

Chapter national government assignment



Students will examine the three contemporary theories of American democracy: pluralism, elite ND class theory, and hyperplasia. 7. Students will be able to discuss and analyze the challenges to democracy presented in the text. 8. Students will be able to address the issue of the scope of government and explain how the scope of government is relevant to an understanding of democracy. 9. Students will be able to describe how liberals and conservatives differ in their positions concerning the appropriate role and scope of government. 10.

Students will be able to understand the Importance of Individualism In Limiting the scope of American government. 11. Students will begin to assess the two questions that are central to governing and that serve as themes for this textbook: How should we be governed? And What should government do? Outline: . Two Central Questions for Governing A. This chapter will introduce three important concepts: government, politics, and public policy B. Two fundamental questions about governing that will serve as themes throughout this book: 1. How should we govern? A. His book will examine the workings of democratic government, evaluate the way that American government actually works compared to the standards of an “ideal” democracy, and continually ask the question “ Who holds the power and who influences the policies adopted by government? ” 2. What should government do? A. This book will explore the relationship between how American government works and what the government does b. Debates about the scope of government are among the most important in political life II. Government and Politics A. Government 1. Government, politics, and policymaking are interrelated 2.

Government: the institutions that make authoritative decisions, or public policies, that apply to all of society 3. Our government consists of four groups: Congress, the president, the courts, and federal administrative agencies (often referred to as bureaucracy) a. Also there are approximately 500, 000 elected officials in the United States c. Policies that affect us are being made almost constantly B. Functions of Governments . Regardless of how they assumed power, all governments have these five central functions in common a. Maintaining a national defense: usually maintained by armed forces 1. The United States spends around \$275 billion a year on national defense b. Providing public services: schools, libraries, weather forecasting, highways, public parks 1. Public Goods: services that can be shared by everyone and cannot be denied to anyone c. Preserving order: governments must have police power to provide order to society d. Socializing the young: most modern governments pay for education and use it to develop support for national principles among the young 1. Practices such as the Pledge of Allegiance seek to foster patriotism and love of country e.

Collecting taxes: governments need to collect money to pay for the public goods and services that it provides C. Politics: . Politics: the way government makes decisions about public policies is through politics a. Determines whom we will select as our government leaders and what policies these leaders pursue b. Harold D. Lasswell defines politics as “ who gets what, when and how. ” 1. Who refers to voters, candidates, groups, and parties 2. What refers to the substance of politics and government and what benefits and burdens they provide 3. How refers to people participate: voting, supporting, compromising, lobbying D.

Political Involvement . Political Participation: refers to the ways in which people get involved in politics a. Voting (the most common), protests, civil disobedience b. America does quite poorly in voter turnout, with one of the lowest rates of voter articulation in the world 1. The elderly have a high turnout (67%) while the young have a poor one (32%) c. Some people earn their living in political office . Single-Issue Groups: groups that have a narrow interest, tend to dislike compromise, and often draw membership from people new to politics a. Those features distinguish them from traditional interest groups b. Hey are usually so concerned with one issue that they cast their votes on the basis of that Issue only, ignoring the politician’s stance on all other issues 1. Pro-life and pro-choice III. The Policymaking System A. Public Policy 1. He end product of government and politics is public policy 2. Policymaking system is the process by which political problems are communicated by the voters and acted upon by government policymakers a. A set of institutions and activities that link together government, politics, and public policy b. It is a system designed to respond to the priorities of the people through governmental action 3. Hen people Influence the government’s policy agenda 4. Policy Agenda: consists of the problem areas which attract the serious attention of public officials a. A government’s policy agenda changes regularly b. It responds to problems in society . Sometimes things that are left off the agenda can be equally important as those things being addressed 6. Public Policy: the end product of government and politics a. Includes every decision that government makes B. Political Issues and Linkage Institutions . Political Issues: issues that arise when people disagree about a problem or about public policy choice made to combat a problem a. Overspent will not act on an Issue until it is high on the policy agenda 2.

Linkage Institutions: the channels or access points through which issues and people's policy preferences get on the government's policy agenda a. In a democracy these include: political parties, elections, interest groups, and the media C. Policymaking Institutions: the branches of government charged with taking action on political issues 1. The U. S. Constitution established three policymaking institutions – the Congress, the presidency, and the courts 2. The bureaucracy is considered by many political scientists to be a fourth 3. ' ere few policies are made by a single policymaking institution D. Policy Impacts: the effects policy has on people and on society's problems 1. Having a policy implies a goal: people who raise a policy issue usually want a policy that works 2. Translating people's desires into public policies is crucial to the workings of democracy IV. Democratic Government A. From the Russian Revolution in 1917 through the Cold War, American foreign policy was concerned with preventing the spread of communism 1. All of the countries that were once part of the Soviet empire now practice democracy B. Defining Democracy . Democracy is a means of selecting policymakers and of organizing government so that policy represents and responds to the people's preferences a. The writers of the Constitution had no fondness of democracy b. Lincoln defined democracy as " government of the people, by the people, and for the people" . Traditional Democratic Theory rests upon a number of key principles that specify how governmental decisions are made in a democracy 1.

