

why politics **Matters:**

AN INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE



2E



kevin **dooley**

joseph **patten**

**WHY POLITICS MATTERS:
AN INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE,
SECOND EDITION**

WHY POLITICS MATTERS: AN INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE, SECOND EDITION

Kevin L. Dooley

Dean of the Honors School
Associate Professor of Political Science
Monmouth University

Joseph N. Patten

Chair of the Department of Political Science and Sociology
Associate Professor of Political Science
Monmouth University



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Kevin L. Dooley, Joseph N. Patten

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WCN: 02-200-203

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2013942444

ISBN-13: 978-1-285-43764-4

ISBN-10: 1-285-43764-0

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 15 14 13 12 11

DEDICATION

To my wife Lauren and our children Jack and Megan.

—K. L. D.

*To my parents, Veena, Nikhil, Jaya, and to the memory of U.S.
Congressman Edward J. Patten.*

—J. N. P.

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WHY POLITICS *SHOULD* MATTER TO YOU

With the start of each new semester comes the initial thrill of meeting new students enrolled in our introduction to political science course. At Monmouth University, where we teach, the introductory course has always been considered the “gateway” to the discipline—a general education requirement that attracts majors from across the academic spectrum. We meet students studying everything from accounting, marketing, and management to anthropology, biology, and music. Thus, the learning environment includes a wide variety of interesting and creative students majoring primarily in subjects other than political science. Although each section will also have a number of politically active, politically motivated undergrads, the classroom is mainly filled with non-majors. In many ways, it was this reality that made us consider not only how we were teaching this course, but also how we could design an appropriate text for students from all academic disciplines.

Student Engagement Matters

Many of the books for this course are written for political science majors with a particular emphasis on comparative politics. But for today’s students, a mix of majors and non-majors, and those completely new to political science, we wanted to offer a broader understanding of the discipline and an opportunity for you to discover which areas of political science are most interesting to you. Our solution was to design a curriculum that would keep both groups engaged in the learning process, major and non-major alike, by taking a “big-picture” approach, evenly surveying the major areas within the field of political science, and emphasizing how the theoretical concepts of the discipline play out in the world around us.

The first thing you may have noticed about this book is this unique organization. We work outward from the student:

- **Part I: Political Theory:** You will learn about the foundations of ancient and modern political thought. This is an important place to start because it is here that the philosophical foundations for modern governments are formed. We believe it is crucial for you to have a general understanding of key political

theorists in order for you to more effectively assess and critique the behavior of governments in our modern world.

- **Part II: Comparing Governments:** Chapter 4 looks at American government and builds on the previous section by examining how the American Framers were influenced by ancient Greek and modern political philosophers when they drafted the American Constitution. Here you will become more familiar with how these political theorists influenced the structure of the American system of government. This section is given special emphasis because it was the “American experiment” toward popular government that ignited democratic fires across the globe, which continues to shape today’s political landscape. It is also the system the majority of our readers will be most familiar with and is therefore a good springboard into our examination and comparison of other government structures around the world.

In Chapters 5 through 8, you will learn about how the world’s political systems are organized, where they differ and are alike, and how they tackle universal issues and those unique to their own particular societies. We will compare the foundations, structures, and modern issues associated with democratic legislatures, executives, and judicial systems. Then we take an in-depth look at authoritarian states and how they differ.

- **Part III: International Relations:** You will learn how the wide array of political systems and cultures interact with one another in our modern international system. Having a broad understanding of political systems and distinct regional cultures will shed light on why nations fight wars, what we can do to try to prevent them, and the challenges and opportunities we face as we attempt to solve global issues.

These sectional stepping-stones from political theory, to American government and comparative politics, to international relations build upon each other, producing a scholar who is able to balance the knowledge of the domestic with that of the global. You will then be given the opportunity to reflect upon all of the issues previously covered in the text and, upon completion, you will possess the skills to see the world through the intellectual prism of the entire field of political science. We’ve found that this is an accessible and intuitive organization for students.

This foundational framework paired with (1) a focus on application and critical thinking, (2) excerpts from the classic and contemporary thinkers who shaped this discipline, (3) the latest global events, and (4) vibrant illustrations bring political science to life! It is because we take so much pleasure in teaching political science to students from all academic majors that made writing this book a labor of love. It’s fun to convey these important themes

to our students, and we believe reading this book will be a stimulating, eye-opening, and enjoyable experience for you as well, as we set out to prove in the pages that follow.

