evolution of American federalism*. Retrieved from <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/atd-monroec-american-government/chapter/the-evolution-of-american-federalism/>

With this reading, go deeper into the evolution of federalism in our country, and about the different forms the relationship between the national government and the states can take. Note your thoughts on dual (1789-1930), cooperative (1930s-1960), and new federalisms (1970s-present) and pay extra attention to how federalism historically has accommodated the diversity that exists across our 50 states.

What do you think of new federalism and decentralized federalism when it comes to discussions of diversity, equity, and inclusion? Which type of federalism has produced results or is more effective?

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3.2: Federalism - Classroom Activity

Exploring Federalism in Action: A Case Study Analysis

Analyze real-world examples of federalism, evaluate its pros and cons, and propose solutions to federal-state conflicts.

1. You are **assigned to a group** and given a real-world federalism issue, for example:

- **Marijuana Legalization** – State vs. Federal drug laws
- **Voting Rights Laws** – State election rules vs. Federal oversight
- **Disaster Response** – Hurricane Katrina & FEMA's role
- **COVID-19 Policies** – State vs. Federal pandemic responses
- **Education Policy** – Common Core vs. State Curriculum

2. **Research** your topic and answer these questions:

- How does this issue illustrate federalism?
- What are the state's and federal government's roles?
- What are the benefits and drawbacks of how power is distributed?
- What solutions could improve cooperation between state and federal levels?

3. Presentation

Each group relays its case study findings.

4. Class Discussion

- Did federalism help or hurt in each case?
- How well was the public served -in all its diversity- in each case?
- Should power shift more to the states or the federal government?

Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	4 (Excellent)	3 (Good)	2 (Needs Improvement)	1 (Unsatisfactory)
Understanding of Federalism	Demonstrates a clear and thorough understanding of federalism and its principles.	Shows a good understanding of federalism with minor gaps in knowledge.	Demonstrates a basic understanding but lacks depth or accuracy.	Shows little to no understanding of federalism.
Case Study Analysis	Provides a detailed and insightful analysis of the issue, addressing all questions thoroughly.	Analyzes the issue well but may lack depth in some areas or miss minor details.	Provides a superficial analysis with limited insight or incomplete answers.	Fails to analyze the issue effectively or answer the questions adequately.
Research & Preparation	Uses a variety of reliable sources and demonstrates thorough preparation.	Uses adequate sources and shows good preparation with minor gaps.	Uses limited sources and shows minimal preparation.	Lacks research and preparation, relying on incomplete or unreliable information.



Criteria	4 (Excellent)	3 (Good)	2 (Needs Improvement)	1 (Unsatisfactory)
Presentation Skills	Presents findings clearly, confidently, and engagingly within the time limit.	Presents findings clearly and mostly confidently, with minor issues.	Presents findings with some clarity but lacks confidence or organization.	Struggles to present findings clearly or stay within the time limit.
Critical Thinking	Offers thoughtful solutions and evaluates pros/cons of federalism effectively.	Provides good solutions and evaluation but may lack depth or creativity.	Offers basic solutions and evaluation with limited critical thinking.	Fails to propose solutions or evaluate federalism effectively.
Class Discussion Participation	Actively engages in discussions, providing insightful comments and questions.	Participates in discussions with relevant contributions.	Participates minimally or with limited relevance.	Does not participate or contributes irrelevant points.

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3.3: Federalism - Homework

U.S. Federalism and Social Equity

Examine the relationship between US federalism and social equity by exploring how the distribution of power between state and federal government impacts access to rights, resources, and protections. Answer both sections below.

1. Research and Short Answer Questions

Using class materials, textbooks, and additional research, answer the following questions in **3–5 sentences each**:

- How does federalism impact social equity? Provide an example of a policy area where state and federal governments have disagreed on issues of fairness or access.
- What role did the Civil Rights Act of 1964 play in shaping federalism? How did it affect states' rights in addressing racial and economic inequality?
- How does the federal government promote equity in education, healthcare, or labor laws? Provide a specific example (e.g., Title IX, Medicaid, the Americans with Disabilities Act).
- Why do some states have stronger social safety nets than others? Discuss how federalism allows for policy differences among states and its consequences for social equity.



2. Case Study Analysis

Choose ONE of the following topics and write a **250-word analysis** on how federalism affects equity in this area:

- [Medicaid Expansion](#) – Why do some states opt out? How does this impact healthcare access?
- [Voting Rights](#) – How do state policies on voter ID laws and redistricting affect marginalized communities?
- [Environmental Justice & Federal Regulations](#) – How do state vs. federal policies impact communities of color and low-income areas?
- [Education Funding & Inequality](#) – How do disparities in state funding and federal programs affect public school quality?

In your analysis, address:

- How does this issue highlight tensions between state and federal control?
- What are the consequences for equity and fairness?
- Should the federal government intervene more or less in this area? Why?
- Do you think federalism helps or hinders social equity in the U.S.?

Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (A)	Good (B)	Satisfactory (C)	Needs Improvement (D/F)
1. Content Accuracy & Relevance	All answers are factually accurate, fully address the prompt, and are highly relevant to federalism and equity.	Most answers are accurate and clearly address the questions; minor gaps in depth or connection.	Answers are somewhat accurate but lack detail or full relevance to the topic.	Answers are inaccurate, off-topic, or fail to address the questions.

Criteria	Excellent (A)	Good (B)	Satisfactory (C)	Needs Improvement (D/F)
2. Depth of Analysis	Demonstrates excellent critical thinking; analysis is insightful and shows clear understanding of how federalism impacts equity.	Provides thoughtful analysis with some insight; demonstrates understanding of the core themes.	Basic analysis present; ideas are underdeveloped or lack clarity.	Minimal or no analysis; answers are vague, superficial, or repetitive.
3. Use of Evidence & Examples	Effectively uses specific and appropriate examples (e.g., policies, laws, cases) to support claims.	Examples are relevant but could be more specific or better integrated.	Few examples used, or examples are too general or loosely connected.	Lacks relevant examples; little to no supporting evidence.
4. Organization & Clarity	Responses are clearly written, well-structured, and free of grammar/mechanical errors.	Mostly well-written with minor issues in clarity or structure.	Organization is inconsistent; grammar/mechanical errors occasionally interfere with meaning.	Poorly organized, unclear, and/or difficult to understand due to errors.
5. Case Study Analysis (250 words)	Provides a well-developed and focused analysis with strong connections to federalism and equity; thoroughly explains consequences.	Covers the topic with clarity; includes some analysis of federal-state dynamics and implications.	Touches on the topic but lacks depth or misses connections to core issues.	Incomplete, vague, or does not demonstrate an understanding of the topic.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Congressional Institutions

Let's now turn our attention to the institutions of the **legislative branch** of our federal government, the **US Congress**. Made up of the [House of Representatives](#) and the [Senate](#), it represents our citizenry most closely on the federal level and is therefore a cornerstone of our democracy.

Article 1 of the Constitution lays out the powers of Congress:

- [Legislate](#) - to make law
- [Power of the Purse](#) - lay and collect taxes
- [Declare War](#) - checks the president's Commander-in-Chief power
- [Oversight and Investigation](#) - can lead all the way to impeachment
- [Advice and Consent](#) - requires the president to seek confirmation from the Senate for nominations or treaties.

Learn more about each of these powers in our readings and media section to follow.

Congressional Leadership

Who has the most power in the chambers on Capitol Hill? We explore the roles of the House Speaker, the Senate Majority Leader, President Pro Tempore, and others,

Congress and DEI

Then we turn our attention on how Congress has evolved demographically over centuries, reflecting the nation's changing diversity and values, and how this has contributed to strengthening or hindering DEI realities in the nation.

Historically, the policies, and operations of Congress were dominated overwhelmingly by older white males, while women, people of color, LGBTQ+, and people with disabilities were largely excluded from access.

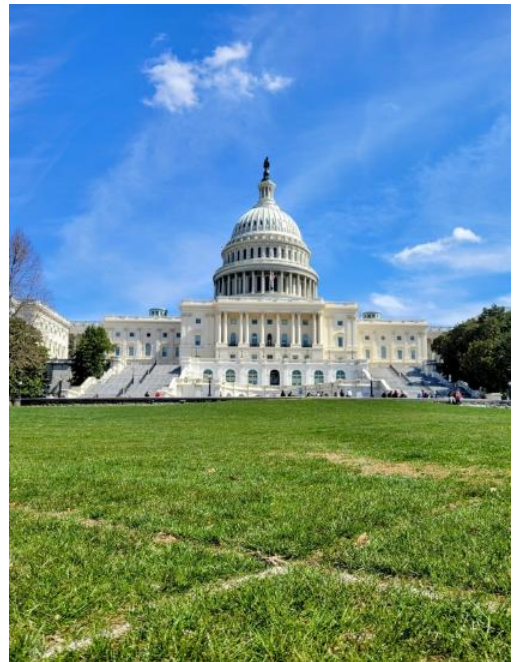
In recent years however, the trend had been toward greater [diversity, equity, and inclusion \(DEI\)](#), as voters selected ever larger numbers of diverse representatives. Although inequalities still exist, this has resulted in consecutive congresses getting increasingly diverse, with the current 119th Congress (2025–2027) being no exception.

The Congressional Research Service and the Pew Research Center state that the 119th Congress consists of:

- A record number of **women** serving in both chambers, making up about [29% of Congress](#) (149 out of 535 members). However, they still fall short of proportional representation, as women account for over 50% of the total U.S. population.
- **People of color** now hold about [28% of seats](#), including increased representation of Black (59 members), Hispanic/Latino (54 members), and Asian American/Pacific Islander (21 members) lawmakers. Though Native American representation remains low, with only a handful of members.
- **LGBTQ+**: The 119th Congress includes at least [13 openly LGBTQ+ members](#), maintaining the previous Congress's record.
- **Disability Representation**: While a few members have publicly disclosed disabilities, advocates continue pushing for greater inclusion in political leadership.

In addition to individual DEI efforts, various congressional caucuses also strive for policymaking that addresses systemic inequities, advocating for policies that promote racial and economic justice. Some example are the:

- [Congressional Black Caucus \(CBC\)](#)
- [Congressional Hispanic Caucus \(CHC\)](#), or the
- [Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus \(CAPAC\)](#)



What do you think of the argument that the more diverse our representatives in Congress, the fairer, more just, and more inclusive our laws and society?

Answer this and other questions via the readings, activities, and assignments in the pages to follow.

[Student Learning Outcomes](#)

Explain the bicameral institutional structure of Congress, the differences between the House and the Senate, and the roles of congressional leadership.

1. Elaborate on the steps of how a bill becomes a law, and how committees and leadership in both houses direct it.
2. Evaluate how the system of checks and balances depends on Congress to perform oversight functions such as conducting impeachment proceedings and confirming executive branch appointments.
3. Assess congressional choices and their policies and social effects.
4. Practice actively engaging in civic activities including representative contact and policy advocacy, and election participation.



[4.1: Congressional Institutions - Readings and Media](#)

[4.2: Congressional Institutions - Classroom Activity](#)

[4.3: Congressional Institutions - Homework](#)

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4.1: Congressional Institutions - Readings and Media

The following readings are scaffolded to introduce you to the main components of the bicameral Congress. First, learn about the roles and responsibilities of the congressional leadership in the House and the Senate. Then evaluate the powers this leadership wields. Finally, engage in criticism of how this institution has changed over time, and in suggestions of beneficial reforms.

1. Crash Course

CrashCourse. (2015, April 17). *Congressional leadership: CrashCourse government and politics #8*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bd55IYsaG4>

This episode engages you in some of the intricacies of hierarchy, strategy, and the influence of party leadership in Congress. While watching it, take notes on these questions:

- How does the Speaker of the House differ from the Senate Majority Leader in terms of power and responsibilities?
- Why is party leadership so important in the legislative process?
- How do whips ensure that members of Congress vote along party lines?
- In what ways can congressional leaders influence the passage (or blockage) of legislation?
- How does congressional leadership impact government gridlock and efficiency?



2. Pew Research Center

Schaeffer, K. (2023, February 7). *The changing face of Congress in 8 charts*. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/02/07/the-changing-face-of-congress/>

Discover the demographics of our Congresses today and over time. Which trend do you notice?

3. Congress That Works

Greenblatt, J. (2018, November 6). *Diversity in Congress: By the numbers + why it matters*. Congress That Works. Retrieved from <https://congressthatworks.com/diversity-in-congress-by-the-numbers-why-it-matters/>

Get another perspective on how representation in the U.S. legislature has evolved, and why it matters for democracy. How do the growing numbers of women, racial and ethnic minorities, and younger lawmakers, affect policymaking, public trust, and political participation? Think about the relationship between descriptive representation and social equity, and critically assess how the composition of Congress influences debates on civil rights, economic justice, and inclusion.

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4.2: Congressional Institutions - Classroom Activity

Leadership Strategy Session

Role-play congressional leaders and rank-and-file members to simulate how parties strategize to pass or block major legislation.

Preparation

You are assigned to one of the two main political parties (e.g., Democrat or Republican) and you are given a leadership role:

- [Speaker of the House](#)
- [House Majority or Minority Leader](#)
- [Senate Majority or Minority Leader](#)
- [Party Whips](#) (House or Senate)
- [Rank-and-file Members](#), organized into caucuses.



Explore the Legislative Scenario

- Democrats want to expand government-funded healthcare such as medicare.
- Republicans oppose the expansion of medicare and prefer a free-market approach.
- The bill is being debated in both chambers, and party leaders must strategize their next steps.

Instructions

1. [Party Strategy Meeting](#)

- Majority and minority party leaders meet with their caucuses to discuss their approach.
- Whips count votes and assess party loyalty.
- Leaders discuss potential concessions or compromise

2. [Negotiations](#)

- Party leaders meet with each other to see if a bipartisan agreement is possible.
- Individual members can lobby for amendments or changes to the bill
- The House or Senate vote

3. [Debrief](#)

- What strategies worked, where there were challenges, and how?
- Which political actors influenced the outcome the most?
- How does party leadership influence legislative success or failure?
- What role do party whips play in ensuring unity?
- How do party leaders handle intra-party disagreements?
- Which groups of our society were impacted by your decisions, and how?

Evaluation Rubric

Participation in Leadership Simulation (Role-Play & Strategy Session) – 25%

Criteria	Excellent (10)	Proficient (8)	Developing (6)	Needs Improvement (4)

Criteria	Excellent (10)	Proficient (8)	Developing (6)	Needs Improvement (4)
Engagement	Actively participates, demonstrates strong leadership, and stays in character throughout.	Participates and stays in character but lacks strong leadership or engagement.	Occasionally participates but is inconsistent in role-play.	Minimal participation and little effort in staying in character.
Strategic Thinking	Uses well-developed strategies, considers multiple perspectives, and adapts effectively.	Demonstrates strategic thinking but may miss key considerations.	Some strategic elements are present, but reasoning lacks depth.	Limited or no strategic approach.
Collaboration & Negotiation	Works effectively with peers, engages in meaningful negotiation.	Engages in negotiation but may struggle with collaboration.	Basic effort to collaborate, but lacks depth.	Does not engage with peers effectively.

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4.3: Congressional Institutions - Homework

Letter to Congress on DEI Legislation

Write a 400-500 word letter **to your representatives and senators** (address all three) about a proposed bill of your choice that focuses on DEI issues.

Use this [Congress](#) site to identify one piece of proposed legislation that you want to support or oppose:

(click on the [link](#) at the top left of the page and switch it from Members to [Legislation](#); you can also search by topic, if you prefer).

Requirements:

- Use the proper letter writing format - your response needs to look and read like a letter you could mail out.
- Summarize your legislation and refer to it with the official bill title (i.e. HR 723).
- Discuss your position on the bill and your reasoning why Congress should take or withhold action.
- Advocate for the named legislation you've identified and explain why this bill would or would not be a good law.
- Your letter should be persuasive and include statistics and other evidence to support your position.
- Consider mailing it out!



Evaluation Rubric

Policy Area	Example	Effect on Society	Broader Impact
Progressive State Policies	Illinois's cannabis legislation	Expands social reforms and economic opportunities	Encourages more inclusive and reform-oriented governance
Restrictive State Policies	Florida's "Don't Say Gay" law	Limits protections and visibility for minority groups	Increases debates over rights, education, and representation
Federal Government Response	Federal support or weakening of DEI initiatives	Shapes national direction on diversity, equity, and inclusion	Reflects political division and polarization across the country
Overall National Outcome	Patchwork of different state and federal policies	Unequal protections and opportunities among citizens	Deepens racial, economic, and social inequalities, as well as tensions between states and the federal government

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: The Legislative Process

As we saw previously, the U.S. Congress -its institutions and leadership- functions as **the nation's premier law making body**. Now, get an inside look at the legislative process through which laws are created with formal rules, informal practices, and outside dynamics that influence it. After writing your *Letter to Congress* during the previous module's homework assignment, and having seen how many bills are considered by Congress at any given time, let us now take a look at **how bills become law**.

The passage of a bill's adoption and transformation into law is marked by an intricate process of

negotiation

compromise, and

power play.

After the **congressional leadership** decides on the merit of a bill (the Speaker of the House, and the Senate Majority Leader) they assign it to **Standing and Subcommittees** for review. Hearings are held and testimonies heard, drafts are edited and marked up until the bill faces committee votes, floor discussions, and finally a full floor vote.