Robert Dahl, a democratic theorist, refers to five criteria that are essential for " an ideal democratic process" a. Equality in voting: the principle of " one person, one vote" is basic to democracy b. Effective participation: citizens

must have adequate and equal opportunities to participate in politics c. Enlightened understanding: free press and free speech are essential to civic understanding d. Citizen control of the agenda: citizens should have the collective right to control the government's policy agenda e.

Inclusion: citizenship and rights should be extended to all those that live within a nation 2. In addition democracies must also practice majority rule and preserve minority rights a. Majority Rule: choosing among alternatives requires that the majority's desire be majorities and allows that they might join majorities through persuasion and reasoned argument c.

Representation: the relationship between the few leaders and the many followers 1. The desires of the people should be replicated in Oversight through the choices of elected officials 2. The closer the correspondence between representatives and their constituents, the closer the approximation to an ideal democracy D. Three Contemporary Theories of American Democracy 1. Pluralist Theory: states that groups with shared interests influence public policy by pressing their concerns through organized efforts a. These groups compete with each other for control over policy, yet no one group dominates b. There are multiple access points to our government and if you fail to get results with one branch of government, you can try another c. Regaining and compromise are essential ingredients Tao democracy d. Dahl states " all active and legitimate groups in the population can make themselves heard at some crucial stage in the process" e. The recent increase in interest group activity is cited by pluralists as evidence for pluralism f. Many differ, such as Robert Putnam, and believe people are joining less groups and acting more on their own 2. Elite and Class Theory:

contends that societies are divided along class lines and that an upper-class elite will rule, regardless of the formal niceties of governmental organization

a. Upper class elite pulls the strings of government b. Wealth – the holding of assets such as property, stocks, and bonds – is the basis of class power: very few powerful Americans are the policymakers 1. Over 1/3 of the nations

wealth is held by 1% of the population c. Big business is the center of the

elite dominance d. Reagan was a big promoter of big business . Hyperplasia:

contends that groups are so strong that government is weakened it is an

extreme exaggerated, or perverted form of pluralism a. There are too many

groups with access to the different levels and branches of government 1.

Hose roofs have multiple ways to both prevent policies they disagree with

and promote those they support b. The groups divide government and its

authority the result of governments trying to placate each group is

confusing, contradictory, and muddled policy (or no policy at all) . Challenges

to Democracy 1. Increased Technical Expertise: today we live in a society of

experts, whose technical knowledge overshadows the knowledge of the

general population a. Today the elite are those who command knowledge,

the experts b. As human knowledge has expanded, it has become

increasingly difficult for citizens to make

Nell-informed decisions 2. Limited Participation in Government: Americans do

not take full advantage of the opportunities to shape government or select

its leaders a. Lack of participation challenges the foundation of democracy 3.

Escalating dependent on Political Action Committees to fund their campaigns

and some feel are then compelled to vote in favor of the Pace's interest 4.

An Old Political System in a Rapidly Changing World: can our constitution

keep up with the changing society 5. Diverse Political Interest: the diversity of the American people can cause a policy gridlock a.

Policy Gridlock: a condition that occurs when no coalition is strong enough to form a majority and establish policy – therefore nothing may get done 6. A major challenge to democracy in America is to overcome the diversity of interests and fragmentation of power in order to deliver policies that are responsive to citizens' needs F. Preview Questions about Democracy: upcoming chapters will ask us to look at these questions 1. Are people knowledgeable about matters of public policy? 2. Do they apply what knowledge they have to their voting choices? . Are American elections designed to facilitate public participation? 4. Does the interest group system allow for all points of view to be heard, or do significant biases give advantages to particular groups? 5. Do political parties provide voters with clear choices, or do they intentionally obscure their stands on issues in order to get as many votes as possible? 6. If there are choices, do the media help citizens understand them? 7. Is the Congress representative of American society, and is it capable of reacting to changing times? 8.

Does the president look after the general Unlearn of the public, or has the office become too focused on the interests of the elite? . The Scope of Government in America A. How active is American government? 1. All together the national, state, and local governments spend about one out of every three dollars of our gross domestic product a. Gross Domestic Product: the total value of all goods and services produced annually in the United States 2. About 18 million people work for one of our governments 3. The national government spends more than \$1. Trillion annually, employs 5

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million people, owns 1/3 of the land in the U. S. , occupies 2. 6 billion square feet of office space, and operates 400, 000 nonmilitary vehicles 4. One measure of the size of government is he size of the budget deficit and the national debt B. Liberal and Conservative Views of the Scope of Government? 1. Probably the most important issue that divides liberals and conservatives results from their differing views on the appropriate scope of government 2. Liberals support a more active role for government in most spheres, along with higher spending and more regulation.