Participation Matters

At the heart of this book, we strive to answer the questions we sometimes hear in the introduction to political science classroom: *Why do I have to take this course? I'm not a political science major and I don't plan to work in government, so why should this matter to me?* The answers surround each and every one of us, whether we know it or not. An understanding of politics is necessary for participation in a globalized world, a concept we stress in the book's opening chapter, "Why Politics Matters," and throughout with a special feature entitled "Why Politics Matters to You!" You will come away aware of the challenges of the twenty-first century and with a new perspective on where political beliefs come from. You will be able to identify the opportunities available to you through which you can make an impact, and you will possess a strong confidence in your overview of the field at the book's completion. You are enthusiastically invited to join in this dialog. We've written the book in a conversational style, with thought-provoking questions at every turn.

Why Theory Matters—Applying Theory to Today!

Throughout, we'll look into the relationship between the theoretical underpinnings (theory) and the formation and interplay of political entities (practice). This theme is emphasized throughout the narrative and within special "Theory and Practice" features in every chapter, with the use of integrated readings through CourseReader. We highlight this important concept to encourage critical thought when assessing and interpreting our political world, as well as to help you apply these concepts to your life. You will come away with not just a series of case studies, but with the tools you'll need to analyze and affect your political surroundings well into the future.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

Based on reviewer feedback, the second edition of *Why Politics Matters* has been streamlined and completely reorganized to integrate the American

government coverage into a comparative politics context. While maintaining U.S. coverage as a foundation of understanding for students, Part II, “Comparing Governments,” now examines world governments in a comparative framework. Chapter 4 on the founding of American government is retained within this part, opening the discussion. Then, the following chapters examine governing institutions within a comparative framework, tackling democratic legislatures (Chapter 5), executives (Chapter 6), and judiciaries (Chapter 7) before examining authoritarian states in Chapter 8. This reorganization results in two fewer chapters in the second edition, creating manageable reading assignments and making the subject even more accessible for the introductory course.

The book has also been updated throughout to include changes in world leadership, the 2012 U.S. elections, the state of the world economy, conflict in Syria and the Middle East, and developments in North Korea, as well as updated statistics and new figures, tables, maps, and photographs.

FEATURES that Teach

- ▼ **Why Politics Matters** brings the subject to life and encourages student interaction through engaging, conversational prose; a bold, full-color design with photographs, maps, figures, and **visual timelines**; and **critical thinking questions** in every boxed feature and throughout the narrative.

TABLE 1.1. Youth Voting: The Percentages of 18- to 29-Year-Old Citizens Who Voted in Recent Presidential Elections²

	Caucasian (%)	African American (%)	Asian American (%)	Latino (%)
1992	53	42	38	38
1996	40	40	35	29
2000	41	41	32	30
2004	50	50	32	33
2008	51	60	41	40
2012	46	54	36	37



“both visually and intellectually interesting”

Keeley Mahanes,

Student at Northern Arizona University

“The first thing I enjoyed was the enthusiasm and passion the authors have towards their subject matter.... [they] do a good job in making a host of complex topics user friendly for college students.”

Cyrus Hayat,

Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis



AP PHOTO/PAVEL RAHMAN

Questions to Consider Before Reading this Chapter

1. What is power? What is the difference between hard power and soft power?
2. What are the three main assumptions of classical realism?
3. How can the three levels of analysis be useful to understanding issues of international conflict?

- ◀ **Questions to Consider Before Reading This Chapter** open every chapter, serving as learning objectives to guide students' reading.
- ▶ **A marginal glossary** defines key terms as students read, and lists of **Key Terms** and **Key People** at the end of every chapter help students review the material.

THEORY and Practice

THEORY AND PRACTICE

The Greeks, the Roman Empire, and the Incorporation of Law into the State

The power of Aristotle's works prompted the Roman statesman Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BCE) to refer to them as “a river of gold” centuries later. Cicero was a Roman statesman and philosopher who was an important link in the Greco-Roman tradition in that it was in part through Cicero that Greek philosophy came to play a role in the governing structure of the Roman Empire. In the *Republic* and *Laws*, Cicero advocated for a mixed constitution in the Roman Republic, consisting of the (1) consuls as the regional power, (2) the senate as the aristocratic power, and (3) the popular assembly.⁴³ Cicero's call for an aristocratic republic also influenced many of the American Founding Fathers.