If the bill passes, it is sent to the other chamber. For example, if the House of Representatives worked on it first, it is then sent to the Senate, and vice versa.

If both chambers pass their versions of the bill, their differences get ironed out in a **Conference Committee** negotiations.

All the while, external pressures influence its passage, such as **public opinion, stakeholder pressure, and media reports**.

Law-Making and DEI

In our previous module on congressional institutions, you noted how complex the intersection is between Congress and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) topics. We saw how **DEI-focused policies have been weakened** in the education and healthcare spheres, for example. In contrast to grassroots movements advocating for inclusive policies, lobbyists -such as corporate interests- oppose equity mandates on the pretext of "colorblindness" or reverse discrimination.

The readings on the next page challenge you to learn more about this process and how minority interests, as well as our civil rights and liberties are affected and perhaps compromised. In our classroom activity, you get to experience law making hands-on, and in your homework assignment you are prompted to bring it all together with your reflection on this learning object.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Map the Journey of a Bill: Track the lifecycle of legislation from introduction to passage, including:
 - Committee assignments and markups
 - Floor debates and amendments
 - Voting procedures and reconciliation
2. Analyze Political Dynamics: Examine how *negotiation, compromise, and power* shape outcomes:
 - The role of party leadership in prioritizing bills
 - Stakeholder influence (lobbyists, grassroots movements)
 - Procedural tools like the filibuster and discharge petitions
3. Evaluate DEI in the Process: Investigate systemic barriers for marginalized communities:
 - How "colorblind" arguments weaken equity-focused bills (e.g., *HEAL Act* amendments)
 - Disparities in witness representation at committee hearings (only 22% from minority-led orgs in 2023*)
 - Contrast corporate lobbying against DEI mandates with community-led advocacy
4. Apply Your Knowledge: Simulate lawmaking in our in-class activity, practicing coalition-building.

- Reflect on how legislative rules amplify or silence diverse voices in your homework.

[5.1: The Legislative Process - Readings and Media](#)

[5.2: The Legislative Process - Classroom Activity](#)

[5.3: The Legislative Process - Homework](#)

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5.1: The Legislative Process - Readings and Media

The following readings are scaffolded to help you develop an increasingly complex understanding of the legislative process and its influencing factors. First, read about the process itself. Then, critically engage with a special power held by the Senate minority party - the filibuster. Finally, examine the role of civil society in this process by exploring how interest groups influence policy making.

1. U.S. Congress

U.S. Congress. (n.d.). *How our laws are made*. Congress.gov. Retrieved October 10, 2023, from <https://www.congress.gov/help/learn-about-the-legislative-process/how-our-laws-are-made>

Find here a complete explanation of the legislative process in the United States Congress. Learn about the process of a bill transforming into law, from its initial presentation to the Congress to the President's final approval. The guide explains all essential steps of the process which include committee review, floor debate, conference committee work, and presidential actions. Find out how different actors -such as congressional members, committees, party leaders, and the President- influence legislative processes.

Take good notes because understanding this process enables you to analyze policy making and civil society influence on Congress. Through this guide you will learn about congressional operations while developing your ability to analyze its advantages and disadvantages.

2. US Senate

U.S. Senate. (n.d.). *Filibusters and cloture: Overview*. Retrieved October 26, 2023, from <https://www.senate.gov/about/powers-procedures/filibusters-cloture/overview.htm#:~:text=Filibusters%20proved%20to%20be%20particularly,a%20major%20civil%20rights%20bill>

This article focuses on the filibuster, an instrument or strategy senators can use to delay or prevent the passage of a bill. Investigate its historical development, and the controversies surrounding it. Over the decades, the filibuster transformed from its original status as a *rare* legislative tactic into a strong and *frequently used* tactic. Pay attention to how it was used to affect civil rights debates, and current legislative gridlocks. Both sides of the filibuster debate are addressed to evaluate its effects on democratic processes, bipartisan cooperation, and governmental management. What is your opinion on the filibuster?

3. Open Secrets

Center for Responsive Politics, (n.d.). *Interest groups and lobbying in Congress*. OpenSecrets.org. Retrieved from <https://www.opensecrets.org>

This section gives you an extensive analysis of interest groups and lobbying activities within the U.S. Congress. Examine some of the financial aspects of lobbying through campaign contributions by Political Action Committees (PACs) and Super PACs, for example. Also examine how ethical and transparent lobbying activity actually is.



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5.2: The Legislative Process - Classroom Activity

Simulating the Legislative Process

In this class period we conduct a legislative process simulation to demonstrate the complete process of bill introduction and debate, as well as amendment and voting procedures in Congress. Through this activity you will learn about the intricate nature of lawmaking, the functions of committees, partisan politics, and negotiation processes.

1. Group Formation

- Roles are assigned such as Senators, Representatives, Committee Chairs, Party Leaders, Lobbyists, and Constituents.
- Everyone is assigned to serve on a specific House or Senate committee (e.g., Foreign Relations, Appropriations, Education).

2. Bill Introduction

- Choose a DEI focused bill from: [Congress.gov Sample Bill](#).

3. Committee Deliberations

- Committees review the bill, hold hearings, and propose amendments.
- Lobbyists and constituents submit written or oral testimony to influence the process.



4. Floor Debate and Voting

- The bill moves to the full House and Senate for debate. Students can propose amendments, filibuster (in the Senate), and negotiate compromises.
- A final vote is held in each chamber.

5. Conference Committee

- If the House and Senate pass different versions of the bill, a conference committee negotiates a compromise.

6. Debrief and Reflect

How was your experience?

(prepare for a deeper reflection in the following homework assignment)

Evaluation Rubric

1. Preparation (20 points)

Criteria: Did the student come prepared to participate in the simulation?

- 5 (Excellent): Student demonstrates thorough preparation by researching their role, understanding the bill, and bringing relevant materials (e.g., notes, amendments, or talking points).
- 4 (Good): Student is well-prepared but may lack some depth in their research or materials.
- 3 (Satisfactory): Student shows basic preparation but relies heavily on provided materials without additional effort.
- 2 (Needs Improvement): Student is minimally prepared and contributes little to the simulation.
- 1 (Poor): Student is unprepared and does not contribute meaningfully.

2. Participation (30 points)

Criteria: Did the student actively engage in the simulation?

- 5 (Excellent): Student actively participates in all stages of the simulation (e.g., committee hearings, floor debates, voting) and demonstrates leadership or initiative.
- 4 (Good): Student participates consistently but may not take a leading role.
- 3 (Satisfactory): Student participates occasionally but is mostly passive or disengaged.

- 2 (Needs Improvement): Student participates minimally and shows little interest in the activity.
- 1 (Poor): Student does not participate or disrupts the simulation.

3. *Understanding of the Process (30 points)*

Criteria: Did the student demonstrate an understanding of the legislative process and their role?

- 5 (Excellent): Student clearly understands the legislative process, their role, and how their actions impact the outcome. They use correct terminology and follow procedures accurately.
- 4 (Good): Student understands the process and their role but may make minor errors or need occasional guidance.
- 3 (Satisfactory): Student shows a basic understanding but struggles with some aspects of the process or their role.
- 2 (Needs Improvement): Student demonstrates limited understanding and requires frequent guidance.
- 1 (Poor): Student does not understand the process or their role and does not contribute meaningfully.

4. *Collaboration (20 points)*

Criteria: Did the student work effectively with others during the simulation?

- 5 (Excellent): Student collaborates effectively with peers, listens to others' perspectives, and contributes to group decision-making. They demonstrate respect and professionalism.
- 4 (Good): Student works well with others but may dominate discussions or struggle to compromise.
- 3 (Satisfactory): Student collaborates adequately but may be passive or disengaged during group discussions.
- 2 (Needs Improvement): Student struggles to collaborate and may be dismissive of others' ideas.
- 1 (Poor): Student does not collaborate and may disrupt group dynamics.
-

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5.3: The Legislative Process - Homework

Classroom Activity Reflection - Discussion Post

Answer the following questions in writing:

1. What obstacles stood in the way of the bill passage from our classroom activity? How did partisan differences influence the legislative process?
2. How did the committee process determine what changes would be included in the final bill version?
3. How was the legislative process influenced by lobbyists and constituents who participated in the decision-making?
4. What reforms could make the legislative process more efficient or democratic?
5. Which social groups are affected by our bill, and how?

Requirements:

1. Read the assignment/discussion topic instructions carefully and do the necessary readings and research
2. Explain your answers in detail.
3. Write at least 400 words total.
4. Respond to the posts of two of your peers. Responses to peers should raise significant points of agreement and/or disagreement, and encourage peers to reflect upon their responses and positions taken in their initial posts.
5. If you can, please respond to any questions from other students regarding your postings (this is not mandatory).



Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Points	Feedback
Depth of Analysis	30	Excellent use of specific examples and data to illustrate partisan obstacles.
Stakeholder Influence	25	Clear explanation of lobbyist/constituent roles; could cite more primary sources.
Reform Proposals	20	Creative suggestions; consider feasibility challenges.
Social Impact	15	Groups identified but intersectional analysis needed.
Peer Engagement	10	Responses provoke further debate with evidence.

Word Count: 450 (essay) + 100 (peer responses) = **550 total**.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Presidential Institutions

This module examines the institutional framework of the presidency, our nation's executive branch that is tasked with 'faithfully executing' the laws of Congress, according to **Article II** of our Constitution. Let's take a look at who works for the president.

While it is difficult to draw definite lines, and while experts may disagree on this, we can learn about the executive branch by dividing it into three tiers according to their proximity to the government and the role they play in this branch:

1. The **Top Tier** is called the **Executive Office of the President**. It includes the **White House Staff**, headed by the Chief of Staff, which includes the Press Secretary, the Communications Director, the National Security Adviser, to name just a few. Altogether, there may be more than 2000 people working closely with the president.

Physically, the top tier centers on the Oval Office in the West Wing, and on anyone who has access to it more or less frequently. They tend to be personal advisers to the president, and councils such as the:

National Security Council (1947)

Council On Environmental Quality (1969)

Office of Science and Technology Policy (1976)

Office of Management and Budget (1970),

Office of Diversity of Inclusion (2018)

and the **Gender Equality Council** established by President Biden (2021), though it may not still exist under the current administration.

2. On the **Second Tier** you can find our **15 Executive Cabinets or Departments** which function as policy advisers. They are the Departments of: State, Defence, Justice, and Treasury (these are the oldest and perhaps most influential ones), along with Agriculture, Commerce, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Labor, and Veteran's Affairs.

3. The **Third Tier** is comprised of our **Independent Regular Agencies**, which administer acts of Congress. This level was first established by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the 1930s, and it has since added more and more agencies to its ranks, approaching a total number around 200 today. Here are some of the better known agencies:

Occupational Safety and Health Agency (OSHA), Social Security Administration (SSA), Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), United States Postal Service (USPS), National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Security and Exchange Commission (SEC), to name just very few.

The Presidency and DEI

Through appointments, policies, and symbolic leadership, the presidency and diversity, equity, and inclusion are closely related. **Executive orders** (such as affirmative action reforms), **cabinet diversity**, and **directives** from federal agencies are some of the ways that presidents influence DEI.

For instance, while President Biden's executive order from 2021 required DEI training throughout the government, President Trump is reversing similar policies, favoring "colorblind" approaches.



By **appointing** diverse judges or establishing positions like the Gender Policy Council, the White House also shapes national DEI narratives. But because of partisan differences, DEI priorities fluctuate significantly between administrations, mirroring larger ideological conflicts between meritocracy and equity. In the end, how institutional power responds to systemic inequality is determined by the sitting president.

So you see how the presidency functions as one of three federal government branches, executing and enforcing congressional laws through its extensive network of federal agencies, departments, councils, shaping civil rights and liberties in the process.

Learn more about this in the following readings, before you get the chance to experience the Oval Office hands-on in a "hurricane simulation," and by thinking about the president's day-to-day tasks in your homework, also speculating what it meant that we had our first African-American president in Barack Obama (2008-2016).



Student Learning Outcomes

1. Identify the three tiers of the executive branch (EOP, Cabinet, independent agencies) and their key functions.
2. Explain the responsibilities of top White House staff (e.g., Chief of Staff, Press Secretary) and their influence on presidential decision-making.
3. Analyze how executive orders and agency directives (e.g., DEI training mandates) translate congressional laws into action.
4. Evaluate how presidential appointments and symbolic actions (e.g., Gender Policy Council) advance or hinder diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.
5. Apply knowledge of executive branch operations to a real-world scenario (e.g., hurricane response simulation).
6. Assess the significance of milestone presidencies (e.g., Obama's election) in shaping modern executive power and representation.

[6.1: Presidential Institutions - Readings and Media](#)

[6.2: Presidential Institutions - Classroom Activity](#)

[6.3: Presidential Institutions - Homework](#)

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6.1: Presidential Institutions - Readings and Media

The following readings introduce you to the fundamentals of the executive branch, give you a glimpse of the inner workings of the White House, and guide you to learning about policy making, specifically on the example of disaster management.

1. National Archives

National Archives and Records Administration. (n.d.). *The Constitution of the United States: A transcription*. Retrieved October 10, 2023, from <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript>

For this module, you do not have to read the entire Constitution, although reading it from start to finish is highly recommended. Article II of the Constitution establishes the presidency as an independent powerful branch of government which maintains equilibrium between Congress and the Judiciary. The president receives broad powers through Article II which includes military command authority and treaty negotiation capabilities and law enforcement responsibilities but also includes Senate approval and impeachment as checks on power. The analysis of presidential domestic and foreign policy actions, crisis management and more depends on a thorough comprehension of Article II.

Take note of the following sections: Section 1 outlines the qualifications needed to become President, Section 3 describes presidential responsibilities, Section 4 explains impeachment procedures. Section 3 will be front and center in the next module.

2. YouTube

Inside the White House: The People's House [Video]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDefPd4WA1Q>

The video serves as an essential resource for the study of presidential history and executive branch operations. The video delivers historical background information and personal perspectives that help you understand the White House as both a political organization and a cultural landmark. The White House has developed in parallel with the presidency and the nation while offering a unique perspective on presidential life and the challenges that both presidents and their families encounter. This video examines the White House functions as the executive power center through its policymaking and diplomatic and crisis management responsibilities. Consider your relationship to the presidency as a citizen while recognizing the significance of civic engagement.



3. FEMA

Federal Emergency Management Agency. (n.d.). *Data visualizations*. Retrieved October 10, 2023, from <https://www.fema.gov/about/reports-and-data/data-visualizations>

This platform provides access to genuine data and tools which help you understand emergency management and disaster policy. Through this resource you learn data analysis and visualization skills while gaining deeper insights into federal agency disaster response; it helps you apply your knowledge to solve real-world challenges and policy issues. The data sets will provide you with significant benefits during our classroom activities and homework assignments in this module.

Specifically, 1. explore disaster data, 2. analyze trends and patterns, 3. gain insight on emergency management processes. The information will assist you in creating case studies and preparing presentations while helping you solve real-world problems that are required for our module activities.

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6.2: Presidential Institutions - Classroom Activity

Presidential Decision-Making Simulation

Simulate a presidential decision-making process to understand the complexities of executive institutions, including the roles of advisors, federal agencies, and external pressures as well as understanding how different segments of our population are affected.

This activity will help you analyze how presidents balance competing interests, make policy decisions, and navigate the challenges of governance while doing all that they can to protect the vulnerable.

Scenario

A **major hurricane** has struck the Gulf Coast, causing widespread damage and displacing thousands of people. The President must decide how to allocate federal resources, coordinate with state and local governments, and address public concerns.

Roles

You will be assigned a specific role:

- **President**: Decides how to allocate resources and communicate with the public.
- **National Security Advisor**: Briefs the president on the issues.
- **FEMA Director**: Recommends disaster response strategies.
- **Governor of Louisiana**: Advocates for state needs and resources.
- **Press Secretary**: Manages media relations and public messaging.
- **Congressional Leaders**: Debate funding for disaster relief.
- **Public Opinion**: Express concerns about government response and preparedness; the public may form interest groups.
- **White House Press Corps**: Questions the president on policy decisions.

Research and Preparation

Research your role and prepare arguments or recommendations.

Simulation

- **Advisory Meeting**: The president convenes a meeting with FEMA and advisors to discuss options. Each presents their recommendations, and you debate the pros and cons of each option.
- **External Input**: Congressional leaders, interest groups, and public opinion representatives present their perspectives.
- Decision-Making**: The president weighs the advice and makes a final decision.

Press Conference

- The Press Secretary announces the decision and answers questions from the White House Press Corps.

Debrief and Reflection

- Discuss the decision-making process, the challenges faced, and the outcome.
- Reflect on how the simulation reflects real-world presidential decision-making.

