

FOUNDATIONS

PART

I

Do not copy, post, or distribute

Do not copy, post, or distribute



Political science is the systematic and scientific study of politics, including institutions, behaviors, and processes.

Alex Wong/Getty Images News/Getty Images

1

WHAT IS POLITICAL SCIENCE?

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

1. Distinguish between politics and political science.
2. Develop an understanding and appreciation of the history of political science.
3. Examine the extent to which political science is a science.
4. Identify and discuss major concepts in political science, including the state, government, power, and ideology.

When the first edition of this book was written and sent to press, the turbulent politics that have marked the past several years were just getting started. There were increased protests via the Black Lives Matter movement and the 2017 Women’s March on Washington, but there was no COVID-19, no challenged presidential election, no insurrection. Many of the political norms that had existed for decades remained somewhat intact. While times were most definitely changing, political scientists could still understand what was happening through a lens of study that we were all fairly used to. Though there is a tendency to romanticize the past, even if those past years were showing early signs of what was to come, nobody could have predicted then that the world would not only be turned upside down but shut down as well. If anything, the past several years have showed the world just how important politics is if we are to function anywhere close to a coherent whole. However, that assumes that we have a good understanding of politics and what it is to begin with.

How does political science explain how a country that has been built on democratic values for centuries suddenly embraces tenets of authoritarianism and experience the phenomenon of democratic backsliding? How does political science understand the rise of “alternative facts” and conspiracy theories in dictating politics of the day? How does political science help us understand the public health policies crafted in the wake of COVID-19? What does political science have to say on the rise of China and Russia’s aggressive moves in Europe? I must admit, the answers that I would have given to these questions several years ago are probably not the answers that I would give today. In fact, the events of the past few years have left many political scientists, me included, wondering if our previous theories about politics and political life were even right. And so, as this second edition of *Political Science Today* is being prepared, it represents the state of political science in the early 2020s: still trying to grapple with a rapidly moving string of events to not only explain what is happening but also try to provide a greater understanding and context to them.

The notion of what political science is versus politics, then, is a good place to start. **Politics** is defined as the authoritative distribution of resources, or rather the determining of who gets what, when, and how. **Political science** is the systematic and scientific study of politics, including institutions, behaviors, and processes. While it is hard to do, political science is an effort to study politics at a distance, to remove ourselves from the day-to-day chaos that is often reflected on our television screens and to see the bigger picture and be able to explain it. Political science is quite different from what you usually hear on cable news channels with bright breaking news

headlines. Some students decide to major in it because they want to go to law school or into the military or because they already know they want to be a politician. Others won't even go near a political science class unless it's required because they "know" they won't like it. In any case, that's what this book is for—to clear up the misconceptions about what political science is, what's involved in it, and to give you a sense of how political science views the politics of today. This chapter introduces the field of political science, first by distinguishing it from what politics is and then by looking at its history and what makes political science a science. Second, the chapter explores some of the fundamental concepts of political science, including public goods, states, government, ideology, and representation. Finally, Chapter 1 discusses the layout of the book and the road ahead.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN POLITICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Perhaps the easiest way to talk about the differences between politics and political science is to look at a few examples. Consider first the insurrection at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. Organized as part of the movement to stop the counting of Electoral College votes and to keep then-president Donald Trump in office, the entire world was shocked as a mob broke into the US Capitol forcing lawmakers to flee from the House chamber. Though they would later return and count the Electoral College votes, more than 100 police officers were injured and seven died. In its aftermath, the political environment between Republicans and Democrats in Congress has become wholly toxic, with some lawmakers refusing to talk to one another. While this outbreak of political violence was hardly expected in the United States and has contributed to a deteriorating political climate, political science provides a lens through which we can better understand not only the causes but the effects of political violence. Political violence, though historically rare in democratic countries, is all too common in countries in Latin America or Africa. Political scientists studying these phenomena can provide insight on what it means for American politics.