Whereas Plato argued that justice in the republic should be maintained through the leadership of the philosopher-king, Cicero instead argued that law, not philosophers, should guide the behavior of government. Cicero argued that leaders of society should be, above all else, knowledgeable in the realms of **natural law** and **positive law**. He called for a unity between law and politics so that the political leader “is a speaking law, and the law a silent magistrate.”⁴⁴ It is in part because of Cicero's emphasis on incorporating law into the State that many of the American Framers advocated creating a nation based on natural law.

Can you think of any existing law that places the well-being of special-interest groups over the public good? If so, how would you change this law, and how would this change improve our society?

- ◀ **Theory and Practice** features demonstrate how political thought directly influences modern-day situations, institutions, and policies, in turn teaching students how to apply overarching political ideas to the current events and political practice around them and analyze both.

“I think it is vital to show how these theories work in practice.... I really like how this textbook is organized and written.

It highlights the different sub-fields of political science giving equal time and energy to each, while providing excellent resources and tools within the textbook for the instructor to use.

The book reflects my own philosophy of teaching an Intro to Politics course.”

Ryan Fitzharris,
Pima Community College

“It does a great job relating the ideas to current issues, which makes it seem relevant and therefore engaging.”

Kaitlyn Andrey,
Student at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania

WHY POLITICS MATTERS to YOU!

WHY POLITICS MATTERS TO YOU!

Prisoner's Dilemma: Are you more competitive than cooperative?

Hobbes argued that civil society will inevitably degenerate into civil war and death because people in the precontract state will not cooperate with each other out of a fear that placing trust in an untrustworthy person could have disastrous impacts. It is based on this finding that Hobbes argued we are by nature more competitive than cooperative. In 1950, Merrill Flood and Melvin Dresher from the Rand Corporation developed the prisoner's dilemma game theory to illustrate that people sometimes will not cooperate with each other even when it is their best interest to do so. The prisoner's dilemma has been widely applied in the field of international relations and is highlighted again in Chapter 9.

Are you by nature a competitive or cooperative person? Pretend you and a classmate joined forces in robbing a bank. The two of you are later apprehended and brought to the police station for questioning. Because the police officers only have circumstantial evidence against you, they need to solicit a confession in order to ensure a conviction. One police officer takes you into an interrogation room while another police officer takes your classmate into an adjoining room. You are then each informed that it is in your best interest to cooperate with the investigation by admitting that you and your classmate were involved in the robbery. You then learn that if both you and your classmate remain quiet you will each serve one year in prison. If you and your classmate both confess, you will each serve five years in prison. If one confesses and the other remains quiet, the one who confesses will go free while the one who remains quiet will serve 10 years in prison.

		Student A	
		Talk	Quiet
Student B	Talk	5 years each	A = 10 years B = 0 years
	Quiet	A = 0 years B = 10 years	1 year each

What would you choose to do?

◀ **Why Politics Matters to You!** features show students how they can get involved and how politics and government are influential in their lives.

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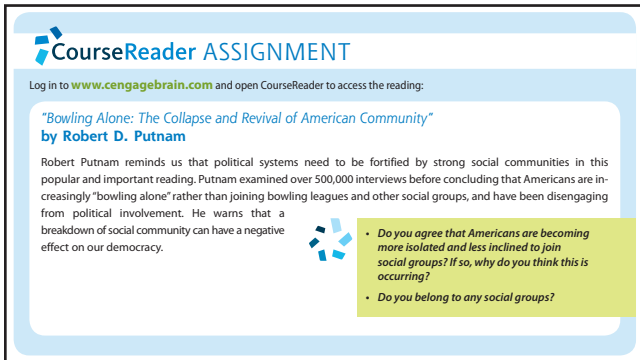
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- Do you agree that Americans are becoming more isolated and less inclined to join social groups? If so, why do you think this is occurring?
- Do you belong to any social groups?

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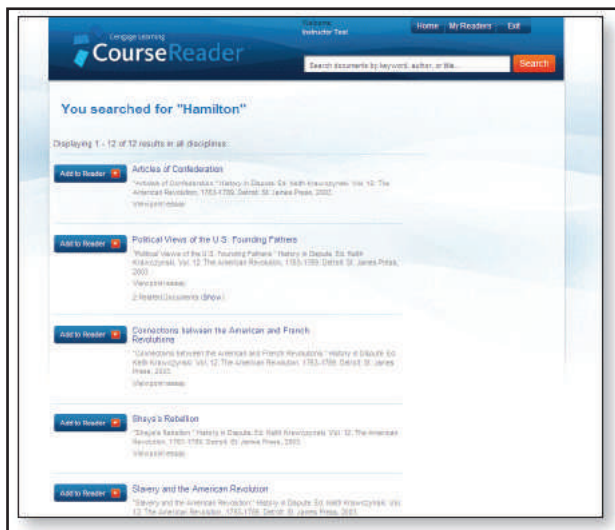
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the instructors who contributed their thoughtful reviews of the book in preparation for this second edition:

Robert Carroll	East-West University	Arthur Morin	Utah Valley University
Richard Foster	Fort Lewis College	Karen Shelby	University of San Diego
Richard McDowell	St. Gregory's University		

We particularly appreciate the efforts of Professors Carroll and Shelby, who created the Instructor's Manual and Test Bank for this edition.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the following instructors whose constructive feedback through reviews, focus groups, and class tests helped shape the first edition:

George Agbango	Bloomsburg University	Tolga Demiryol	Quinnipiac College
Victor Aikhionbare	Palm Beach State College	Chad DeWaard	University of Tennessee
Daniel Allen	Anderson University	Jack DiSarno	University of North Carolina, Pembroke
Brian Anderson	Mississippi University for Women	Kevin Dockerty	Kalamazoo Valley Community College
Chad Atkinson	Wright State University	Tom Dolan	Columbus State University
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Bradley Best	Buena Vista University	Ryan Fitzharris	Pima Community College
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Charles Boehmer	University of Texas El Paso	Amy Freedman	Long Island University, C.W. Post
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Wendell Broadwell	Georgia Perimeter College	Donald Gawronski	Mesa Community College
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Margery Coulson-Clark	Elizabeth City State University	Michelle Hammes	Saint Cloud State University
Stephen Crescenzi	Thomas Edison State College	Sally Hansen	Daytona State
Greg Culver	University of Southern Indiana	Cyrus Hayat	Indiana University, Purdue
John Davis	Howard University	Peter Heller	Manhattan College
Wartyna Davis	William Paterson	Timothy Jeske	Yakima Valley Community College
		Maorong Jiang	Creighton University

Joon Kil	Irvine Valley College	Erin E. Richards	Cascadia Community College
Dongsoo Kim	West Liberty State College	Michelle Rodriguez	San Diego Mesa College
Bob King	Georgia Perimeter College	Mark Roeder	North Greenville University
Edward Kissling	Ocean County College	Elgin Rogers	Ivy Tech State College, Bloomington
Donnamarie Landsberg	Johnson County Community College	Leticia Sara	Red Rocks Community College
Christianna Leahy	McDaniel College	Atsuko Sato	California State University, Los Angeles
Manwoo Lee	Millersville University	Robert A. Saunders	SUNY Farmingdale
David Levenbach	Arkansas State University	Shawn Scharf	Youngstown State University
Richard Levy	Salem State College	Jason M. Seitz	Georgia Perimeter College
Timothy Lim	California State University, Los Angeles	John Shively	Longview Community College
Lindsey Lupo	Point Loma Nazarene University	Jonathan Schulman	Palm Beach State College
Shari MacLachlan	Palm Beach State College	Ginger Silvera	Cal State Dominguez Hills
Sharon Manna	North Lake College	Cigdem V. Sirin	University of Texas, El Paso
Samantha Mannion	Holyoke Community College	Shyam Sriram	Georgia Perimeter College
Andrae Marak	California University of PA	Robert T. Starks	Northeastern Illinois University
Patrick McGovern	Buffalo State College	Adam P. Stone	Georgia Perimeter College
Don Melton	Arapahoe Community College	Holley Tankersley	Coastal Caroline University
John Mercurio	San Diego City College	Kimberly Turner	College of DuPage
Melissa Michelson	Menlo College	S.P. Udayakumar	South Asian Community Center for Education and Research
Stephen Morris	Middle Tennessee State University	Denise Vaughan	Bellevue College
Marcella Myers	Andrews University	Greg Weeks	University of North Carolina, Charlotte
Bruce Nesmith	Coe College	Stephen Wright	Northern Arizona University
Sunday Obazuaye	Cerritos College	Ming Xia	College of Staten Island, CUNY
Daniel Ogbaharya	Western Illinois University	Bradford Young	Ocean County College
Evan Oxman	Lake Forest College	Noah Zerbe	Humboldt State University
Don Ramlow	Kalamazoo Valley Community College	Annalisa Zinn	Quinnipiac College
Sherri Replogle	Illinois State University		

In addition, we'd like to thank our team at Cengage: Product Team Manager Carolyn Merrill, Associate Product Manager Scott Greenan, Content Developer Rebecca Green, Senior Content Project Manager Jessica Rasile, and Senior Rights Specialist Jennifer Meyer Dare. We would also like to thank our Project Manager Escaline Aarthy with S4Carlisle Publishing Services.