Assessment



Criteria	Excellent (10 pts)	Proficient (8 pts)	Developing (6 pts)	Needs Improvement (4 pts or below)
Role Preparation & Understanding	Demonstrates a deep understanding of assigned role; uses research to develop strong arguments and recommendations.	Understands assigned role and provides relevant arguments with some supporting details.	Shows basic understanding of role but lacks depth in arguments and recommendations.	Limited understanding of role; arguments are unclear or unsupported.
Participation & Engagement	Actively engages in the simulation, effectively communicates ideas, and interacts constructively with other participants.	Participates consistently and contributes relevant points but may need more engagement.	Participates minimally, with limited contributions or reliance on others.	Little to no participation; does not contribute meaningfully.
Decision-Making & Critical Thinking	Thoughtfully weighs multiple perspectives, justifies decisions with strong reasoning, and considers potential consequences.	Considers different perspectives and provides justification for decisions, though reasoning may need more depth.	Some effort to consider perspectives but lacks strong justification for decisions.	Decisions are made without clear justification or consideration of multiple perspectives.
Press Conference Performance	Clearly and confidently communicates the final decision; effectively answers questions with well-supported responses.	Communicates the decision clearly but may struggle with some responses.	Communicates decision but lacks confidence or depth in responses.	Struggles to explain decision and provide meaningful responses to questions.
Reflection Paper	Provides insightful analysis of challenges, competing interests, and presidential decision-making with strong examples.	Addresses key questions with thoughtful responses and some supporting details.	Addresses questions but lacks depth in analysis and examples.	Provides minimal or unclear responses with little analysis.
Collaboration & Teamwork	Works well with team members, listens actively, and contributes to a productive discussion.	Works cooperatively with others, though engagement may vary.	Some effort to collaborate, but contributions are minimal.	Little to no teamwork; disrupts discussion or does not engage with others.

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6.3: Presidential Institutions - Homework

The Presidency: A Multimedia Presentation

This homework assignment challenges your creativity by synthesizing information from multiple sources to create a visual presentation. By creating this multimedia presentation you may gain better knowledge about the presidency and the White House while developing important research and communication skills.

Create a 5-7 minute multimedia presentation (e.g., PowerPoint, Prezi, or video) on one of the following topics:

1. [A Day in the Life of the President](#): Describe the daily responsibilities and challenges of the President.
2. [The White House Through the Years](#): Highlight key moments in the history of the White House.
3. [Presidential Advisors](#): Explain the role of key advisors (e.g., Chief of Staff, National Security Advisor) in shaping presidential decisions.
4. [The People's House](#): Discuss how the White House serves as a public institution and a symbol of democracy.
5. [Reflect on the our first African-American president](#), Barack Obama. How important was it to our nation? What do you think his legacy is regarding DEI?



Requirements

- Include visuals (e.g., photos, charts, videos) to enhance your presentation.
- Use at least 2 credible sources.
- Provide a brief written summary (1 page) of your presentation.

Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	5 (Excellent)	4 (Good)	3 (Satisfactory)	2 (Needs Improvement)	1 (Poor)	Score
Content	Thorough understanding, insightful analysis, accurate, and relevant.	Solid understanding, some depth, mostly accurate and relevant.	Basic understanding, limited analysis, some inaccuracies or irrelevance.	Lacks depth, often inaccurate or irrelevant.	Little to no understanding, largely inaccurate or irrelevant.	/5
Organization	Clear structure, logical flow, easy to follow.	Organized, clear structure, minor gaps or inconsistencies.	Basic structure, lacks clarity or logical flow in some areas.	Poorly organized, little clarity or logical flow.	Lacks organization, difficult to follow.	/5
Visuals	Highly effective, relevant, professional, and visually appealing.	Effective and relevant, minor issues in quality or relevance.	Somewhat effective, may lack relevance or quality.	Poorly chosen or executed, little relevance or impact.	Missing or do not contribute to the presentation.	/5

Criteria	5 (Excellent)	4 (Good)	3 (Satisfactory)	2 (Needs Improvement)	1 (Poor)	Score
Delivery	Confident, clear, professional, engages audience, maintains eye contact.	Clear and professional, minor issues in confidence or engagement.	Adequate, may lack confidence, clarity, or engagement.	Unclear or unprofessional, little confidence or engagement.	Poorly delivered, significant issues in clarity, confidence, or professionalism.	/5
Research	Uses at least 2 credible sources, proper citations, clear connection to topic.	Uses 2 credible sources, minor issues in citations or relevance.	Uses 1-2 sources, some issues in credibility, citations, or relevance.	Uses 1 source, significant issues in credibility, citations, or relevance.	Lacks credible sources or proper citations.	/5

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Presidential Power

This module examines executive branch authority, its **responsibilities and boundaries** within governmental systems while concentrating on **presidential roles** to analyze executive power functions in contemporary democratic and authoritarian systems. Acquire an understanding of:

leadership dynamics

governance systems

the effect on policy-making

democratic accountability.

Key Themes and Topics

Using the assigned readings, engaging in a crisis simulation during class time, and reflecting on how presidents historically used the powers of the executive branch, we will investigate the:

1. Theoretical Foundations of Presidential Power

- Its origins and evolution.
- Constitutional frameworks that define executive authority.
- Separation of powers and checks and balances.

2. Sources of Presidential Power

- Formal powers
- Informal powers
- Implied powers derived from constitutional interpretation.

Generally, we can summarize **7 Presidential Powers**:

1. [Commander-in-Chief of the US Armed Forces](#)
2. [Veto](#)
3. [Appointment](#)
4. [Convening Congress in special circumstances](#)
5. [Treaty](#)
6. [Pardon](#)
7. [Executive Privilege](#)



We investigate these powers further in this module and contrast them to those of the other two governmental branches in:

3. Limitations on Presidential Power

- Judicial review and legislative oversight.
- Public opinion and media scrutiny.
- Term limits and impeachment.

4. The Role of the President

- Head of state vs. head of government.
- The president's role in domestic policy, foreign policy, and national security.

- Crisis management and leadership during emergencies.

And finally, we shall think about significant timelines and current debates:

5. Historical and Contemporary Issues

- Expansion of executive power over time.
- Controversies surrounding executive actions (e.g., war powers, executive privilege).
- The impact of political polarization on presidential authority.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Understand the constitutional and legal foundations of presidential power.
2. Analyze the balance of power between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.
3. Evaluate the role of the president in shaping domestic and foreign policy.
4. Examine historical and contemporary examples of presidential decision-making.
5. Compare presidential systems with other forms of governance.

[7.1: Presidential Power - Readings and Media](#)

[7.2: Presidential Power - Classroom Activity](#)

[7.3: Presidential Power - Homework](#)



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7.1: Presidential Power - Readings and Media

With these readings and media, you explore the characteristics and specifics of presidential power and how it can be limited, specifically by the Congress. First, think about presidential power via its primary source, the Constitution, then delve deeper into the mechanisms of checks and balances before you learn about how these checks and balances got activated during the first Trump administration. What are the legal and political limits of tools Congress holds over the president? How effective were the Congress's oversight attempts at curbing the Trump presidency's powers? What role do public opinion and media play in shaping congressional oversight? What lessons can be drawn for future administrations and Congresses?

1. National Archives

U.S. Constitution. art. I, § 1. Retrieved from <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution>

In the last module, we focused on presidential institutions, now we learn about the sections in the Constitution that define and limit presidential power. Pay specific attention to Article II, Section 2 (outlining the president's powers, including Commander-in-Chief of the military, pardon, treaty, and appointment powers, etc.). Also refer to Article I, Section 7 (veto power), and Section 8 (war powers). The Amendments relevant to presidential powers are the 12th, 20th, 22nd, and 25th. Take notes on all of them, and think about the executive's formal power, checks and balances, ambiguities (which parts are vague and open to interpretation?), and evolution (how have these powers developed and changed over time?)

2. Khan Academy

Khan Academy. (n.d.). *Checks and balances*. Retrieved October 10, 2023, from <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-government-and-civics>

This video further explains the checks and balances inherent in our constitutional system of government, ensuring that power is evenly distributed among its three branches -legislative, executive, and judicial- to prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful. Particularly take notes on each branches' powers and how the judiciary, legislature, and executive branch can limit each others powers.



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7.2: Presidential Power - Classroom Activity

Simulating Presidential Decision-Making

This activity enables you to grasp the intricate nature of presidential authority together with decision processes, and the relationship between official and unofficial presidential powers. The activity promotes critical thinking, collaboration, and debate through theoretical concept application to real-world scenarios. As [presidential advisors](#), analyze a crisis scenario by recommending actions while evaluating presidential power sources, legal boundaries, public opinion, and political effects.

1. Form 4 groups

Group 1: National Security Advisors: Focus on military and diplomatic responses.

Group 2: Legal Advisors: Analyze constitutional and legal constraints.

Group 3: Public Relations Team: Consider public opinion and media strategy.

Group 4: Economic Advisors: Assess the economic impact of potential decisions.



2. Scenario: Our country is facing a major crisis. **A series of bombings, targeting five historically Black colleges simultaneously** leaves hundreds of students dead, and investigators confirm it was racially motivated. Public panic ensues. Intelligence reports suggest the attack was organized jointly by domestic terrorists and a hostile foreign nation. The president must decide how to respond.

- Groups discuss how to respond to this crisis, and prepare of recommendations

Questions to consider:

- What formal powers does the president have to address this crisis?
- What is the role and the influence of your group or role?
- What informal tools (e.g., executive orders, public speeches) could be used?
- What are the potential consequences of each action?

3. Group Presentations

- Each group presents their recommendations to the President (played by the instructor or a student volunteer)

4. Debate and Decision

- After all groups present, the class debates the pros and cons of each recommendation.
- The president makes a final decision based on the advice and class discussion.

5. Reflection

- How did the groups balance legal, political, and public concerns?
- What role did checks and balances play in the decision-making process?
- How might real-world presidents handle similar crises?

Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (10 pts)	Proficient (8 pts)	Developing (6 pts)	Needs Improvement (4 pts or below)

Criteria	Excellent (10 pts)	Proficient (8 pts)	Developing (6 pts)	Needs Improvement (4 pts or below)
Role Preparation & Understanding	Demonstrates a deep understanding of assigned role; uses research to develop strong arguments and recommendations.	Understands assigned role and provides relevant arguments with some supporting details.	Shows basic understanding of role but lacks depth in arguments and recommendations.	Limited understanding of role; arguments are unclear or unsupported.
Participation & Engagement	Actively engages in the simulation, effectively communicates ideas, and interacts constructively with other participants.	Participates consistently and contributes relevant points but may need more engagement.	Participates minimally, with limited contributions or reliance on others.	Little to no participation; does not contribute meaningfully.
Decision-Making & Critical Thinking	Thoughtfully weighs multiple perspectives, justifies decisions with strong reasoning, and considers potential consequences.	Considers different perspectives and provides justification for decisions, though reasoning may need more depth.	Some effort to consider perspectives but lacks strong justification for decisions.	Decisions are made without clear justification or consideration of multiple perspectives.
Press Conference Performance	Clearly and confidently communicates the final decision; effectively answers questions with well-supported responses.	Communicates the decision clearly but may struggle with some responses.	Communicates decision but lacks confidence or depth in responses.	Struggles to explain decision and provide meaningful responses to questions.
Collaboration & Teamwork	Works well with team members, listens actively, and contributes to a productive discussion.	Works cooperatively with others, though engagement may vary.	Some effort to collaborate, but contributions are minimal.	Little to no teamwork; disrupts discussion or does not engage with others.

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7.3: Presidential Power - Homework

Analyzing Presidential Power and its Effects on DEI

This assignment encourages you to engage with both theoretical and practical aspects of presidential power, fostering a deeper understanding of its role in the U.S. government. Analyze the sources, uses, and limitations of presidential power by examining historical and contemporary examples and reflect on the role of checks and balances in maintaining democratic accountability.

Instructions:

1. Choose ONE U.S. president (e.g., Franklin D. Roosevelt, Richard Nixon, Barack Obama, Donald Trump, or another).
2. Choose a DEI related event that occurred during this president's term.
3. Research a specific example of how this president used their formal or informal powers (e.g., executive orders, war powers, vetoes, or the "bully pulpit")
4. Write a 2–3 page analysis addressing:
 - What power(s) did the president use, and what was the context?
 - Was the use of power effective? Why or why not?
 - What were the political, legal, and public reactions?
 - How was the DEI event affected by it?
 - How did Congress or the judiciary respond (if applicable)?



Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	5 (Excellent)	4 (Good)	3 (Satisfactory)	2 (Needs Improvement)	1 (Poor)
Content	- Thoroughly addresses all parts of the prompt. - Provides clear, detailed, and accurate information about the president's use of power.	- Addresses most parts of the prompt. - Provides clear and accurate information with minor gaps.	- Addresses some parts of the prompt. - Provides basic information but lacks depth or detail.	- Addresses few parts of the prompt. - Information is incomplete or unclear.	- Does not address the prompt. - Information is inaccurate or irrelevant.
Research	- Uses multiple credible sources. - Demonstrates strong evidence of thorough research.	- Uses credible sources. - Demonstrates adequate research.	- Uses a limited number of sources. - Research is somewhat superficial.	- Relies on unreliable or insufficient sources. - Research is minimal.	- Lacks credible sources. - No evidence of research.

Criteria	5 (Excellent)	4 (Good)	3 (Satisfactory)	2 (Needs Improvement)	1 (Poor)
Analysis	- Provides insightful, well-reasoned analysis. - Clearly evaluates the effectiveness of the president's actions and reactions.	- Provides reasonable analysis. - Evaluates effectiveness with some insight.	- Provides basic analysis. - Evaluation is present but lacks depth.	- Analysis is weak or unclear. - Evaluation is superficial or missing.	- Lacks analysis. - No evaluation of effectiveness or reactions.
Organization	- Well-structured with clear introduction, body, and conclusion. - Logical flow of ideas.	- Structured with introduction, body, and conclusion. - Mostly logical flow.	- Basic structure is present but may lack clarity or coherence.	- Poorly organized. - Ideas are disjointed or hard to follow.	- No clear structure. - Ideas are incoherent or confusing.
Mechanics	- No grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. - Writing is clear and polished.	- Few minor errors. - Writing is clear and mostly polished.	- Some errors that do not significantly hinder understanding.	- Frequent errors that hinder understanding.	- Numerous errors that make the writing difficult to understand.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Supreme Court Selection Process

We turn our attention now to the third branch of government: the judiciary, and in particular, the [Supreme Court of the United States \(SCOTUS\)](#).

Article III of the Constitution -the thinnest article of the three covering the branches of government- does not specify much in terms of the requirements for nominees to this important post, nor does it set aside as many powers as the other branches enjoy. Nevertheless, SCOTUS is a formidable force in our democracy as it has the final say on the laws Congress pass -what their wording means, and indeed, whether or not they are constitutional. It is therefore crucial to staff the bench with justices who can rise to the task, uphold our democratic values, keep advancing our civil rights and liberties, and move our nation toward greater justice and fairness for all.



Our nation's legal system is greatly impacted by the intensely political and closely watched process of **choosing justices for the U.S. Supreme Court**. The Senate confirms the president's nominations, and candidates are usually assessed according to their legal knowledge, judicial philosophy, and ideological affinities. To guarantee that the Court represents the demographics and lived experiences of the country, there has been an increasing focus in recent years on integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the selection process.

The module examines the following essential elements:

1. How the president chooses Supreme Court candidates through a selection process that considers legal qualifications, judicial beliefs, and political factors such as race, ethnicity, and gender.
2. The detailed evaluation process nominees face, which includes background investigations and Senate Judiciary Committee hearings before receiving a Senate vote.
3. How the selection process for Supreme Court justices depends on political ideology along with legal experience, past rulings, and public opinion.

The Selection Process in a Nutshell

1. A [vacancy](#) occurs on the court either because a justice dies, retires, or new bench seats are added by the Congress (though the latter has not happened since 1869).
2. The president receives the [curricula vitae](#) (resumes) of candidates.
3. The president creates their first short list: their top [24 candidates](#) are selected based on ideology, age, gender, ethnicity, race, and experience.
4. The shortlisted candidates' files are forwarded to the Federal Bureau of Investigation ([FBI](#)) for thorough background checks.
5. A second shortlist of 12 is created and [ranked #1, #2, #3](#).
6. In a [press conference](#) the president announces and introduces their top pick for the vacancy.
7. Usually, this is followed by a [two week waiting period](#), giving the media and the public a chance to do their own research, and weigh in on the fitness of candidate to the office.



8. If the candidate 'survives' the two week period, they get sent to the Hill for [Senate confirmation hearings](#) with the Judiciary Committee.
9. After the hearings, the [Senate Judiciary Committee](#) votes for the candidate, before the whole Senate does.
10. If the nominee is approved, they are [seated at the bench](#), if denied, the president may move on to the #2 on their list

SCOTUS and DEI

For decades, if not centuries, the majority of justices confirmed and even considered were white, male, and from prestigious legal backgrounds. In its 230+-year history, [there have only been three Black justices](#) and [five women](#). Critics contend that the Court's capacity to comprehend cases involving gender, race, disability, and other equity issues is constrained by this homogeneity. DEI proponents stress that diverse justices, regardless of their gender, race, professional experience, or socioeconomic background, contribute a range of viewpoints that improve deliberations and the public's confidence in the judiciary.

Read about the nomination process in greater detail in the next section, and contemplate the value of a diverse court. In our classroom activity, you get to participate in a mock nomination hands-on, and our homework assignment challenges you to assimilate all that you have learned in an analytical essay.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Process Mastery: Trace the 10-step Supreme Court nomination process from vacancy to Senate confirmation, identifying key decision points where politics and qualifications intersect.
2. Constitutional Context: Explain how Article III's minimal requirements for justices have allowed evolving standards for judicial appointments over time.
3. DEI Analysis: Evaluate how factors like race, gender, and professional background (e.g., public defense vs. corporate law) influence modern nomination shortlists.
4. Historical Assessment: Compare demographic data of past SCOTUS benches to demonstrate underrepresentation of women and minorities in judicial history.
5. Case Impact: Analyze how diverse justices like Thurgood Marshall or Ketanji Brown Jackson have shaped landmark civil rights rulings.
6. Stakeholder Perspectives: Defend or critique the role of Senate hearings, media scrutiny, and public opinion in vetting nominees' "fitness" for office.
7. Reform Proposal: Design an evidence-based reform to improve diversity in nominations without compromising judicial expertise.

