

## Government 30

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### Introduction to American Politics

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## Course Home Page

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<http://people.hmdc.harvard.edu/~dcarpent/govt30webhome.html>

Contains:

- Syllabus [in HTML and .PDF (Adobe) format]
- Contact Information
- All Course Announcements and Assignments, plus Policies and Guidelines for the Class
- Lecture Notes [also in HTML & .PDF]
- My Philosophy for the Course and Other Brain Candy

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## Under-Age?

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Don't you have be able to old enough to drink and shoot a gun to give a response to the State of the Union?

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## The Ubiquity of “Democracy”

President George W. Bush, last night: “Democracy,”  
“Democratic,” “Democracies” 12 times.

“Democracies replace resentment with hope, respect the rights  
of their citizens and their neighbors, and join the fight against  
terror.”

2005 inaugural: “The concerted effort of free nations to  
promote democracy is a prelude to our enemies’ defeat.”

2001 inaugural: “The most important tasks of a democracy are  
done by everyone.”

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## The Ubiquity of “Democracy”

President Bush, 2003:

“The roots of our democracy can be traced to  
England, and to its Parliament.”

“The establishment of a free Iraq at the heart of the  
Middle East will be a watershed event in the global  
democratic revolution.”

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-2.html>

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## The Ubiquity of “Democracy”

Kerry, 9/24/2004:

“We will promote the development of free and  
democratic societies throughout the Arab and  
Muslim world.... We must reach out to them  
and yes we must always promote democracy.”

[http://www.johnkerry.com/pressroom/speeches/spc\\_2004\\_0924.html](http://www.johnkerry.com/pressroom/speeches/spc_2004_0924.html)

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## Question

1. How many times does the word “democracy” appear in the U.S. Constitution?
2. How many times did Bush use the word “republic” in his inaugural? How many times did Kerry use the word “republic” in his acceptance speech?

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## Puzzles, Questions for the Semester

1. What is a democracy, why did the Founders doubt it, and what was their alternative?
2. What was the Founders’ idea of a republic?

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## PUZZLES/ISSUES FOR THE SEMESTER

**THE FOUNDING:** What was the nature of the compromise of 1787? Who won and who lost in the making of the U.S. Constitution?

**ELECTIONS:** Why did the Republicans take the House in 1994, and why did Clinton keep the presidency two years later? Why did Bush win in 2000 during conditions that historically favor the incumbent party holding the presidency? What happened in 2004?

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### Puzzles (continued)

**ELECTIONS II:** Whatever happened to marginal districts? (Most house elections are blowouts.)

**VOTING AND PARTICIPATION:** Why is it that in America, people at the extremes participate most?

**PARTIES:** How strong are they? Why were they stronger 100 years ago?

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### Puzzles (continued)

**INSTITUTIONS:** Is the presidency really imperial? Is the bureaucracy? Or does Congress rule the roost?

**THE COURTS:** Should judges make or find law? Has the Court really gotten more conservative?

**CIVIL RIGHTS AND WELFARE:** Are we headed toward a balkanized America? A "Brazilianized" America?

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### CLASS FORMAT

1. 2 lectures, discussion section per week

2. Your requirements

- attendance at lectures and sections
- 4 discussion papers (2-3 pp.)
- final examination (finals week)

3. Things your TFs might add

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## Writing Demands I

### 1. Clear Argumentation

- Argument on paper's first page.
- Argument should be summarized (or able to be summarized) in one sentence.

### 2. Clear organization: ("Tell 'em what you're gonna tell 'em, tell 'em, then tell 'em what you told 'em.")

- Papers should have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Paragraph is the basic building-block of the paper.

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## Writing Demands II

### 3. Proper Grammar and Spelling

- Use spell-check
- Grammar: Strunk & White: *Elements of Style*.
- Use grammar-check
- Have a friend (even someone else in class) read your paper.

### 4. Counterarguments

- Essential to good argumentation
- Actively consider (and briefly refute) arguments against your position

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