We would also like to thank Professors Rekha Datta, Nancy Mezey, Ken Mitchell, Kathryn Kloby, Enoch Nappen, Vincenzo Mele, Saliba Sarsar, and Ms. Kristen Gillette of the Monmouth University Department of Political Science and Sociology for their continued friendship and support.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kevin L. Dooley is the dean of the Honors School and associate professor of political science at Monmouth University, where he teaches courses in political theory, ethics in international relations, and comparative European politics. He received his Ph.D. from the Division of Global Affairs at Rutgers–Newark in 2005 and in 2011 was nominated for Monmouth University’s Outstanding Teacher Award. He serves as the advisor to Monmouth University’s Model United Nations Team.



Joseph N. Patten is chair of the Department of Political Science and Sociology and associate professor of political science at Monmouth University, where he teaches courses in American politics. He received his Ph.D. in political science from West Virginia University in 1996. In 2009, he received Monmouth University’s Distinguished Teaching Award and was named Faculty Member of the Year at Buena Vista University in Iowa in 2002 and in 1999. He also serves as the coach of Monmouth University’s Policy Debate Team and as the president of the New Jersey Political Science Association (2012).



WHY POLITICS MATTERS: AN INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE

WHY POLITICS MATTERS

1



▲ Pakistani student Malala Yousafzai (left) is presented with the United Nations Charter by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (right) on July 12, 2013. Yousafzai was shot by the Taliban while travelling to school, targeted because of her committed campaigning for the right of all girls to an education.

Chapter Outline

Introduction 2

Political Science as the Study of Power 5

Political Science as an Academic
Discipline 14

Questions to Consider Before Reading this Chapter

1. How have you been socialized by your family, friends, and peers? Have your political beliefs been challenged since you entered college?
2. What are political ideologies? What are the differences between left-wing and right-wing ideologies?
3. How can public-opinion polls indicate your voting preferences or what you care most about?
4. What is the difference between “hard power” and “soft power” in the realm of international politics?
5. What do you think it takes to win a policy debate? How can the skills you learn in debate help you to influence policy issues?
6. What are the different areas that political scientists study? Why are theories so important to their research?

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS POLITICAL SCIENCE?

There is an old adage that states one should never discuss religion or politics when attending dinner parties with casual acquaintances. Many of us have been taught that arguments focused on our cultural differences, recently enacted health care law, or partisan viewpoints frequently grow tense and might prevent friends from enjoying each others’ company, or, more important, dessert. Those who adhere to the social etiquette of proper dinner conversation are probably smart to do so. A clashing of political views can bring about a stressful social environment and can cause awkward moments for unsuspecting dinner guests.

Lucky for you, however—you are in a political science class, which happens to be the most appropriate and exciting place to discuss such things. Here you are encouraged and even rewarded for respectfully engaging in a wide variety of political observations and cultural perspectives. Learning how to discuss politics in a civil manner requires practice and a thick skin. Although we are certainly not required to agree with any particular outlook, we all have a responsibility to at least try to understand the viewpoints of others. We want to see that you, the next generation of citizens, are able to articulate and understand some of the challenges that face us in the coming century and to succeed in making this world a better and more secure place.

The challenges ahead are great. But so were the challenges that faced George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Susan B. Anthony, Alice Paul, Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Nelson Mandela. All of these men and women demonstrated a commitment to change, but most of all, recognized that politics matters. In fact, it is probably one of the most defining features of the human experience. We are above all else, as the great Greek philosopher Aristotle noted, “political animals.” Unlike other members of the animal kingdom, humans possess the ability to reason and then through language carry that reason into action in the form of legally constructed communities. So, although you may never have thought of yourself or your friends as being *political*—you are.

STAN HONDA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

You have the ability to reason, the ability to articulate your ideas, and the ability to carry those thoughts into action.

So at times politics and debates about politics can become a passionate endeavor, one that can cause disagreements over what is considered right and wrong. Has there ever been a time when a fellow student said something you completely disagreed with? Or have you ever been offended by another’s comments? If so, that is because each of us has been socialized by the many groups to which we belong. Political scientist Thomas M. Magstadt has defined **political socialization** as the process by which citizens develop the values, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions that enable them to support the political system.¹ In other words, the various groups that define our lives contribute to the way we view the world.