[8.1: Supreme Court Selection Process - Readings and Media](#)

[8.2: Supreme Court Selection Process - Classroom Activity](#)

[8.3: Supreme Court Selection Process - Homework](#)

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8.1: Supreme Court Selection Process - Readings and Media

The following media teach you about the fundamentals of the nomination process to the US Supreme Court (SCOTUS), engage you in a look at some of the recent historical highlights of this process, and illustrate why diversity on the bench matters.

1. Georgetown Law Library

Georgetown Law Library. (n.d.). *Supreme Court nominations research guide: Nomination & confirmation process*. Georgetown Law Library. Retrieved February 15, 2025, from <https://guides.ll.georgetown.edu/c.php?g=365722&p=2471070>

This research guide provides an extensive explanation of the process of selecting and confirming SCOTUS justices. It explains the constitutional foundation and formal procedures of the process while directing you to additional resources for further study.

Follow the complete process description while taking notes on the steps, and study the selection process development. Review either the Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson or Amy Coney Barrett nomination process with its accompanying documents.



2. Brennan Center for Justice

Brennan Center for Justice. (2021, February 10). *What research shows about the importance of Supreme Court diversity*. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/what-research-shows-about-importance-supreme-court-diversity>

Contemplate the importance of a diverse group of justices, especially on the highest level of our judicial system. Why does it matter? What happens if -as was historically the case- only older white men interpret and direct the law? Read about it in this article.

3. Democracy Now!

Amy Goodman (2025, April 25). *SCOTUS and Planned Parenthood* [Video segment]. Democracy Now!. https://www.democracynow.org/2025/4/...ned_parenthood

What are the implication of the court's attitude toward Planned Parenthood? While the nation may still be waiting for the Supreme Court's decision on this case, how would you like to see this case decided? And how important is it in your opinion that there are female justices on the court, and that perhaps we should increase their numbers?

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8.2: Supreme Court Selection Process - Classroom Activity

Supreme Court Nomination Role-Playing with a DEI Component

Engage in a simulated Supreme Court nomination and confirmation process to understand the roles of the president, Senate Judiciary Committee, the nominee, and the importance of diverse representation. This activity offers you a hands-on approach to understanding the Supreme Court selection process while encouraging debate and critical analysis.

Materials Needed

- Copies of the U.S. Constitution (or relevant excerpts on judicial appointments)
- Case studies of past Supreme Court nominations
- Sample questions for Senate Judiciary hearings
- Name tags for assigned roles

Roles assigned to students

- **President** - selects a nominee and justifies the choice.
- **Supreme Court Nominees** (one Caucasian, one African-American or any other minority of your choice) - respond to Senate questioning.
- **Senate Judiciary Committee Members** - ask questions and debate the nominee's qualifications.
- **Media Representatives** - Report on and analyze the nomination process.
- **Interest Groups** - present different viewpoints and lobby for or against the nominee.



Introduction

Briefly discuss the Supreme Court nomination process.

Nomination Announcement

The president announces a nominee and explains their qualifications.

As we have two candidates today (one caucasian, one African American), modify the announcements accordingly.

Senate Judiciary Hearing

The nominees answer questions from the Judiciary Committee.

Committee members challenge the nominees on legal philosophy and past rulings.

Media and Public Opinion

Media representatives report on the hearing.

Public interest groups present their stance on the nominees.

Senate Vote

The class votes on whether to confirm each of the nominees.

Debrief and Discussion

Reflect on how the process ensures checks and balances.

Were both nominees treated equally? Why or why not?

Discuss real-life Supreme Court nominations and their impact.



Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (4 pts)	Good (3 pts)	Satisfactory (2 pts)	Needs Improvement (1 pt)
Understanding of Role	Fully understands and effectively portrays the assigned role with accurate arguments and reasoning.	Understands role well and presents reasonable arguments.	Some understanding of role but lacks depth in arguments.	Limited understanding of role; arguments lack clarity and accuracy.
Use of Evidence & Reasoning	Provides strong, well-researched evidence to support arguments.	Uses relevant evidence with some minor gaps in reasoning.	Uses minimal or general evidence; arguments are not well-supported.	Lacks evidence or reasoning in arguments.
Engagement & Participation	Fully engaged, speaks confidently, and actively participates in discussions.	Engaged and contributes meaningfully but may lack confidence.	Participates but contributions are minimal or hesitant.	Little to no participation in discussions.
Collaboration & Respect	Works well with others, listens actively, and respects differing viewpoints.	Generally cooperative and respectful; listens to others.	Shows some collaboration but may interrupt or disregard others.	Rarely collaborates; disrespectful or uncooperative.
Critical Thinking & Analysis	Demonstrates deep analysis of the judicial selection process and its impact.	Shows good critical thinking with some minor gaps.	Limited analysis; understanding is mostly surface-level.	Lacks critical thinking and deeper analysis.
Presentation & Communication	Speaks clearly, persuasively, and remains on topic.	Communicates well but may lack persuasion or clarity at times.	Some difficulty in communication; ideas not fully clear.	Struggles to communicate ideas effectively.

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8.3: Supreme Court Selection Process - Homework

Analytical Essay: DEI in Supreme Court Nominations

This assignment evaluates how the Supreme Court nomination process affects diversity equity and inclusion principles through an analysis of historical patterns, representation, and systemic barriers in judicial selection processes.

A 3-4 page essay should address the following question:

What are the effects of the Supreme Court nomination process on judicial diversity? Which reforms would improve representation and equity?

Key Areas to Cover:

1. SCOTUS diversity trends -e.g., race and gender, sexual orientation- should be analyzed through historical research.
2. In your analysis, compare two Supreme Court nominees who come from different backgrounds, i.e., Thurgood Marshall and Sandra Day O'Connor, or Ketanji Brown Jackson and Ruth Bader Ginsburg.
3. Discuss how the confirmation process for judges faces multiple barriers which stem from implicit bias, political opposition, systemic obstacles.
4. In your paper, present multiple strategies to enhance judicial diversity while promoting fair representation.
5. Include at least three sources which are formatted according to APA style.



Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	1 (Poor)	2 (Below Average)	3 (Satisfactory)	4 (Good)	5 (Excellent)
Historical Analysis	No clear analysis of trends in Supreme Court diversity.	Limited or superficial analysis of diversity trends.	Adequate analysis of trends but lacks depth or detail.	Strong analysis of trends with clear examples and insights.	Comprehensive and nuanced analysis of historical trends in diversity.
Case Studies	No case studies provided or irrelevant examples.	Case studies are mentioned but lack comparison or analysis.	Case studies are compared but analysis is shallow or incomplete.	Clear comparison of nominees with thoughtful analysis of their impact.	In-depth comparison with insightful analysis of nominees' backgrounds.
Barriers and Bias	No discussion of barriers or bias in the nomination process.	Limited or vague discussion of barriers and bias.	Identifies barriers and bias but lacks depth or evidence.	Detailed discussion of barriers and bias with supporting evidence.	Thorough and nuanced analysis of barriers and bias with strong evidence.
Proposed Reforms	No proposed reforms or irrelevant suggestions.	Reforms are mentioned but lack detail or feasibility.	Reforms are proposed but lack depth or connection to diversity.	Clear, feasible reforms with a logical connection to enhancing diversity.	Innovative, well-reasoned reforms with strong justification and detail.

Criteria	1 (Poor)	2 (Below Average)	3 (Satisfactory)	4 (Good)	5 (Excellent)
APA Citations	No citations or incorrect formatting.	Few citations with major formatting errors.	Some citations with minor formatting errors.	Proper citations with minimal formatting errors.	Accurate APA citations with no errors and proper integration of sources.
Clarity and Organization	Disorganized, unclear, or difficult to follow.	Some organization but lacks clarity or logical flow.	Generally clear but with occasional lapses in organization or flow.	Well-organized with clear and logical flow.	Exceptionally clear, concise, and logically structured.
Grammar and Mechanics	Frequent grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors.	Several grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors.	Minor grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors.	Few grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors.	No grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors.
Depth of Insight	Lacks insight or critical thinking.	Minimal insight or critical thinking.	Some insight but lacks depth or originality.	Demonstrates strong insight and critical thinking.	Exceptional insight, originality, and critical thinking.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

9: Supreme Court - Ruling Process

Now that we have investigated how SCOTUS justices are selected, let us look at the **process** of how they achieve their rulings.

SCOTUS makes decisions based on a structured, deliberative process by which legal disputes become precedents. Three main constitutional powers aid the court in this process:

- 1) **Statutory Construction** – the ability of the court to *interpret* the meaning of laws made anywhere in the country.
- 2) **Judicial Review** – granting the court the power to overturn or *declare unconstitutional* any law made in the country, any Act of Congress, or presidential action.
- 3) **The Power To Do Nothing**, allowing the court to pick and choose the cases they want to consider among the petitions they receive.

**The Supreme Court's decisions shape laws,
affect civil rights
government power
and our civil liberties.**

These are the process steps in a nutshell:

1. SCOTUS receives a **petition**, which is a case that is sent to them.

Generally, 90% of all cases SCOTUS receives are *Appellate Jurisdiction*. they are appeals of decisions by lower courts.

Article III, Section 2 of the Constitution also grants SCOTUS *Original Jurisdiction*, which means that these cases start at SCOTUS; they may involve foreign diplomats or dignitaries, federal states suing each other, or a federal state suing a foreign dignitary (or vice versa). About 10% of the cases the court hears tend to be of original jurisdiction.

2. The petitions are received by the “**Cert Pool**” = a group of 36 law clerks who create very short memos of each case. Each of the 9 justices has 4 clerks in the Cert Pool.

About 7000 cases are filed to SCOTUS every year, roughly 1% of them are accepted.

3. Each justice creates a **Discuss List** after receiving the short memos from the Cert Pool. During their term -from October to June- the justices tend to meet once per week to share their discuss lists. Which cases did they find of merit? How many of the other 8 justices felt the same?

If four justices find the same case intriguing, it goes on the *docket* -the list of cases to hear and decide during the term. This is called the **Rule of Four**.

Note that it does not take a majority (5) of the justices to place a case on the docket, and it does not matter whether the chief justice approves.

Roughly 75-85 cases get accepted per year.

4. A **Writ of Certiorari** is then sent to the attorneys of both sides of the case (the petitioner's and respondent's counsels). This writ states the date and time of the scheduled oral argument, and requests that all documentation pertaining to the case be forwarded to the court.

5. Law clerks summarize the case in longer memos. They elaborate on the facts and arguments, and they draft questions to be asked by the justices during the oral argument. At this stage (and even at the initial reception of the briefs), the court may receive **Amicus Curiae** letters from interested parties in civil society.



6. On **oral argument** days, each side (prosecution and defense) is usually allotted 30 minutes to present their arguments and to answer numerous questions by the justices.

Oral arguments tend to be scheduled on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays of the first two weeks of the month. Generally, the court therefore has about 6 argument days, and hears roughly 10 cases per month, October to April, though federal holidays and other factors may change this schedule.

As a rule of thumb, May and June are reserved for writing the court's decisions, though emergency pleas and urgent cases may still be scheduled and heard that late in the court's term.

7. During argument weeks, the justices go into **Conference** on Wednesdays and Fridays. Present in these meetings are only the 9 justices. No clerks are included as these meetings are completely secret. In these meetings, each justice states how they will rule, explaining their opinion.

Wednesday afternoons (usually) the justices decide the Monday cases; Thursdays they meet for the Rule of 4, and Fridays they decide the Tuesday and Wednesday cases.

8. The Conferences conclude with deciding which one of the justices in the majority must write up the mandatory **Majority Opinion** for the decision, which is the explanation of the ruling that will be filed officially.

Often, a justice in the opposition drafts a **Dissenting Opinion** that may be joined by other justices who feel the same. Sometimes, a **Concurrent Opinion** is filed, too, which agrees with the ruling but not with its logic, offering an alternative logic. The writing of opinions can take many months and is secret from the rest of the country, and from anyone besides the justices and their clerks who help with the drafting.

9. Once all opinions are filed -the mandatory Majority Opinion and the optional opinions- the **official announcement** of the rulings takes place. Many announcements take place in June.

SCOTUS and DEI

Though justices are supposed to be objective, and unbiased, they are human and often ideological patterns emerge. Moreover, presidents nominate justices for their ideology. Generally, over many decades -haltingly but nevertheless, SCOTUS had advanced civil rights, such as in the cases *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), *Loving v. Virginia* (1967), (*Roe v. Wade*, 1973), *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), to name a few.

Today, however, the court's persistent right-wing drift is causing concern in our society, as recent decisions have rolled-back or severely weakened civil rights protections. The rulings (among others) in:

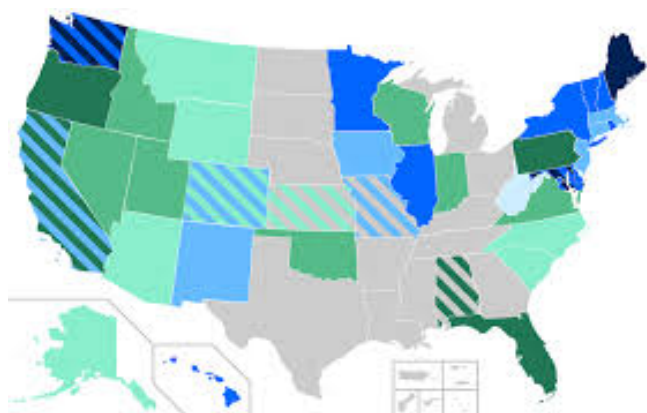
- [Shelby County v. Holder](#) (2013) gutted the 1965 Voting Rights Act.
- [Brnovich v. Democratic National Committee](#) (2021) made it more difficult to challenge voting laws that discriminate racially.
- [Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health](#) (2022) overturned *Roe v. Wade* and women's constitutional right to an abortion
- [303 Creative LLC v. Elenis](#) (2023) weakened LGBTQ+ rights by allowing businesses to refuse serving them, and
- [Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard](#) (2023) nixed race-conscious college admissions, effectively ending affirmative action in higher education.

More changes are in the works as we are waiting to learn the court's rulings on issues concerning DEI programs, race-neutral stopgaps for affirmative action, gender-affirming care bans, and others.

Do you agree with the right-leaning court's baseline argument that they enact "colorblind" jurisprudence, rejecting race-conscious policies that -in their view- violate the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause?

The following readings and media, classroom activity, and homework assignment takes you deeper into these issues and questions so that you emerge with a greater understanding of the importance and effects of the Supreme Court's decisions on our lives.

Student Learning Outcomes



1. Explain the Supreme Court's process for selecting, hearing, and deciding cases.
2. Analyze how statutory construction, judicial review, and case selection shape SCOTUS rulings.
3. Evaluate the impact of landmark civil rights rulings (e.g., *Brown v. Board*) versus recent rollbacks (e.g., *Dobbs*).
4. Debate the ideological shifts in SCOTUS and their consequences for DEI, affirmative action, and LGBTQ+ rights.
5. Assess the "colorblind jurisprudence" argument and its implications for the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause.

[9.1: SCOTUS Ruling Process - Readings and Media](#)

[9.2: SCOTUS Ruling Process - Classroom Activity](#)

[9.3: SCOTUS Ruling Process - Homework](#)

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9.1: SCOTUS Ruling Process - Readings and Media

1. Lumen Learning

Lumen Learning. (n.d.). *Judicial decision-making and implementation by the Supreme Court*. Monroe Community College, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/atd-monroecc-american-government/chapter/judicial-decision-making-and-implementation-by-the-supreme-court/>

Deepen your knowledge of the process at which SCOTUS arrives at rulings (aka opinions or decisions), by reading this textbook chapter. The court's constitutional powers are also discussed along with checks and balances to them. Especially pay attention to the practice questions at the end of the article to make sure that you have comprehended everything correctly.

2. Cheryl Ingram

YouTube. (2023, June 29). *Supreme Court strikes down affirmative action in college admissions* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCD5rvThfhl>

SCOTUS rulings that have significantly impacted DEI issues in our country are discussed in this video (with sometimes colorful language). Take notes on the different cases discussed and think about your own opinion on them.

3. FOX 32

Fox 32 Chicago. (2023, June 29). *Supreme Court rejects affirmative action in college admissions, holds race can't be used* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3iHGoC-T2A>

Contemplate reverse discrimination when viewing this video. What is its definition? How did the court impact reverse discrimination, and how does it change what discrimination means, in general? What is the effect of this ruling on DEI programs in general? And, do you think that setting "a more level playing field," as mentioned in the video, leads to a fairer and more just nation?



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9.2: SCOTUS Ruling Process - Classroom Activity

Debate: SCOTUS Decisions and DEI

In this organized debate we further investigate our understanding and feelings about major Supreme Court decisions and their DEI impact.