For example, in their study of the Colombian civil war and its relationship with democratic reforms, Steele and Schubiger highlight that despite efforts to increase democratic elements and open up political participation, reforms often led to the political violence they were supposed to reduce. Part of the reason for this, they argue, is that politics became too localized, exposing ideological fault lines and involving armed groups in processes they were not prepared for. Importantly for understanding the rise in political violence in the United States, they write that "Once violence is unleashed against certain types of voters and candidates, vulnerable voters understand that participating in elections is extremely risky" with the likely outcome being that they simply stop voting at all.¹ Similarly, in her study of sub-Saharan Africa, Burchard found that electoral violence significantly harmed voter confidence in democracy generally.² While media reports in the United States about growing political turmoil have had a tendency to stoke dissatisfaction and concern, the findings of these studies warn us about the consequences that further violence may have in America.

A second example that helps disentangle politics from political science is the COVID-19 pandemic and, more specifically, how states have responded to it. Now three years into this

public health crisis, countries around the world have reacted in quite different ways. New Zealand all but shut down its country to people coming in while Sweden had some of the loosest coronavirus protocols, relying primarily on voluntary restrictions. Without a doubt, many of these COVID-19 responses (mask and vaccine mandates, social distancing, mandatory shut-downs) have become intensely politicized in the United States. But beyond this political rhetoric, what can political science tell us about why states respond as they do?

Franklin, drawing on the field of comparative politics, provides some answers as to why some states had harsher responses to the pandemic than others.³ These include political system, culture, the growth of populism and populist politics, and state capacity. Franklin notes that authoritarian states like China may have been better able to deal with the COVID-19 outbreak since they could rapidly introduce shutdowns and had greater leverage to manage and monitor their populations. However, authoritarian states also tend to be bad at communicating information, something which may have actually hampered China's initial response.⁴ Culture may also play a role as countries with more collective rather than individualistic attitudes may be more accepting of stronger responses. Franklin also argues that populist politics in many states has led to a situation in which experts are routinely questioned and distrusted, further harming COVID response. Finally, the ability or capacity of the political system to respond may also influence the policies a state chooses to implement to control the pandemic.

While COVID is likely to play a role in our everyday lives for some time to come, political scientists attempt to understand how and why states choose particular policies. Further, if we understand what policies were the most effective in containing the virus, we might be able to benefit from better public policies in the future.

In these two examples, we see how political scientists move beyond shallow political issues and examine patterns of politics: what factors allow bills to be passed, patterns in how states adopt different policies, and how the development of Congress or of the executive branch makes things easier or harder to accomplish. These questions might not be sexy enough to capture the attention of political pundits on television, but they are arguably more interesting, informative, and important as they address the underlying questions of how and why things happen in politics.

Sometimes, it is hard to see how these issues affect you; while we have all been impacted to some extent by COVID-19, you may not have experienced any violence in trying to exercise your democratic rights. However, most things in society can be connected to politics and political science in some way. Interested in sports? One way to explore sports in politics might be how Congress has involved itself in issues from steroids in baseball to concussions in football. Additionally, when local municipalities build stadiums or arenas for their local teams, politics is involved. Interested in the fine arts? Think about education policies that have placed a greater emphasis on science, math, and reading, and drawn money and attention away from theater, arts, and music. Have a passion for space? You can study the politics of NASA and human space-flight or even broader contours of science policy like climate change.

The bottom line of this discussion is that political science is more than what we often think it is or can be. It is also more thorough, deliberate, and objective than the politics we see on TV

or read about on the internet. In that sense, even those who might be turned off by the nasty rhetoric or negative commercials might be interested in the actual dynamics of explaining why bills are passed or why the public feels the way they do.

HISTORY

Debates over the history and nature of political science are not new. (For readings on these topics, see the For Further Reading section at the end of this chapter.) Most everyone can agree that the roots of the discipline go back to ancient Greece with the philosophy of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. While Socrates himself is well-known for his approach to teaching (the so-called Socratic method), his writings, if ever there were any, do not survive today. What we know about Socrates and his philosophy comes to us through his student Plato. Plato's writings, most importantly for us, *The Republic*, present his thoughts as a series of discussions between Socrates and his students. Many of these discussions centered on concepts like justice, government, morals, and what proper city-states should look like. Ironically, students are often taught that the origins of democracy come from ancient Greece quite literally: *demos* means "people" and *kratos* means "rule." However, among other discussions in *The Republic*, Plato classifies democracy as being an unjust government along with timocracy,* oligarchy, and tyranny. His reason for this is that democracy, allowing the people to rule, could lead to what is called tyranny of the majority. The danger, according to Plato, is that the majority could run roughshod over the rights of the minority and therefore devolve into a tyrannical, unjust government.