Political socialization:
The process by which one’s attitudes and values are shaped.

Other students will likely process discussions that take place in this class differently from you because of the influences of their gender, race, religion, friends, sexual orientation, family, level of education, and socioeconomic status. These differences should be celebrated both in and beyond this class because learning from the experiences of others helps to inform our own beliefs. Perhaps Thomas Jefferson put it best when he said that he “never considered differences of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend.”

Some political scientists examine how our differences influence whether and how we participate in the political process. Tables 1.1 to 1.3 highlight how race, gender, and education impact the voter turnout rates of college-age voters. These tables reveal that some college-age students belonging to certain social groups are more likely to vote than others. On closer inspection, Table 1.1 shows that young African Americans were more likely to vote than college-age students from other ethnic or racial groups. Approximately 54 percent of college-age African American voters participated in the 2012 presidential election, compared with 46 percent of Caucasians, 37 percent of young Hispanics, and 36 percent of young Asians.

Table 1.2 also indicates that college-age women were more likely to vote than college-age men in the 2012 election, with 49 percent of 18- to 29-year-old women

TABLE 1.1. Youth Voting: The Percentages of 18- to 29-Year-Old Citizens Who Voted in Recent Presidential Elections²

	Caucasian (%)	African American (%)	Asian American (%)	Latino (%)
1992	53	42	38	38
1996	40	40	35	29
2000	41	41	32	30
2004	50	50	32	33
2008	51	60	41	40
2012	46	54	36	37

Why do you believe some racial or ethnic groups vote in higher numbers than others? Why do you believe young people are more politically active than in previous decades?

TABLE 1.2. Youth Voting: The Percentages of 18- to 29-Year-Old Males and Females Who Voted in Recent Presidential Elections³

	Young Women (%)	Young Men (%)
1992	54	50
1996	43	36
2000	43	38
2004	52	46
2008	55	47
2012	49	42

Why do you believe that college-age women are more likely to vote than college-age men?

TABLE 1.3. Youth Voting: The Percentage of 18- to 29-Year-Old College-Educated and Non-College-Educated Citizens Who Voted in Recent Elections⁴

	College Educated (%)	No College Education (%)	Difference in Voting Turnout (%)
1992	67.2	36.4	30.9
1996	52.0	26.0	26.0
2000	51.8	26.7	25.1
2004	61.1	33.7	27.4
2008	62.1	35.9	26.2
2012	55.9	28.6	27.3

Why do you believe that educated college-age voters are more likely to vote than young people who do not attend college?

and 42 percent of college-age men casting a ballot. However, the most dramatic predictor of whether a young person is likely to vote is educational attainment. Table 1.3 highlights that young people with at least some experience in college (56 percent of voter turnout) were much more likely to vote in the 2012 presidential election than young people without any college experience (29 percent of voter turnout).

Although you may never have considered the influence that all or some of these groups have had on your life, certain political scientists have. For example, there are a number of political scientists who conduct and then analyze the results of public-opinion polls. **Public-opinion polls** allow individuals to see how certain *demographics* view specific political issues or problems. **Demographics**, which refer to some of the ways people are categorized (e.g., women, people of color, small business owners, union members, 18- to 24-year-olds with college degrees, Catholics, etc.), allow political scientists to determine if relationships exist between one's group and how one feels about a number of political issues. Public-opinion polls may ask you

Public-opinion polls:

Surveys that seek to determine how different groups of people perceive political issues.

Demographics:

Classifications of different groups of people that usually refer to one's race, class, ethnicity, gender, level of wealth, age, place of residence, employment status, level of education, and so on.



▲ College sophomore Denzel Fleming signs a voting pledge during a Rock the Vote road trip bus tour on the University of North Carolina's Charlotte campus. Rock the Vote visits campuses across the country to encourage voter registration and political awareness and participation among young people.

your age, race/ethnicity, religion, and level of education and what you think about health care reform, gun control, homeland security, or President Obama. By answering these questions, political scientists can determine if there are relationships between one's demographic and one's opinions about the political world.

So in this very abstract way, you are already political. What this text attempts to do is to help you see that politics matters in a much deeper sense than the material covered on an exam or expressed in a research paper (although these also matter for obvious reasons).