You are divided into **6 groups, two per debate topic** (one pro, one con), and you either have to research the pro OR con side of ONE of the following questions:

1. Has the Supreme Court's ban on race-conscious admissions (*Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*) effectively closed a critical pathway to upward mobility for Black students?
2. If SCOTUS upholds state bans on gender-affirming care for minors (*United States v. Skrmetti*), does it violate transgender youth's 14th Amendment rights or protect them from "experimental" medical treatments?
3. Did rulings like *Brnovich v. DNC* (2021), which weakened the Voting Rights Act's protections against racial discrimination, disproportionately suppress Latino voter turnout through laws like strict ID requirements and polling-place closures?

- Research FIVE salient arguments to support your side.
- Debate it with the group that researched the opposing arguments.
- Discuss the issue with the whole class, then we move on to the next topic.



Evaluation Rubric

Uses appropriate language (incl. POL vocabulary)

1-3 4- 6 7-10

Presents 5 major arguments

1-3 4- 6 7-10

Cites statistics, studies, or theories for every argument

1-3 4- 6 7-10

Time limits (as specified) are adhered to

1-3 4- 6 7-10

Monitored and engaged in small and large group discussions

1-3 4- 6 7-10

[1-3 needs improvement, 4-6 satisfactory-good; 7-10 very good-excellent; Maximum points possible = 50]

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9.3: SCOTUS Ruling Process - Homework

Discussion Post: SCOTUS and DEI

1. Use this [Docket Search](#) link (and do your own research), to identify, describe, and review three (3) DEI related cases the US Supreme Court ruled on during the last term.

Do you agree with the court's decisions? Briefly explain why or why not, in light of civil rights and democracy.

2. Then choose three (3) cases from the upcoming term even if they have not been heard or ruled on. How should they be decided in your opinion, or if already decided, do you agree with the court?

Requirements

1. **Read** the assignment instructions carefully and do the necessary research.
2. **Ground** your opinion in the readings and media.
3. Write at least **400 words**
4. Respond to the posts of **TWO** of your peers. Responses to peers should raise significant points of agreement and/or disagreement, and encourage peers to reflect upon their responses and positions taken in their initial posts.
5. If you can, please respond to any questions from other students regarding your postings (this is not mandatory).



Evaluation Rubric

1. Content & Research (40 points)

- Thoroughness (20 pts):
 - Did the student identify and describe three past cases (2024-2025 term) accurately?
 - Did they select and analyze three upcoming cases (2025-2026 term) with clear reasoning?
- Research Depth (20 pts):
 - Are sources (SCOTUS docket, news articles, legal analyses) properly referenced?
 - Does the response demonstrate understanding of DEI legal debates?

2. Critical Analysis & Argumentation (30 points)

- Legal & Democratic Implications (15 pts):
 - Does the student provide a well-reasoned opinion on past rulings (agree/disagree) with civil rights and democracy in mind?
- Forward-Looking Perspective (15 pts):
 - For upcoming cases, does the student propose a justified stance on how they *should* be decided?

3. Peer Engagement (20 points)

- Response Quality (10 pts per peer reply, 20 pts total):
 - Did the student engage meaningfully with two peers (50+ words each)?
 - Do responses raise substantive points (agreement/disagreement) and encourage reflection?

4. Writing & Mechanics (10 points)

- Clarity & Structure (5 pts):
 - Is the post well-organized (clear intro, case summaries, analysis, conclusion)?
- Grammar & Style (5 pts):
 - Is the writing free of errors and academically appropriate?

(Total Points: 100)

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

10: Political Economy - Fiscal and Monetary Policy

When it comes to creating and guiding a healthy economy, governments utilize two tools: fiscal, and monetary policy.

In this learning object, we discuss what a healthy economy is, what these macroeconomic tools are, how they work and who is responsible for them.

Here is a definition in a nutshell:

Fiscal Policy = taxing and spending

Monetary Policy = lending and borrowing

Governments use taxation, spending, lending, and borrowing to influence the economy

and move it toward the three main economic goals that define a healthy economy:

1. **Price Stability** - keeping prices relatively constant is important in healthy economies; they should not rise too quickly, resulting in **inflation**, or fall too drastically, causing deflation. As nothing in reality remains constant, though, governments aim for gradual price increases, ideally just under **2% annually**. Fiscal control allows individuals to make informed decisions on investing, saving, or borrowing, while maintaining currency stability, and aiding economic growth.

2. **Economic Growth** - the increase of goods and services in an economy at a specified time frame (e.g., annually), is measured in Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Ideal for the United States -an already highly developed economy- is a **GDP** increase of about **3-4% annually**. Successful economies reach continued growth through investment, innovation, a smart use of natural resources, and adequate regulation, to name a few. A healthy economy lifts living standards, incomes, and maintains funding for social programs.

3. **Full Employment** - in a healthy economy, anyone who wants to work should be able to. The government aims at an **ideal unemployment rate of 3-4%**. Please note here, that "full employment" does not mean 0% unemployment because there are always people who cannot work, are in between jobs, or are students, etc. This is the third important economic goal because high unemployment can lead to social unrest, and political instability.

Interestingly, the United States does *not* (at this point in time) adopt the **fourth economic policy** goal that many other countries measure:

4. **Shared Prosperity** - Germany, Norway, Finland, Mexico, Columbia, Ethiopia ,and Rwanda are some of the countries that integrate a measure of shared prosperity as a gage of how healthy their economies are. The **Gini Index** (or Gini Coefficient), measures wealth inequality within a country. Ranging from **0%-100%** (perfect equality to perfect inequality), governments measure if their economic growth benefits only the wealthy or a broader segment of society. Among developed economies, Norway tends to score best with a Gini Index of about 22%, South Africa among the worst with 63%, and the United States tends to be in the "mildly unequal" place of about 42%.

In this learning module, our readings, classroom activity, and homework assignments teach you the basics of each of these policy tools, who is responsible for them, and what the processes are to optimize them toward reaching the economic policy goals.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Define and distinguish between fiscal and monetary policy, including their tools, goals, and institutional frameworks.



2. Analyze the impact of fiscal policy (government spending and taxation) on national output, employment, and inflation.
3. Evaluate the role of the Federal Reserve in conducting monetary policy and its influence on interest rates, credit availability, and price stability.
4. Apply macroeconomic models (e.g., IS-LM, AD-AS) to predict the short-run and long-run effects of policy decisions.
5. Interpret economic indicators (GDP, CPI, unemployment rate) to assess the timing and effectiveness of policy interventions.
6. Critically assess policy trade-offs, such as inflation vs. unemployment or short-term stimulus vs. long-term debt sustainability.
7. Use real-world data to simulate or evaluate policy outcomes in terms of social justice.

[10.1: Political Economy - Readings and Media](#)

[10.2: Political Economy - Classroom Activity](#)

[10.3: Political Economy - Homework](#)

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10.1: Political Economy - Readings and Media

The following resources explain fiscal policy and provide an application to human rights and social equity.

1. Crash Course

(2015, September 16). *Fiscal Policy and Stimulus - Crash Course Economics #8*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otmgFQHbaDo>

Access an overview of fiscal policy with this video, detailing how government spending and taxation influence a nation's economy. The objectives of fiscal policy are explained, expansionary and contracting approaches are differentiated, and their impacts on economic growth and stability are discussed.

2. Lumen Learning

Lumen Learning. (n.d.). *Goals of monetary policy*. SUNY Herkimer County Community College Macroeconomics. <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/su...onetary-policy>

This article reviews in greater detail the economic policy goals sketched out in our introduction page. Specifically learn about the mechanisms of monetary policy when it comes to creating or maintaining a healthy economy.

 bANrGr1aydMfTaKg7

3. Politics and Rights Review

Politics and Rights Review. (2024, August 7). <https://politicsrights.com/tax-and-r...ocial-justice/>

After learning about the basics of fiscal and monetary policy, explore the intersection of tax policies and human rights in this article that argues that taxation is not merely a tool for funding government but a fundamental instrument for advancing human rights and social equity. It emphasizes that progressive tax systems -where higher earners pay more- can reduce inequality and support essential public services, while regressive systems deepen poverty and exclusion.

Note that the author critiques poorly designed tax exemptions that favor the wealthy and undermine justice, calling instead for fiscal policies that prioritize human needs and uphold dignity. By viewing poverty as a result of political choices, the article positions tax reform as a moral imperative for governments committed to social justice. Do you agree?



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10.2: Political Economy - Classroom Activity

Case Study Analysis and Discussion

1. You are assigned to ONE of three groups, and your task is to analyze a real-world fiscal policy:

Group 1: The U.S. Child Tax Credit Expansion (2021) – Did it reduce poverty?

Group 2: The progressive Taxation during the 1960s – Did it improve social equity?

Group 3: Kansas Tax Cuts (2012–2017) – Did "trickle-down" economics fail?

2. Group Presentations of the Findings

- Was your policy expansionary or contractionary?
- Did it advance human rights (per *Politics and Rights Review*)?
- What were the unintended consequences?



While conducting your research and crafting your answers, keep in mind the requirements spelled out in the evaluation rubric below.

Evaluation Rubric

1. Depth of Analysis (8 Points)

- Excellent (7–8 pts): Responses demonstrate a nuanced understanding of fiscal policy's role in social justice, citing specific examples from readings (e.g., "The Politics and Rights Review argues that regressive taxes exacerbate poverty, as seen in...").
- Proficient (5–6 pts): Identifies key ideas but lacks detailed connections to sources.
- Basic (3–4 pts): Superficial analysis (e.g., "Taxes should be fair" without evidence).

2. Use of Sources (6 Points)

- Excellent (5–6 pts): Directly references at least two assigned materials (e.g., "Crash Course explains contractionary policy as..., which conflicts with the human rights perspective because...").
- Proficient (3–4 pts): Mentions one source vaguely.
- Basic (1–2 pts): No citations or misrepresents sources.

3. Critical Thinking & Originality (4 Points)

- Excellent (4 pts): Offers unique insights (e.g., "While Lumen Learning focuses on economic stability, human rights critiques reveal trade-offs like...").
- Proficient (2–3 pts): Repeats ideas from class without added reflection.
- Basic (1 pt): Restates prompts without analysis.

4. Clarity & Structure (2 Points)

- Excellent (2 pts): Organized, concise, and free of errors.
- Proficient (1 pt): Some clarity issues but coherent.
- Basic (0 pts): Unclear or disjointed.

(Total Points: 20)

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10.3: Political Economy - Homework

Analyzing Fiscal Policy and Social Justice

Read the article “*Tax and Rights: The Fiscal Path to Social Justice*” carefully. Then, respond to the following questions in a short-answer format (approx. 100 words each).

Use specific examples from the article to support your answers:

The Central Argument

What is the relationship between tax policy and social justice? How does this perspective differ from traditional economic views of taxation?

2. Policy Evaluation:

How do progressive and regressive tax systems affect economic inequality? Why does the author argue that progressive taxation is essential for realizing human rights?

3. Critical Thinking:

The article claims that poverty is the result of political choices. Do you agree with this assertion? Why or why not? Support your answer with reasoning and evidence.

4. Application:

Choose a current or historical example of a country that implemented either a progressive or regressive tax policy. Explain how this policy affected social outcomes, and assess it through the lens of the article’s arguments.

5. Reflection:

How should governments balance the need for economic growth with their obligation to promote equality and protect rights through fiscal policy?



Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (10 pts)	Good (8 pts)	Satisfactory (6 pts)	Needs Improvement (4 pts or less)
Understanding of Key Concepts	Demonstrates thorough understanding of fiscal policy and its link to social justice	Demonstrates good understanding with minor inaccuracies	Demonstrates basic understanding but lacks depth or clarity	Misunderstands core concepts or provides vague/inaccurate explanations
Use of Evidence from Article	Effectively integrates specific, relevant examples or quotes	Integrates examples, but not always specific or well explained	Mentions the article with limited evidence or detail	Rarely or never references the article
Critical Thinking and Analysis	Provides insightful, original analysis and reflection	Provides thoughtful analysis, though somewhat conventional	Shows basic analysis with limited depth	Lacks analysis or provides simplistic reasoning
Organization and Clarity	Well-organized, clearly written, with smooth transitions	Mostly clear and organized, with minor lapses	Some disorganization or unclear phrasing	Disorganized, difficult to follow, or poorly written
Grammar and Mechanics	Virtually no errors; polished academic writing	Minor errors that do not impede understanding	Noticeable errors that occasionally affect clarity	Frequent errors that impede comprehension

(Total Points: 50)

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

11: Economic Theory

In this learning module, discover two of the main theories that address:

how healthy economies should be organized

how much of a role governments should play in regulating economies

whom economies ought to serve, and

how markets should best function to benefit everyone.

In particular, we examine **Keynesianism**, and **Neoliberalism** by defining them, placing them in their historical context in our country, and shining a light on their social justice effects and underpinnings.



For much of the past 200 years or so, economic theory in the western world and beyond was characterized by a "battle of ideas" between versions of capitalism and socialism, from which the more modern versions of Neoliberalism and Keynesianism emerged. Read about this battle in the Shields article in the next section, after having been introduced to the two key thinkers we study here, John Maynard Keynes, and Friedrich von Hayek.

According to **Keynesianism**, developed by British economist **John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946)**, a healthy economy needs active government intervention. Governments ought to focus on increasing consumer demand and lowering unemployment, if necessary with fiscal stimulus payments and job creation; this is especially crucial during economic downturns. Historically, Keynesianism was applied during the

Great Depression (1929-1940) by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Great Recession (2008-2010) by President Barack Obama, and the

COVID-19 Pandemic (2020-2023), by Presidents Donald Trump and Joseph Biden.*

Neoliberalism, on the other hand, advocates deregulation, privatization, and lower government spending. It has grown out of the theories of economists such as **Friedrich von Hayek (1899-1992)**. Neoliberals contend that the most effective way to distribute resources is through free markets rather than government intervention. Under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, this philosophy rose to prominence in the 1980s, bringing with it welfare reform, trade liberalization, and tax cuts.

Knowing these conflicting frameworks is more crucial than ever as the United States struggles with issues like **inequality, climate change, and economic uncertainty**. In order to ascertain how both theories continue to influence policy discussions and lived realities, this module asks you to examine their tenets, applications, and social ramifications.

After you have familiarized yourself with the foundations of their thought, we will critique them via readings, our classroom activity, and the homework assignment.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Define the core principles of Neoliberalism and Keynesianism and identify their historical origins.
2. Compare and contrast the role of government and markets in each framework.
3. Analyze real-world U.S. economic policies through the lens of both ideologies.
4. Evaluate the social and economic outcomes of Neoliberal and Keynesian policies on different populations.
5. Formulate evidence-based arguments supporting or challenging these frameworks in contemporary contexts.

*Please note that these time frames are debatable.

[11.1: Economic Theory - Readings and Media](#)

[11.2: Economic Theory - Classroom Activity](#)

[11.3: Economic Theory - Homework](#)

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11.1: Economic Theory - Readings and Media

1. School of Life: Neoliberalism

The School of Life. (2016, June xx). *Political Theory – Friedrich Hayek* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHsCkinrCPE>

This video introduces the main tenets of Friedrich Hayek's thought that was associated with liberal economics (aka classical liberalism or capitalism), and with neoliberalism. Hayek (1899-1992) argued that free markets (or *laissez-faire*) are essential for economic prosperity and individual liberty. In his book, *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), he critiqued socialist central planning, instead advocating for individual freedom and limited government intervention.

He theorized that economics is much too complex to be guided by a government and if done so, it would lead to loss of individual freedom and efficiency. Hayek revived the idea of the 'invisible hand' (Adam Smith), and that economies or markets ought to regulate themselves.

Hayek criticized socialism as leading to authoritarianism by placing too much power in the hands of government, even if its intent was the opposite. Instead, he vigorously supported limited government, the rule of law, and individual liberty, while opposing state interventions that undermine market processes. Hayek's ideas continue to shape neoliberal and libertarian thought, and his warnings about state overreach remain influential in debates over regulation and government control today.

In sum, Hayek championed a vision of freedom rooted in economic decentralization, arguing that individual liberty and prosperity flourish best in societies that trust in the self-organizing nature of free markets. Do you agree with him?



1. School of Life: Keynesianism

The School of Life. (2016, June). *Political Theory – John Maynard Keynes* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtAeINU3FKM>

Compare Hayek's ideas to Keynes's now with this video. He questioned laissez-faire doctrine (Hayek) and argued that economies experience high unemployment because of insufficient aggregate demand not insufficient supply. With this thought, John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946) transformed economics in the 20th century.

The central tenet of Keynes's theory is that private demand declines during recessions. He promoted aggressive government intervention through deficit spending on public works projects, for example, in order to increase demand, employment, and eventually business investment. This was opposed to Hayek's solution of letting markets gradually self-correct.

Keynes's well-known tenet, "In the long run, we're all dead," sums this up: action must be taken immediately rather than waiting for external market forces to take over.

Keynes's impact was profound: his ideas shaped post-WWII economic policies worldwide, leading to institutions like the IMF and World Bank. Though challenged in the 1970s by stagflation and critics like Hayek, Keynesian policies resurged during the 2008 financial crisis, proving the enduring relevance of his approach. What do you think of Keynes's way of economic problem solving?