POLITICAL SCIENCE AS THE STUDY OF POWER

In his 1936 book, political scientist Harold Lasswell said that “politics is who gets what, when, and how.” This very simple expression sums up the essence of this book and the entire field of political science at large. Political science is in many respects concerned with the study of *power*. In this book, you will learn about how important ancient and modern political theorists viewed power and how political leaders exercise it in the current era. Political power can broadly be defined as the ability

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Log in to www.cengagebrain.com and open CourseReader to access the reading:

“Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community”

by **Robert D. Putnam**

Robert Putnam reminds us that political systems need to be fortified by strong social communities in this popular and important reading. Putnam examined over 500,000 interviews before concluding that Americans are increasingly “bowling alone” rather than joining bowling leagues and other social groups, and have been disengaging from political involvement. He warns that a breakdown of social community can have a negative effect on our democracy.



- *Do you agree that Americans are becoming more isolated and less inclined to join social groups? If so, why do you think this is occurring?*
- *Do you belong to any social groups?*

to get others to do what they would not do on their own. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and other ancient philosophers believed political power should only be applied as a means to the end of social justice. These thinkers laid the theoretical foundation of Western civilization by maintaining that political power should be brandished by the wisest and most ethical members of society because leaders, above all else, have a responsibility to promote social harmony and the public good. They believed that only those educated on the virtues of justice should wield power because they will more likely place the public’s interest over their own.

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), in his book *The Prince*, wandered away from this Greek view by asserting that “power” and not “justice” is the most important unit of analysis in politics. He claimed that in order to truly comprehend the nuances of politics, it is more important to have an understanding of how leaders can best acquire and maintain political control over the populace. Machiavelli’s amoral approach to politics stressed that the primary purpose of government is to prevent civil unrest and to promote security at home and abroad.

The discussion of how governmental power should be structured is later joined by some of the leading **social contract theorists**, such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. These theorists focused mostly on the power relationship between government and the individual. In Chapter 3, we highlight how social contract theorists typically make observations on: (1) whether humans are more generally cooperative or competitive with one another, (2) the types of problems that are likely to occur in the absence of government, and (3) their preferred form of government for addressing these problems. Thomas Hobbes’s (1588–1679)

Social contract

theorists: *Thinkers beginning in the seventeenth century who sought to explain human nature by looking at the terms by which governments are set up in the first place.*

classic text *Leviathan* sets out to prove the correctness of Machiavelli's contention that power rather than justice is the most important variable in studying politics. It is here, Hobbes argued, that the purpose of political power should not be used to primarily promote ethical governance, but should instead be used to promote the more limited goal of preventing social turmoil and war. Hobbes's social contract advocated for an *authoritarian system of government*, where individuals surrender all political power to the government so that government can more efficiently prevent civil unrest and violence. In Table 1.4, we include definitions of different types of political systems and the economic systems and ideologies that influence them.

TABLE 1.4. Different Types of Political Systems, Economic Systems, and Political Ideologies⁵

Anarchism	A doctrine that advocates the abolition of organized authority. Anarchists believe all government is corrupt and evil.
Authoritarianism	A form of government in which a large amount of authority is invested in the state, at the expense of individual rights.
Autocracy	A government in which almost all power rests with the ruler. The Soviet Union under Stalin and Iraq under Saddam Hussein are examples of autocracies.
Capitalism	An economic system in which the means of production, such as land and factories, are privately owned and operated for profit.
Communism	The political system under which the economy, including capital, property, major industries, and public services, is controlled and directed by the state and in that sense is "communal."
Conservatism	A political philosophy that tends to support the status quo and advocates change only in moderation. Conservatism upholds the value of tradition and seeks to preserve all that is good about the past.
Direct democracy	Democracy in which the people as a whole make direct decisions, rather than have those decisions made for them by elected representatives.
Fascism	A nationalistic, authoritarian, anticommunist movement founded by Benito Mussolini in 1919. Fascism was a response to the economic hardship and social disorder that ensued after the end of World War I.
Feminism	The theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes.
Feudalism	A medieval form of social economic and political organization. Feudalism had a pyramidal structure. At its head was the king; below the king was a hierarchal chain of nobles, down to the lords of individual manors—the manor being the basic social and economic unit.
Liberal	A person who believes it is the duty of government to ameliorate social conditions and create a more equitable society.
Libertarianism	The belief that government should not interfere in the lives of citizens, other than to provide police and military protection.
Marxism	The theory developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, which became the official doctrine of communism. According to Marxism, the key to how society operated was economics; all other aspects of society, such as politics and religion, were conditioned by the economic system.
Meritocracy	A society in which power is wielded by those who deserve it, based on their talents, industry, and success in competition, rather than through membership in a certain class or possession of wealth.
Monarchy	Form of rulership whereby a queen or king, empress or emperor holds absolute or limited power, usually inherited.
Nation-state	Usually used to describe the modern state, but strictly speaking applies only when the whole population of a state feels itself to belong to the same nation.
Oligarchy	A political system that is controlled by a small group of individuals, who govern in their own interests.

(Continued)

TABLE 1.4. (continued)

Pacifist	The doctrine holding that war is never justified and that all disputes between nations should be settled peacefully.
Plutocracy	Government by the wealthy, or a group of wealthy people who control or influence a government.
Representative democracy	A system of government in which the people elect agents to represent them in a legislature.
Republic	The form of government in which ultimate power resides in the people, who elect representatives to participate in decision making on their behalf.
Social contract	The political theory that a state and its citizens have an unwritten agreement between them, a social contract into which they voluntarily enter.
Socialism	A political system in which the means of production, distribution, and exchange are mostly owned by the state, and used, at least in theory, on behalf of the people.
Terrorism	The pursuit of a political aim by means of violence and intimidation.
Theocracy	A state or government that is run by priests or clergy.
Totalitarianism	A system of government where the ruling authority extends its power over all aspects of society and regulates every aspect of life.
Utilitarianism	A political philosophy developed in England in the nineteenth century by thinkers such as Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, which says that the duty of government is to promote the greatest good for the greatest number.

Other social contract theorists such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau believed that power should be more widely dispersed among the people in *democratic systems of government* in order to achieve social harmony. John Locke (1632–1704) advocated for a *representative democracy* where government possesses limited powers and where the people select representatives to make decisions on their behalf. Locke’s writings were particularly influential to the American Framers as they grappled with how best to form a new government in the late eighteenth century. Thomas Jefferson referenced Locke when he penned the U.S. Declaration of Independence in what has become one of the most widely cited sentences ever written: “We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” It was this line of thinking that also paved the way for the expansion of political rights for ethnic minorities and women (see Theory and Practice box about female judges). Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), on the other hand, criticized representative democracies, claiming they facilitate the exploitation of the masses by political elites. He instead called for universal political participation in a direct democracy form of government, where the people as a whole make decisions for themselves.

Leading experts in American politics discuss political power in the context of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. One major debate involves whether the American president has taken on “imperial” qualities and whether the executive branch has too much power over the other two branches of government. Famed presidential scholar Richard Neustadt, known by some as the American Machiavelli, argues that presidents must above all else have the political skills to “persuade” the Washington establishment and the American public to act on their agendas.

Justice Elena Kagan was confirmed with little fanfare to the U.S. Supreme Court in August 2010. Out of the 112 justices who have served on the Court throughout our history, only four of them have been women. Why is that? Do female justices interpret legal facts differently from their male counterparts? There is some research in political science suggesting that female justices might frame legal issues differently than male justices when hearing oral arguments and drafting legal opinions.

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, for example, was most vocal on a case questioning whether school officials in Arizona could legally strip-search a 13-year-old female student while searching for drugs. Whereas some of the other male justices downplayed the significance of the girl's embarrassment, Justice Ginsburg, as the lone female justice on the Supreme Court at the time, empathized with the girl's humiliation. In a subsequent interview, Justice Ginsberg stated "they [meaning the other male judges] have never been a 13-year-old girl . . . it's a very sensitive age for a girl. I don't think my colleagues, some of them, quite understood."⁶

The first woman to serve on the Supreme Court was Sandra Day O'Connor, who was nominated to the bench by President Ronald Reagan in 1981. In 2010, Justice Kagan joined two other female justices—Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, appointed by President Clinton in 1993, and Justice Sonia Sotomayor, nominated by President Obama in 2009. Having three female justices serve together could impact the culture of the Court. One 2006 study of the U.S. business world, for instance, found that a critical mass of "three or more women can cause a fundamental change in the boardroom and enhance corporate governance."⁷ Having three female justices deliberating on cases might, then, expand the range of perspectives brought to legal discussions. However, another study in political science found no difference between the judicial decisions of male and female judges at the lower federal court level, except on the issue of sexual discrimination, where female judges were 10 percent more likely to rule in favor of the party bringing the suit.⁸ In the United States, approximately 26.6 percent of all federal and state judges are women.⁹ In comparison, women make up 26 percent of all judges in Canada, 46 percent of the judges in Finland, and 54 percent of the judges in France.¹⁰

Is the gender composition of the U.S. Supreme Court relevant to how it makes decisions?

Should a person's gender, race, and/or ethnicity be taken into account when selecting judges? Why or why not?