3. Sydney Business Insights

Shields, J., (2020). *From neo-liberalism to neo-Keynesianism*. Sydney Business Insights. Retrieved June 25, 2025, from <https://sbi.sydney.edu.au/from-neo-liberalism-to-neo-keynesianism/>

After learning about neoliberalism, turn to this article which outlines the challenges neoliberalism faced especially during the 2008 recession and the COVID-19 crisis that forced government to embrace Keynesian rescue policies such as stimulus checks, and deficit spending. While these policies helped the broad public, Shields argues that their long-term effect benefited elites by concentrating finances and political power in their hands. Has public policy become a tool for private gain rather than social welfare?

4. MROnline

Patnaik, U. (2024, May 25). *Neo-liberalism has increased mass poverty*. MROnline. Posted on May 25, 2024. Retrieved June 26, 2025, from <https://mronline.org/2024/05/25/neo-liberalism-has-increased-mass-poverty/>

Let us now look at how neoliberalism has impacted poverty via this case study set in India. Patnaik examines the World Bank claim that neoliberal policies have lifted millions of people out of poverty. She investigates this by comparing it to food intake statistics and finds that, in fact, the opposite holds true, that neoliberal policies such as deregulation and austerity have led to a decrease in living standards. Read this article carefully and think about our society and its problems. This helps you with our class activity and homework assignment.



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11.2: Economic Theory - Classroom Activity

Policy Scenario Simulation

In this class period we compare Neoliberal and Keynesian economic policy through the lens of an economic crisis.

Imagine that we are faced with

- 10% unemployment
- 8% inflation, and
- a shrinking economy with a -3% GDP.

Our economy is in a **recession**. Business leaders and labor unions are up in arms and are trying to influence government policy.

How do we get the economy back on track, fulfilling the economic policy goals outlined in our module introduction? Which theorist's ideas prove more valuable and effective in this scenario?



1. Pair up with a student next to you and compare the basic principles of Neoliberalism and Keynesianism.

Create a chart, answering these questions:

- What is the role of government in the economy?
- How does each view the role of markets?
- Can you provide two typical policies for each?
- Which historical examples can you provide where each theory was practiced?

2. After that, your class is divided into two groups, each functioning as **presidential advisors**.

You either find yourself in the neoliberal adviser group or in the Keynesian advisor group:

- Propose two or three policy solutions based on your assigned economic ideology.
- Justify your decisions based on your theoretical principles (e.g., why do you think that policy x will reduce inflation?)
- How are your solutions affecting the lower class in the short- and long-term?

3. Class discussion

- Which approach feels more realistic?
- Which groups would benefit or lose from each set of policies?
- Can you see how each of these economic policy suggestions play out in other current real-world scenarios such as climate, healthcare, or student debt policy?
- Based on your findings, which theorist and political party should the economically disadvantaged support?



Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (4 pts)	Proficient (3 pts)	Developing (2 pts)	Beginning (1 pt)

Criteria	Excellent (4 pts)	Proficient (3 pts)	Developing (2 pts)	Beginning (1 pt)
Understanding of Ideologies (SLO 1 & 2)	Demonstrates a clear, nuanced understanding of both Neoliberalism and Keynesianism, including core principles and historical context.	Demonstrates a clear understanding of both ideologies, with minor gaps or inaccuracies.	Shows basic understanding but with significant misconceptions or oversimplifications.	Demonstrates minimal or confused understanding of the ideologies.
Application to U.S. Policy (SLO 3)	Accurately applies both frameworks to real or simulated U.S. policy examples with strong justification.	Applies both ideologies to policy examples with some justification.	Attempts to apply ideologies to policies but with unclear or weak justification.	Fails to connect ideologies to relevant policies or misapplies them.
Group Participation & Collaboration	Actively contributes to group work, demonstrates leadership or facilitation, and engages respectfully with others' ideas.	Participates consistently and contributes useful insights to the group.	Participates minimally or inconsistently; contributions may lack clarity or relevance.	Rarely participates or disrupts group dynamics.
Presentation of Policy Scenario (SLO 4 & 5)	Presents a clear, persuasive, and well-reasoned argument from the assigned ideological perspective with creative and realistic solutions.	Presents a coherent argument with mostly clear reasoning and relevant solutions.	Presentation lacks clarity or depth; reasoning is underdeveloped or inconsistent.	Presentation is unclear, unprepared, or largely off-topic.
Critical Thinking & Reflection (SLO 4 & 5)	Demonstrates deep reflection and critical engagement with the consequences of each ideology, including effects on various social groups.	Demonstrates thoughtful engagement and identifies some social consequences.	Demonstrates limited reflection; may overlook key social or political impacts.	Demonstrates little to no reflection or critical engagement.

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11.3: Economic Theory - Homework

Discussion Post

Write an essay that compares neoliberal and Keynesian principles on the issue of [racial wealth disparities](#).

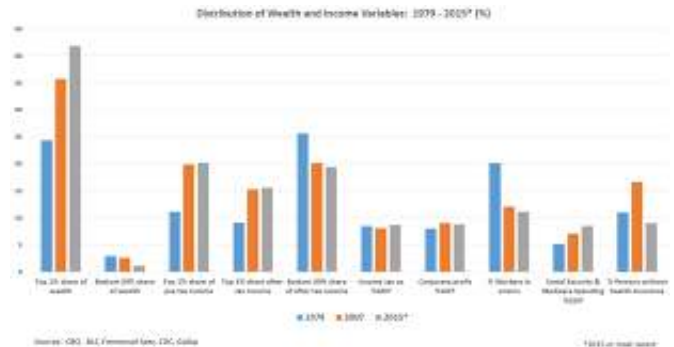
1. **Explain** the problem of racial wealth disparity in our country.
2. Which set of policies would **solve** the problem better: Neoliberalism or Keynesianism? Explain your decision.
3. Support your position with at least one existing or current **policy example**.
4. What are some **advantages and disadvantages** that would affect different groups under your selected framework?

In your discussion post, adhere to these guidelines:

1. Read the assignment instructions carefully and do the necessary readings and research.
2. Explain your answer using the readings.
3. Write at least 400 words.
4. Respond to the posts of two of your peers. Responses to peers should raise significant points of agreement or disagreement and encourage peers to reflect upon their responses and positions taken in their initial posts.
5. If you can, please respond to any questions from other students regarding your postings (this is not mandatory).

Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (A) (90–100 points)	Good (B) (80–89 points)	Satisfactory (C) (70–79 points)	Needs Improvement (D/F) (0–69 points)
Understanding of the Issue (25 pts)	Clearly and insightfully explains the causes and scope of racial wealth disparities; demonstrates deep understanding.	Accurately describes the issue with some insight; explanation is clear and informed.	Basic explanation provided; limited depth or clarity.	Lacks clarity or depth; misrepresents or omits key aspects of the issue.
Application of Economic Frameworks (25 pts)	Skillfully compares Neoliberalism and Keynesianism; clearly articulates how each addresses inequality and government intervention.	Compares both frameworks well; identifies their views on inequality and government's role.	Mentions both theories but with limited comparison or application to the issue.	Inaccurate or minimal discussion of the economic frameworks.
Use of Evidence & Policy Example (20 pts)	Integrates a relevant, well-explained policy example; effectively uses readings and research to support arguments.	Provides a clear policy example and refers to readings or research to support points.	Includes a basic policy example with minimal explanation or connection to readings.	Lacks or misuses policy example; little or no use of assigned materials or research.
Analysis of Framework Impact (15 pts)	Thoroughly analyzes pros and cons of selected framework for different groups; shows awareness of complexity and nuance.	Identifies key advantages and disadvantages with some analysis of group impacts.	Addresses pros and cons generally, but lacks depth or clarity on group impacts.	Missing or vague analysis of how the framework affects different groups.



Criteria	Excellent (A) (90–100 points)	Good (B) (80–89 points)	Satisfactory (C) (70–79 points)	Needs Improvement (D/F) (0–69 points)
Writing, Structure, & Word Count (10 pts)	Clear, well-organized, and engaging writing; meets or exceeds 400 words; free of grammar or spelling issues.	Well-written and mostly organized; meets 400 words; few minor errors.	Some organization or clarity issues; close to 400 words; several grammar or style errors.	Unclear, disorganized, or below word count; multiple errors that hinder comprehension.
Peer Engagement (5 pts)	Responds thoughtfully to at least 2 peers, raising insightful questions or points; shows active engagement.	Responds to 2 peers with relevant points or questions.	Responds to at least 1 peer with basic engagement.	No peer responses or responses lack substance.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

12: Elections and Voting

Focus on the effects of **race on elections and voting** in this learning module, asking questions such as:

- How do electoral strategies use race as a mobilizer?
- How does race shape voting patterns? and
- What is the effect of race on party coalitions?

From the beginning of American independence until today, the United States's electoral system has been **deeply influenced by race as a fundamental political factor**, and is intimately intertwined with racial inclusion and exclusion struggles, from the

[Constitution's Three-Fifth Compromise](#) (1787), to the

[Voting Rights Act](#) (1965), and

our [current Supreme Court challenges](#).

Today, racial influences on voting choices, party alliances, and candidate tactics, are evident in **direct statements, implicit messages, or coded language**. Racial background continues to be one of the most influential factors determining voting decisions in our country.

For example, **black voters** maintained strong Democratic support in every presidential election after the Civil Rights movement, yet **white voters** consistently supported Republican candidates, especially during presidential contests. Can these parties rest on their laurels, though? Can they assume that their voter base remains loyal to them?

The political preferences of **Latine, and Asian-American** voters seem to call this in question. While their importance increases in battleground states, their electoral choices are increasingly complex; our established political parties are worried about a grand realignment in the pattern of support among voters.

This raises critical questions about **campaign tactics** involving racial identities for representation and voter mobilization. The practice of appealing to racial identities for representation leads to deepened polarization, resulting in election contests that become increasingly tribal in nature.

In the following pages, we dive deep into examining racial dynamics in elections, utilizing both theoretical analyses of democratic values and practical assessments of power systems.

[Student Learning Outcomes](#)

1. Identify and explain how racial identity influences voting behavior, campaign strategy, and party alignment in U.S. elections.
2. Analyze the use of explicit and implicit racial cues in political communication and assess their impact on electoral outcomes.
3. Evaluate the ethical and democratic implications of racial appeals in political campaigns, including coded language and micro-targeting.
4. Compare and contrast voting patterns among major racial and ethnic groups across different levels of government (presidential, congressional, gubernatorial).
5. Apply theories of racial cueing and voter identity to contemporary election case studies, including the 2024 presidential race.
6. Develop and defend evidence-based arguments regarding the role of race in democratic representation and political mobilization.
7. Reflect on how their own perspectives and identities influence their understanding of race in electoral politics



[12.1: Elections and Voting - Readings and Media](#)

[12.2: Elections and Voting - Classroom Activity](#)

[12.3: Elections and Voting - Homework](#)

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12.1: Elections and Voting - Readings and Media

1. Research Archive of Rising Scholars

Qiao, B. (2024, October 18). *Demographic influences on U.S. election outcomes across levels: A machine learning approach* [Preprint]. Research Archive of Rising Scholars. <https://doi.org/10.58445/rars.1785>

Read here Benjamin Qiao's examination of how race and education affect election results at presidential, senatorial, and gubernatorial levels through his research which employs contemporary machine learning methods. The research demonstrates that racial demographics serve as the leading factors which determine election outcomes particularly during presidential elections. The influence of race proves stronger than other demographic factors at both senatorial and gubernatorial levels but reaches its peak during national elections. The study shows that education levels also influence election results but to a lesser extent than racial demographics.

2. Niskanen Center

Niskanen Center. (2018, April 11). *Episode 14: How racial stereotypes impacted voting for Obama and Trump*. Retrieved July 20, 2025, from niskanencenter.org/1clark.dirzon.com+1

Now that we know how important race is in election prediction, in this article, learn how racial factors persistently determine American voting behavior despite the disappearance of explicit racist campaign discourse. Specifically discussed is how implicit racial attitudes and longstanding stereotypes influenced voting behavior in the 2008 and 2016 presidential elections.

The research examines how voters who maintained negative stereotypes about African Americans refused to back Barack Obama even though he presented a centrist agenda, and how racial prejudices helped Donald Trump win by using identity-based campaign strategies. Grasp the impact of race, identity, and social cognition on American electoral politics through political psychology and voter data analysis.

As you read, also think about whether Obama's victories (2008 and 2012) marked the beginning of a “post-racial” political period as some researchers believed, or whether the contrary is true: that deeply racial factors remain integrated into the psychological foundations of American politics.

3. Italian Journal of Electoral Studies

Giuliani, M. (2025). Gender and race in Kamala Harris's defeat. A cross-state analysis of U.S. 2024 presidential election. *Italian Journal of Electoral Studies (IJES)*, Research Note 6, 1–23, Just Accepted. <https://doi.org/10.36253/qoe-17135> (Click the PDF in the upper right corner).

In light of race as demographic election determiner and mobilizer, as introduced above, how do we explain Kamala Harris's election defeat in 2024? In his 2025 research, Giuliani, notes how gender and race influenced Kamala Harris's defeat in the 2024 presidential election. This research uses cross-state data to ask: Did Harris receive better support from states with higher numbers of women voters and Black voters? How about support for her from states with large Hispanic populations? States with high numbers of female voters? How do her numbers compare to those of Joe Biden?

Economic and political factors including campaign intensity and state-level ballot measures are also investigated, but the big discovery is that demographic identity failed to ensure electoral victory. The study reveals that identity politics remains complex and demographic affinity does not automatically lead to success anymore. Rather, what is needed are targeted outreach and policy engagement.





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12.2: Elections and Voting - Classroom Activity

Debates: DEI and Elections

Let's hear the different viewpoints on questions of race, elections, and voting.

For this activity, you are divided into 6 groups, two per debate topic (one pro, one con).

You either have to research the **pro OR con** side of ONE of the following questions:

1. Should political campaigns explicitly appeal to racial or ethnic identities to mobilize voters?
2. Should race-based redistricting (racial gerrymandering) be preserved as a tool of electoral fairness or reformed to promote broader integration?
3. Was Kamala Harris's loss in 2024 more shaped by race, gender, policy positions, or campaign strategy?

- Research FIVE salient arguments to support your side.
- Debate it with the group that researched the opposing arguments.
- Discuss the issue with the whole class.



Evaluation Rubric

Uses appropriate language (incl. POL vocabulary)

1-3 4- 6 7-10

Presents 5 major arguments

1-3 4- 6 7-10

Cites statistics, studies, or theories for every argument

1-3 4- 6 7-10

Time limits (as specified) are adhered to

1-3 4- 6 7-10

Monitored and engaged in small and large group discussions

1-3 4- 6 7-10

[1-3 needs improvement, 4-6 satisfactory-good; 7-10 very good-excellent; Maximum points possible = 50]

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12.3: Elections and Voting - Homework

Analytical Essay

Write a 400–600 word essay responding to the prompt below. Be sure to incorporate evidence from at least two assigned readings, and reference one current or recent election (local, state, or national).

Your essay should have a clear thesis, use specific examples, and demonstrate critical engagement with the material:

To what extent should racial identity be used or acknowledged in electoral campaigns?

Examine how political campaigns employ racial cues through direct or indirect methods. What is their impact on voter conduct and democracy? Explain thoroughly and support your normative position (whether they *should* or *should not* be used in elections), with examples.

Requirements

- Cite at least **two course readings** (APA or MLA format).
- Reference at least **one election example** (2008–2024)
- Engage with at least ONE of the following ideas:
 - Racial cueing and priming
 - Deracialization in campaigns
 - Racial gerrymandering
 - Voter identity and turnout patterns

Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (A)	Satisfactory (B–C)	Needs Improvement (D–F)
Argument & Clarity	Clear, well-structured, insightful	Mostly clear with some logical gaps	Unclear or disorganized
Use of Readings	Integrates readings critically	Cites readings but with limited depth	Minimal or inaccurate use of sources
Election Example	Relevant and well-analyzed	Mentioned but weakly connected	Irrelevant or missing
Critical Thinking	Demonstrates nuance and originality	Shows some reflection	Lacks depth or analysis
Mechanics	Error-free, well-edited	Some grammar or formatting issues	Frequent errors



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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

13: Interest Groups and Lobbying

Interest or pressure groups are a powerful but often misunderstood feature of American politics. Misunderstood, because they are often decried as being unfair,

yet [our democratic system relies heavily on interest group participation](#).

Interest groups are organizations that seek to influence public policy on all levels of government -from your local, aldermanic offices to the US Capitol- by educating the public on the importance of their cause. A successful interest group pressures, or **lobbies** legislators to create policies that further their cause.

For example, sustained pressure over decades from LGBTQ+ groups such as the [Human Rights Campaign \(HRC\)](#) led to the Supreme Court's decision *Obergefell v. Hodges* - effectively federally legalizing same sex marriage in 2015.

Other civil rights **advocacy groups** are, for example the:

[NAACP \(National Association for the Advancement of Colored People\)](#)

[Southern Poverty Law Center \(SPLC\)](#)

[ACLU \(American Civil Liberties Union\)](#)

[MALDEF \(Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund\)](#)

[Asian Americans Advancing Justice \(AAJC\)](#)

[Native American Rights Fund \(NARF\)](#)

[Black Lives Matter Global Network](#), to name a few.

Aside from the many additional civil rights groups, lobbying groups can also be formed by major **business associations** such as the:

[US Chamber of Commerce \(USCC\)](#)

[American Medical Association \(AMA\)](#)

[American Federation of Labor, Congress of Industrial Organizations \(AFL-CIO\)](#)

[National Association of Manufacturers \(NAM\)](#), among many others.

In the readings and media to follow, learn about how else you could classify the myriad of organized groups in our society, along with what makes these groups so important: that they tend to energize civic society, and help define who has power and how it is exercised. You, too, can be powerful in our political system when you form or join a group!

Additionally, in this learning module, we investigate how interest groups are structured, organizational forms they take, and which methods they employ to influence government decision-making, such as:

- Lobbying
- Funding political campaigns
- Protesting or demonstrating



- Grassroots campaigning
- Commercial advertising
- Testifying in Congress
- Holding teach-ins, etc.

Why are some groups more powerful than others? What are the most successful strategies? How democratic is interest group politics?

In our analyses, we investigate two organizational models: **formal strategies**, and the **newer organizing approaches** displayed by groups like [Black Lives Matter \(BLM\)](#).

Challenge yourself in our classroom activity, where we compare and contrast both organizational methods via role-playing, and in your homework assignment by creating and defending your own, new pressure group.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Define the role and function of interest groups in the U.S. political system.
2. Differentiate between types of interest groups (e.g., economic, public interest, identity-based, single-issue) and their strategies for influence.
3. Describe and evaluate common lobbying techniques, including direct lobbying, grassroots mobilization, campaign contributions, and issue advocacy.
4. Analyze how interest groups interact with other political institutions, such as Congress, the executive branch, and the courts.
5. Assess the democratic implications of interest group influence, including issues of access, equity, and political representation.
6. Compare traditional hierarchical interest group models with decentralized, movement-based organizing strategies (e.g., Black Lives Matter).
7. Apply course concepts to create a hypothetical interest group and develop an advocacy strategy based on real-world policy issues.
8. Interpret and critique academic literature on interest groups, lobbying, and political power.
9. Engage in reflective discussion about ethical and strategic dilemmas in advocacy work, such as the use of dark money, astroturfing, or microtargeting.

[13.1: Interest Groups and Lobbying - Readings and Media](#)

[13.2: Interest Groups and Lobbying - Classroom Activity](#)

[13.3: Interest Groups and Lobbying - Homework](#)

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13.1: Interest Groups and Lobbying - Readings and Media

1. Lumen Learning

Lumen Learning. (n.d.). *Interest groups as political participation.* American Government. <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/at...participation/>

This chapter creates awareness of your essential role in American democracy through interest group participation. Joining lobby groups enables us to participate in political activities that extend beyond voting. Through lobbying, education, and advocacy, interest groups allow our participation in civic life. We can make our voices heard on important matters, so that we can help shape public policy. This reading traces how interest groups form from grassroots movements and powerful sponsorships, and how they use strategic issue framing to shape public opinion. You learn about how organized groups affect government choices, and why certain voices receive more attention than others.

2. Class, Race and Corporate Power

Pedroso, Joaquin A. (2016) "Black Lives Matter or, How to Think Like an Anarchist," *Class, Race and Corporate Power*: Vol. 4: Iss. 2, Article 4. DOI: 10.25148/CRCP.4.2.001668 Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48645487>

Learn from this article how interest group organizing goes beyond lobbying elites. Decentralized grassroots resistance has emerged as a newer strategy for working toward structural change. Black Lives Matter and similar movements adopt anarchist principles through horizontal organization, direct action, and community-based solutions, instead of hierarchical leadership and institutional lobbying.

Note that interest groups can also function outside of established structures by using collective action and mutual support to establish alternative systems of care and accountability. The model presented in this article demonstrates how interest group influence can occur through movement-building and radical democratic participation rather than traditional channels like campaign contributions or policy advocacy. How do you feel about this newer model for organizing?



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13.2: Interest Groups and Lobbying - Classroom Activity

The Battle of Interest Groups

1. Warm-Up Discussion

Compare typical features of established interest groups (AARP, NRA, labor unions) against the social movement characteristics of Black Lives Matter. How does BLM disrupt the conventional understanding of how interest groups operate?

2. Group Analysis & Scenario Building

Form groups of 3 to 4 members and choose social issues such as climate justice, housing rights, immigrant protection, or reproductive rights for your assignment. Each group needs to create an interest group and select one of these models:

- **Model A:** Traditional Interest Group
 - Build a formal leadership structure
 - Identify legislative targets and lobbying goals
 - Plan media or fundraising strategies
- **Model B:** Anarchist-Inspired Movement Group
 - Emphasize horizontal organizing and direct action
 - Focus on community-based support and mutual aid
 - Reject institutional engagement in favor of alternative structures



3. Presentations

Each group presents to the class their organizing models, goals, and challenges.

4. Debrief & Discussion

- Which organizing model is better suited to long-term change? Which one to immediate results?
- What risks do decentralized groups face? What power do they gain?
- Should all interest groups seek institutional acceptance? Why or why not?

Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Exemplary	Satisfactory
Understanding of Models	Clearly distinguishes organizing styles	Basic distinction with minor confusion
Application to Issue	Applies theory creatively and appropriately	Applies theory but lacks depth
Critical Reflection	Raises thoughtful ethical or strategic insights	Reflects on concepts without critique

13.2: Interest Groups and Lobbying - Classroom Activity is shared under a [CC BY-NC](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

13.3: Interest Groups and Lobbying - Homework

Essay: This is My Interest Group!

Create your own interest group to defend a social or political matter you care about. What is your main issue in our society? What is missing? Organize around that.

You should address the following points:

1. What is the mission of your interest group? What specific goals or policies are you trying to change, protect, or promote?
2. Which organizational model would you use (as discussed in our classroom activity)?
3. Why would you choose this model? Discuss the benefits and challenges of your approach.
4. What tactics would you use to build power, mobilize support, and influence policy or public opinion?
5. How would you address legitimacy, accountability, and sustainability in your group's structure?

Requirements

- Length: 400–600 words
- Cite at least one course reading (APA or MLA)
- Optional: include a name, logo, or slogan for your group

Evaluation Rubric



Criteria	Excellent (A)	Good (B)	Satisfactory (C)	Needs Improvement (D–F)
Mission & Goals	Clearly articulates a compelling mission and specific policy or advocacy goals	Defines a mission and general goals, with minor lack of specificity	Mission and goals are vague or underdeveloped	Lacks a clear mission or purpose
Organizing Model Choice	Clearly identifies and explains chosen model (traditional or BLM-inspired) with strong rationale	Identifies model and provides some reasoning	Identifies a model but rationale is weak or unclear	No clear organizing model or explanation provided
Analysis of Strengths & Challenges	Thoughtfully discusses advantages and trade-offs of chosen model	Addresses benefits or challenges, though unevenly	Basic discussion with limited analysis	Lacks meaningful discussion of strengths or limitations
Tactics & Strategy	Provides realistic, creative, and detailed tactics aligned with the organizing model	Describes some relevant tactics, with moderate detail	Lists tactics but with little alignment to model or mission	Tactics are unrealistic, vague, or missing
Use of Course Readings	Effectively integrates ideas from at least one course reading with proper citation	References reading(s) but integration is surface-level	Minimal or unclear reference to course materials	No evidence of engagement with course readings

Criteria	Excellent (A)	Good (B)	Satisfactory (C)	Needs Improvement (D–F)
Structure & Clarity	Essay is well-organized, clearly written, and free of grammar errors	Generally clear and organized, with few grammar issues	Some disorganization or frequent grammar problems	Disorganized, unclear, or difficult to follow
Length & Formatting	Meets word count and follows all submission guidelines	Meets most requirements with minor issues	Slightly below word count or formatting expectations	Significantly too short or missing major formatting elements

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

14: Media and Politics

Is it an exaggeration to claim that **democracies stand and fall with the quality of their media institutions**?

Perhaps not. It is even said that the media represent a “fourth estate” or the “fourth branch of government,” because of their role in informing us, the citizenry, of current events -whether political, economic, or cultural- along with interpreting them.

In this learning module, we look at how media and politics intersect, and how they shape public discussions on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Our aim here is to acquire some of the [critical media literacy skills](#) required for meaningful civic participation.

Specifically, we explore:

- different types of media that participate in political discourse
- how producers and sources and institutional forces determine what qualifies as news
- the nature of media bias, and
- how information gets tailored to match or target specific groups.

The basic understanding of these core elements enables us to **recognize the strengths and boundaries through which media operates as a democratic tool**.

Another strategic aim is reinforcing **media literacy** as the critical skill needed to handle contemporary information systems. Key strategies such as [framing](#), [false balance](#), and [misinformation](#) negatively affect public comprehension, particularly regarding scientific matters, political decisions, identity issues. We shall analyze source reliability and motivation alongside social media and political actor strategies that exploit weak media literacy for ideological purposes.

Once we have some of these foundations in place, we examine how the public DEI discourse is influenced and shaped by media, and how it is currently influencing corporate and organizational policy.

Moreover, to what extent do the media shape **binary narratives** (DEI is good or bad) by using storytelling approaches that concentrate on political outcomes?

In summary through this module, you will learn to analyze how media create political interpretations, and assess how these interpretations influence public opinions and policy decisions. Through critical evaluation of these materials, you will develop better media consumption skills while becoming more active members of our democratic society.

Our classroom activity in this module helps strengthen your understanding of concepts and issues surrounding media and politics, and in our homework assignment you get to apply creatively what you have learned.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Identify the primary functions and types of media in democratic political systems.
2. Explain how media framing, bias, and misinformation shape public understanding of political and social issues.
3. Analyze how media institutions influence debates around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).
4. Compare contrasting ideological perspectives (e.g., liberal vs. conservative) in media coverage of DEI-related events.
5. Evaluate the credibility, purpose, and framing techniques of various media sources using media literacy principles.
6. Apply critical thinking skills to interpret how media narratives affect political polarization, corporate behavior, and civic discourse.
7. Demonstrate informed and respectful engagement in group discussions about media, politics, and identity.
8. Reflect on their role as media consumers in shaping democratic participation and resisting misinformation.



[14.1: Media and Politics - Readings and Media](#)

[14.2: Media and Politics - Classroom Activity](#)

[14.3: Media and Politics - Homework](#)

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14.1: Media and Politics - Readings and Media

1. Crash Course

CrashCourse. (2016, January 16). *Media institution: Crash Course Government and Politics #44* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6F0g4N415uw>

First, establish a firm understanding of what the media are and how they play a role in politics with this video. Discover media functions and types (print, broadcast, internet, etc.), their advantages, disadvantages, and biases, along with the main factors influencing news coverage (journalists, sources, leaks, press releases, producers, etc.).

2. LIS101

LIS101. (n.d.). *Politics, mass media, and science*. LIS101: Introduction to Information Literacy. <https://lis101.com/politics-mass-media-and-science/>

This LIS101 course excerpt teaches you about political agendas and media structures which determine how people understand scientific issues and current events. The media tools of framing, false balance, and fake news are discussed, which sometimes conceal facts and give too much credibility to false information. Insufficient critical thinking and source evaluation skills can lead to information distortion through state propaganda and social media participation.

This excerpt helps you acquire essential knowledge about becoming better information consumers, an essential requirement for democratic participation, scientific understanding, and media resistance.



3. People Matters

People Matters Editorial Team. (2024, November 13). *Is DEI dead? The corporate backlash against diversity*. People Matters. <https://www.peoplesmatters.in/article/diversity-equity-inclusion/is-dei-dead-the-corporate-backlash-against-diversity-43372>

After defining media and politics, and conducting a critical assessment of coverage, we should examine how diversity equity and inclusion have become central topics for partisan media debates and political discussions. Media platforms present DEI initiatives through two opposing lenses which either show them as necessary reforms or dangerous overreach, even if these approaches intensify political polarization. For example, the Supreme Court's affirmative action decision has empowered critics while forcing corporations to abandon their DEI policy support. Meanwhile, corporate internal decisions affect political discussions, shape media coverage, public opinion. The backlash against DEI shows how political forces employ identity and cultural matters to advance their fight, placing corporate diversity initiatives at the forefront of America's ongoing ideological conflict.

That said, the authors conclude that corporate DEI programs are still alive, despite executive orders, and political and legal challenges. Interestingly, note how some companies have taken to reorganizing their DEI programs along with their communication methods so that they can still do justice to DEI.

4. RedLion

Joyce, T. (2025, July 16). Harvard Rebrands Diversity Offices, Emphasizing 'Community' Language Instead. RedLion. <https://readlion.com/harvard-rebrands-diversity-offices-emphasizing-community-language-instead/>

Read this article carefully and take notes as it is the focus of your homework assignment in this module.

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14.2: Media and Politics - Classroom Activity

A Classroom Discussion

1. Discuss with a seat neighbor: what does it mean that "the media frame the issue?"

Note down your answers, informed by the assigned readings in this module.

2. Small Group Discussion

In groups of 3 or 4, discuss all of the following questions, taking notes:

A. Crash Course Perspective:

- What are the main functions of media in a democracy?
- What are the advantages and limitations of different media types?

B. LIS101 Perspective:

- How do media tools (framing, false balance, misinformation) impact how we view science and politics?
- How do these tools affect debates about issues like climate change, vaccines, or DEI?

C. People Matters Perspective:

- How have the media portrayed the backlash against DEI initiatives?
- What role does political ideology play in shaping corporate DEI reporting?

D. Synthesis Questions:

- How would conservative-leaning and liberal-leaning media outlets frame the same DEI story differently?
- How can we protect ourselves against bias or manipulation in media content?



3. Whole-Class Debrief

- Did any of you change your mind during discussion?
- What surprised you about how DEI is being framed?
- What's the connection between media literacy and democratic citizenship?

Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (4 pts)	Good (3 pts)	Fair (2 pts)	Needs Improvement (1 pt)
Preparation	Completed all readings/videos; came prepared with notes or key points	Completed most of the assigned materials and participated actively	Some evidence of preparation; limited contribution to discussion	Unprepared; did not complete assignments; minimal participation
Participation	Consistently contributed thoughtful comments and questions	Participated regularly and showed understanding of materials	Spoke occasionally; comments sometimes off-topic or unclear	Rarely participated; did not engage in discussion
Collaboration	Listened actively; encouraged others; built on others' ideas	Showed respect and teamwork; mostly collaborative	Participated with group but showed limited engagement	Disruptive or uncooperative in group work
Understanding of Content	Demonstrated strong grasp of media framing, bias, and DEI concepts	Understood main ideas with occasional gaps	Some misunderstandings or confusion about key concepts	Did not show understanding of the material

Criteria	Excellent (4 pts)	Good (3 pts)	Fair (2 pts)	Needs Improvement (1 pt)
Critical Thinking	Made insightful connections between sources and real-world media	Identified and discussed bias or framing with some analysis	Basic analysis attempted; lacked depth or clarity	Little or no analysis of media or framing

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14.3: Media and Politics - Homework

Analytical Essay: Harvard University and DEI

Think about the recent news that Harvard University is renaming or rebranding its DEI programs. Review the "Harvard" article in the readings and media section of this module, then answer these questions in **400-500 word essay**:

1. Describe the changes Harvard is making.
2. Which role did media coverage play in this decision?
3. Analyze the social, political, and institutional circumstances that prompted this change.
4. How does the rebranding reflect broader political narratives around identity, inclusion, and institutional autonomy?
5. Do you think reframing DEI efforts as "community" or "belonging" will be effective? Why or why not?

Support your argument with references to recent news, class readings, and at least one scholarly or journalistic source, such as our "Harvard" article.



Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (5 pts)	Good (4 pts)	Fair (3 pts)	Needs Improvement (1-2 pts)
Thesis & Argument	Clear, focused, and original thesis; strong, persuasive argument	Clear thesis; sound argument	Basic thesis; argument lacks depth	Unclear or missing thesis; weak or incoherent argument
Use of Evidence & Sources	Excellent use of class readings and outside sources; well-integrated evidence	Good use of sources; mostly integrated	Limited or superficial use of sources	Few or no sources used; poorly integrated or off-topic
Analysis & Insight	Offers thoughtful analysis; connects ideas to broader political and media context	Some analysis; relevant connections	Basic or surface-level analysis	Minimal analysis; lacks depth or relevance
Organization & Clarity	Well-organized; smooth transitions; clear and engaging writing	Mostly organized; minor issues with flow or clarity	Some disorganization; writing occasionally unclear	Poorly organized; writing difficult to follow
Mechanics & Formatting	Virtually no grammar/spelling errors; proper APA formatting	Few errors; APA mostly correct	Several grammar or formatting errors	Many errors; formatting not followed

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

15: Public Opinion

Public opinion is another important element in democratic politics because it **represents the unified desires of citizens**

and as such, it helps to keep our government responsible and accountable. Through its influence on elections, policy-making, and public dialogue,

it may validate or contest leadership positions while also creating

the potential for social transformation.

The power of public opinion depends on how it is measured, and on citizens being well-informed. However, it must also be protected from manipulation. Whether using the

Likert scale (e.g., strongly agree to strongly disagree),

multiple choice

yes/no questions, or

open-ended questions,

politicians rely on polling data of public opinion to accurately represent their constituencies, and to craft legislation that reflects the wishes of democratic majorities.

In this module, we gather more insight about **our society's opinions concerning Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives** at a time when this discussion has become a central point of disagreement.

- **How many Americans think that DEI policies are still necessary**

to fight discrimination, and to create inclusive, fair environments?

- **Which segments of the population support this argument, and which ones oppose it?**

- **Which measurements were used, and which populations sampled?**

Racial identities, generational differences, educational backgrounds, and party affiliation may be some of the variables that influence opinions on DEI, and we will investigate them further in the following pages.

Via the readings and media on the next page, learn about the basics of public opinion polling, its effects on politics, and on existing societal DEI divisions. This way, you may gain critical insight into the importance of public opinion, and why its research remains vital in democratic societies.

After that, hone your research and public speaking abilities in our classroom debate activity, and conduct your own opinion poll in your homework assignment.



Student Learning Outcomes

1. Explain the role of public opinion in democratic governance, including how it influences policy decisions and institutional behavior.
2. Analyze public attitudes toward DEI initiatives, national polling data and scholarly interpretations.
3. Critically evaluate polling methods, including question framing, sample selection, and potential biases in public opinion research.
4. Design and conduct a basic public opinion survey, applying principles of clarity, neutrality, and ethical data collection.
5. Compare and contrast original survey findings with national polling data, identifying trends, contradictions, and possible explanations for variation.
6. Develop and defend evidence-based arguments, about the political implications of DEI programs through structured classroom debate.
7. Reflect on the relationship between public sentiment and political action, especially in the context of contested or polarized policy issues.
8. Demonstrate civic reasoning and political literacy, recognizing how public opinion can both shape and challenge institutional priorities.

[15.1: Public Opinion - Readings and Media](#)

[15.2: Public Opinion - Classroom Activity](#)

[15.3: Public Opinion - Homework](#)

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15.1: Public Opinion - Readings and Media

1. Lumen Learning.

Lumen Learning. (n.d.). *The effects of public opinion*. In *American Government*. Retrieved July 16, 2025, from <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-amgovernment/chapter/the-effects-of-public-opinion/>

This textbook chapter outlines the importance of public opinion for the democratic process, and provides you with some foundational knowledge on how public opinion influences government policy and decisions. Pay close attention to the concepts and definitions, and think about how politicians react to polls, and how public opinion's influence on policy making and democratic oversight has changed over time.

2. NBC

Bowman, B. (2025, March 18). *Poll: American voters are deeply divided on DEI programs and political correctness*. NBC News. <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/poll-american-voters-are-deeply-divided-dei-programs-political-correct-rcna196377>

Let's now take a deep dive into the divisions in public opinion on DEI topics. This NBC video and the subsequent article presents survey data showing how sharply the American public is divided along party lines (Democrat and Republican) when it comes to these topics. Notice how Republicans tend to dislike DEI policies while Democrats tend to support them. Also note how the issue divides along gender and education lines. You learn here how polling data reveals broad divisions in our society which may explain our voting behavior, governmental policy, and media narratives as they shape and reflect cultural and political conflict.



3. London School of Economics (LSE) Blogs

Rice, D., Rhodes, J., Nteta, T., & Eichen, A. (2025, June 4). *New research shows the American public continues to support diversity, equity, and inclusion policies*. USAPP – American Politics and Policy (LSE USAPP Blog). <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2025/06/04/new-research-shows-the-american-public-continues-to-support-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-policies/>

This blog post provides another set of polling data assessing our society's attitudes toward diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies, going a bit deeper than the NBC article did. Amid major political pushback from the Trump administration -his executive orders on the issue and his efforts to dismantle federal DEI programs- the authors find that about 45% of Americans oppose ending DEI policies in areas like education, employment, and housing, compared to just 35% who support their removal. Additionally, approximately 60% of respondents favor DEI training for professionals -including teachers, police officers, military personnel, public-sector employees, and healthcare workers. The majority of that support cuts across political, demographic, and age groups. Take good notes here so that you can be prepared for our following class activity and homework.

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15.2: Public Opinion - Classroom Activity

Class Debates

1. The class is divided into six groups:

Each group is assigned ONE of the following questions, and ONE perspective (either pro or con):

- A) Should institutions rely on public opinion polls to guide DEI policy decisions? (Group 1=pro, Group 2=con)
- B) Do polling methods introduce biases into how we understand public opinion on DEI? (Group 3=pro, Group 4=con)
- C) Are polls effective tools for measuring DEI program impact, or should institutions use internal metrics instead? (Group 5=pro, Group 6=con)

2. Discuss your assigned question and opinion (pro or con) with your group, finding the relevant data in our assigned readings and doing additional research.

3. Develop 5 arguments for or against this policy based on your assignment, and prepare a brief statement introducing and outlining your group's stance.

4. Present your arguments, then listen to the other groups' statements. Take notes on their stances as you listen.

5. Engage in rebuttals with each other.

6. Class Reflection

- 1. Based on your assigned opinion (pro or con), which demographics are you likely representing?
- 2. Which arguments did you find most convincing?
- 3. Did any perspective challenge your personal beliefs?
- 4. What are the real-world implications of your presented opinions?

Evaluation Rubric

Uses appropriate language (incl. POL vocabulary)

1-3 4- 6 7-10

Presents 5 major arguments

1-3 4- 6 7-10

Cites statistics, studies, or theories for every argument

1-3 4- 6 7-10

Time limits (as specified) are adhered to

1-3 4- 6 7-10

Monitored and engaged in small and large group discussions

1-3 4- 6 7-10

[1-3 needs improvement, 4-6 satisfactory-good; 7-10 very good-excellent; Maximum points possible = 50]



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15.3: Public Opinion - Homework

Create Your Own DEI Public Opinion Poll

What do the people around you really think about DEI?

1. Design Your Survey

Create 3–5 short, clear, and unbiased questions to measure opinions about DEI. You must include:

- 1 Likert scale question (e.g., *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*)
- 1 multiple-choice, or yes/no question
- 1 open-ended question (e.g., *What does DEI mean to you?*)

Your survey should focus on a pressing DEI centric area such as:

- Workplace diversity programs
- DEI training in education
- DEI and meritocracy
- Representation in media or leadership

2. Collect Data

Survey at least 5–10 people from different backgrounds (family, friends, classmates, or others). Use Google Forms, paper surveys, or casual interviews.

Log the responses and note patterns or surprising answers.

3. Analyze & Reflect

Write a short reflection or record a 2–3 minute video that addresses:

1. What did you learn from your respondents?
2. Did your results match or differ from national polling data (e.g., Pew, Gallup)?
3. What challenges did you face in writing fair, unbiased questions?
4. How might the framing of a question influence someone's response?
5. Include at least one national poll on DEI as a comparison point (cite it properly in APA format).

Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (5 pts)	Good (4 pts)	Fair (3 pts)	Needs Improvement (1–2 pts)
Survey Design	Clear, unbiased questions with thoughtful structure; includes all required types	Mostly clear and unbiased; meets format requirements	Some leading or unclear questions; missing one element	Vague, biased, or incomplete questions
Data Collection & Effort	8–10+ responses from diverse participants; effort clearly demonstrated	At least 5–7 thoughtful responses; some variety in respondents	Fewer than 5 responses or limited variety	Minimal effort or incomplete data collection
Analysis & Reflection	Insightful analysis; thoughtful comparison to national poll; strong critical thinking	Good reflection and comparison; mostly accurate and complete	Some analysis; weak or vague connection to national data	Superficial or missing reflection



Criteria	Excellent (5 pts)	Good (4 pts)	Fair (3 pts)	Needs Improvement (1–2 pts)
Use of Outside Source	Integrates a national poll with proper APA citation	Uses national poll; citation mostly correct	National poll mentioned but poorly integrated or cited	No outside source used or citation missing
Clarity & Presentation	Well-organized writing or video; minimal errors	Generally clear; minor errors	Some disorganization or grammar issues	Unclear, disorganized, or hard to follow

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Index

A

American Government

- Front Matter
- 9: Supreme Court - Ruling Process
- 9.1: SCOTUS Ruling Process - Readings and Media
- 9.2: SCOTUS Ruling Process - Classroom Activity
- 9.3: SCOTUS Ruling Process - Homework
- 10: Political Economy - Fiscal and Monetary Policy

anarchism

- 1: Political Ideologies

arguments

- 1.2: Political Ideologies - Classroom Activity

C

chicago city colleges

- Front Matter
- 5.2: The Legislative Process - Classroom Activity

Congressional Institutions

- 4: Congressional Institutions
- 4.1: Congressional Institutions - Readings and Media
- 4.2: Congressional Institutions - Classroom Activity
- 4.3: Congressional Institutions - Homework

conservatism

- 1: Political Ideologies
- 1.1: Political Ideologies - Readings and Media
- 1.2: Political Ideologies - Classroom Activity

D

democracy

- 1: Political Ideologies

diversity

- 1.1: Political Ideologies - Readings and Media

E

equity

- 1.1: Political Ideologies - Readings and Media

F

fascism

- 1.2: Political Ideologies - Classroom Activity

federalism

- 3: Federalism
- 3.1: Federalism - Readings and Media
- 3.2: Federalism - Classroom Activity
- 3.3: Federalism - Homework

G

government

- 1: Political Ideologies

I

ideology

- 1.2: Political Ideologies - Classroom Activity

inclusion

- 1.1: Political Ideologies - Readings and Media

Ingrid Riedle

- Front Matter
- 5.2: The Legislative Process - Classroom Activity

L

legislative process

- 5: The Legislative Process
- 5.1: The Legislative Process - Readings and Media
- 5.3: The Legislative Process - Homework

liberalism

- 1: Political Ideologies
- 1.1: Political Ideologies - Readings and Media
- 1.2: Political Ideologies - Classroom Activity

libertarianism

- 1: Political Ideologies
- 1.2: Political Ideologies - Classroom Activity

M

marxism

- 1: Political Ideologies
- 1.2: Political Ideologies - Classroom Activity

media literacy

- 1.1: Political Ideologies - Readings and Media

P

political culture

- 1.1: Political Ideologies - Readings and Media

political ideologies

- 1: Political Ideologies
- 1.1: Political Ideologies - Readings and Media

political ideology

- 1.3: Political Ideologies - Homework

political science 201

- Front Matter
- 1.3: Political Ideologies - Homework
- 2.1: The Constitution's 14th Amendment - Readings and Media
- 3.3: Federalism - Homework
- 5.2: The Legislative Process - Classroom Activity

political vocabulary

- 1.2: Political Ideologies - Classroom Activity

presidential institutions

- 6: Presidential Institutions
- 6.1: Presidential Institutions - Readings and Media
- 6.2: Presidential Institutions - Classroom Activity
- 6.3: Presidential Institutions - Homework

Presidential Power

- 7: Presidential Power
- 7.1: Presidential Power - Readings and Media
- 7.2: Presidential Power - Classroom Activity
- 7.3: Presidential Power - Homework

S

SCOTUS selection process

- 8: Supreme Court Selection Process
- 8.1: Supreme Court Selection Process - Readings and Media
- 8.2: Supreme Court Selection Process - Classroom Activity
- 8.3: Supreme Court Selection Process - Homework

social issues

- 1: Political Ideologies

socialism

- 1: Political Ideologies
- 1.2: Political Ideologies - Classroom Activity

socialization

- 1.1: Political Ideologies - Readings and Media

T

the legislative process

- 5.2: The Legislative Process - Classroom Activity

U

universal healthcare

- 1.2: Political Ideologies - Classroom Activity

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 - [InfoPage - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [Table of Contents - Undeclared](#)
 - [Licensing - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [1: Political Ideologies - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [1.1: Political Ideologies - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [1.2: Political Ideologies - Classroom Activity - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [1.3: Political Ideologies - Homework - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [2: The Constitution's 14th Amendment - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [2.1: The Constitution's 14th Amendment - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [2.2: The Constitution's 14th Amendment - Classroom Activity - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [2.3: The Constitution's 14th Amendment - Homework - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [3: Federalism - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [3.1: Federalism - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [3.2: Federalism - Classroom Activity - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [3.3: Federalism - Homework - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [4: Congressional Institutions - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [4.1: Congressional Institutions - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [4.2: Congressional Institutions - Classroom Activity - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [4.3: Congressional Institutions - Homework - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [5: The Legislative Process - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [5.1: The Legislative Process - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [5.2: The Legislative Process - Classroom Activity - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [5.3: The Legislative Process - Homework - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [6: Presidential Institutions - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [6.1: Presidential Institutions - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [6.2: Presidential Institutions - Classroom Activity - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [6.3: Presidential Institutions - Homework - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [7: Presidential Power - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [7.1: Presidential Power - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [7.2: Presidential Power - Classroom Activity - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [7.3: Presidential Power - Homework - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [8: Supreme Court Selection Process - CC BY-NC 1.0](#)
 - [8.1: Supreme Court Selection Process - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 1.0](#)
 - [8.2: Supreme Court Selection Process - Classroom Activity - CC BY-NC 1.0](#)
 - [8.3: Supreme Court Selection Process - Homework - CC BY-NC 1.0](#)
 - [9: Supreme Court - Ruling Process - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [9.1: SCOTUS Ruling Process - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [9.2: SCOTUS Ruling Process - Classroom Activity - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [9.3: SCOTUS Ruling Process - Homework - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [10: Political Economy - Fiscal and Monetary Policy - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [10.1: Political Economy - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)

- 10.2: Political Economy - Classroom Activity - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
- 10.3: Political Economy - Homework - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
- 11: Economic Theory - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 11.1: Economic Theory - Readings and Media - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 11.2: Economic Theory - Classroom Activity - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 11.3: Economic Theory - Homework - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
- 12: Elections and Voting - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 12.1: Elections and Voting - Readings and Media - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 12.2: Elections and Voting - Classroom Activity - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 12.3: Elections and Voting - Homework - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
- 13: Interest Groups and Lobbying - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 13.1: Interest Groups and Lobbying - Readings and Media - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 13.2: Interest Groups and Lobbying - Classroom Activity - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 13.3: Interest Groups and Lobbying - Homework - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
- 14: Media and Politics - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 14.1: Media and Politics - Readings and Media - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 14.2: Media and Politics - Classroom Activity - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 14.3: Media and Politics - Homework - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
- 15: Public Opinion - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 15.1: Public Opinion - Readings and Media - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 15.2: Public Opinion - Classroom Activity - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 15.3: Public Opinion - Homework - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
- Back Matter - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - Index - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - Glossary - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
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 - Detailed Licensing - *Undeclared*

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By Page

- [Professor Ingrid Riedle's Political Science 201 - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [Front Matter - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [TitlePage - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [InfoPage - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [Table of Contents - Undeclared](#)
 - [Licensing - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [1: Political Ideologies - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [1.1: Political Ideologies - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [1.2: Political Ideologies - Classroom Activity - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [1.3: Political Ideologies - Homework - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [2: The Constitution's 14th Amendment - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [2.1: The Constitution's 14th Amendment - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [2.2: The Constitution's 14th Amendment - Classroom Activity - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [2.3: The Constitution's 14th Amendment - Homework - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [3: Federalism - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [3.1: Federalism - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [3.2: Federalism - Classroom Activity - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [3.3: Federalism - Homework - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [4: Congressional Institutions - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [4.1: Congressional Institutions - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [4.2: Congressional Institutions - Classroom Activity - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [4.3: Congressional Institutions - Homework - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [5: The Legislative Process - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [5.1: The Legislative Process - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [5.2: The Legislative Process - Classroom Activity - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [5.3: The Legislative Process - Homework - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [6: Presidential Institutions - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [6.1: Presidential Institutions - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [6.2: Presidential Institutions - Classroom Activity - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [6.3: Presidential Institutions - Homework - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [7: Presidential Power - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [7.1: Presidential Power - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [7.2: Presidential Power - Classroom Activity - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [7.3: Presidential Power - Homework - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [8: Supreme Court Selection Process - CC BY-NC 1.0](#)
 - [8.1: Supreme Court Selection Process - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 1.0](#)
 - [8.2: Supreme Court Selection Process - Classroom Activity - CC BY-NC 1.0](#)
 - [8.3: Supreme Court Selection Process - Homework - CC BY-NC 1.0](#)
 - [9: Supreme Court - Ruling Process - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [9.1: SCOTUS Ruling Process - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [9.2: SCOTUS Ruling Process - Classroom Activity - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [9.3: SCOTUS Ruling Process - Homework - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [10: Political Economy - Fiscal and Monetary Policy - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)
 - [10.1: Political Economy - Readings and Media - CC BY-NC 4.0](#)

- 10.2: Political Economy - Classroom Activity - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
- 10.3: Political Economy - Homework - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
- 11: Economic Theory - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 11.1: Economic Theory - Readings and Media - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 11.2: Economic Theory - Classroom Activity - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 11.3: Economic Theory - Homework - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
- 12: Elections and Voting - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 12.1: Elections and Voting - Readings and Media - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 12.2: Elections and Voting - Classroom Activity - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 12.3: Elections and Voting - Homework - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
- 13: Interest Groups and Lobbying - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 13.1: Interest Groups and Lobbying - Readings and Media - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 13.2: Interest Groups and Lobbying - Classroom Activity - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 13.3: Interest Groups and Lobbying - Homework - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
- 14: Media and Politics - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 14.1: Media and Politics - Readings and Media - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 14.2: Media and Politics - Classroom Activity - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 14.3: Media and Politics - Homework - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
- 15: Public Opinion - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 15.1: Public Opinion - Readings and Media - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 15.2: Public Opinion - Classroom Activity - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - 15.3: Public Opinion - Homework - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
- Back Matter - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - Index - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
 - Glossary - *CC BY-NC 4.0*
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