Aristotle continued this tradition in his work *Politics*. In it, Aristotle discusses what the best government is, arguing that the city is the natural community and the only just community. These three Greek philosophers left an indelible mark on political philosophy that would not be questioned nor significantly added to until the medieval period when philosophers like St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas wrote treatises on the nature and purpose of law. These writings will be explored further in Chapter 3.

As Europe moved from the medieval period into the sixteenth century, religion and its role in government came to the forefront of European political matters. The first prominent treatise that appeared at this time was Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*. With its oft-heard exhortations like "The ends justify the means" and "It is much safer to be feared than loved," Machiavelli's name is sometimes used as an adjective to mean cunning and deceitful. The real purpose of *The Prince*, however, was to win Machiavelli favor with the powerful Medici family out of which had come popes and royalty. Machiavelli thus represented a real attempt at synthesizing advice for rulers that would make them not only successful but also powerful. This focus on the practical applications of politics represents a shift in political theory, considering not just the fundamental building blocks of society but demonstrating how they could be put into practice. This tradition can also be seen in Sir Thomas More's 1516 book *Utopia*, describing an ideal society and its religious, governmental, and cultural practices.

* A form of government where only property owners participate in government.

Ironically, in More's England, a massive government upheaval was in the works. In 1534, King Henry VIII of England declared the Church in England to be independent of the Roman Catholic Church because he desired a divorce from his first wife. The religious upheaval generated by this one move helped lead to the English Civil War in the 1600s. During this period, a new generation of political philosophers arose, questioning the original purposes of the governments under which they lived. What gave the king the right to rule over his people? Was the divine right of kings, the idea that God divinely inspired and supported monarchy and therefore implicitly supported the actions and decisions of kings, justifiable? Particularly given the religious reformation of the time, what role should religion play in forming a government?

A new generation of philosophers arose from the ashes of the English Civil War to try to provide answers to the now pressing questions. And while much of this will be discussed further in Chapter 3, we will briefly describe some of the innovations here. The philosophers Thomas Hobbes and John Locke separately proposed to begin from a thought experiment called the **state of nature**, imagining what life and human behavior might look like in the absence of government, society, and culture. Based on this, both Locke and Hobbes agreed that individuals are granted certain **natural rights** that all people have, but at some point, this state of nature begins to break down. Hobbes, believing that human nature is suspect, saw a breakdown among the people leading to a life that is “nasty, brutish, and short.” Locke, on the other hand, believed that the state of nature can be more pleasant, arguing that people are naturally good; it is only the introduction of property and money that causes disputes among the people. In any case, once the state of nature breaks down, people, in need of safety, agree to enter into **social contracts** wherein everyone gives up some of their natural rights to a government in return for order and protection from one another. These ideas dramatically changed political theory. No longer did rule need to be divinely ordained; no longer was there justification to keep the common people from being involved in the operations of government. The age of Enlightenment had begun.

These social contract theorists greatly influenced views on the role and responsibilities of government moving into the eighteenth century. For example, the principles of consent of the governed, natural rights, and social contract theory are widely apparent in the founding documents of the United States. Jefferson readily admits to “certain unalienable rights” in the Declaration of Independence, along with “their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government and to provide new Guards for their future security.” Other influential theorists, such as Montesquieu, explicated ideas like separation of powers that Americans, including John Adams, expounded on and advocated for the adoption of in a new American government.

Establishing a Discipline

Given the importance of such ideas to certain movements, including the American and French revolutions, no one could deny the significance of political philosophy and theory. However, as the nineteenth century progressed and the role of the state grew, there was a clamor in American academia to establish some sort of area of study that encompassed not only political philosophy but also areas such as law and administration. This was also reflected in the changes in the

American university system as it moved from a traditional curriculum broadly focused on the classics, religion, and ethics to a curriculum dominated by specialized fields of study.⁵

This conception of political science as a field would soon come into conflict with the idea of developing a science of politics. The second influence on the development of political science was the very idea of developing a systematic and scientific view of the political world. Woodrow Wilson, before becoming president of the United States, was one of the first political scientists in America and in 1887 wrote, “I suppose that no practical science is ever studied where there is no need to know it. The very fact, therefore, that the eminently practical science of administration is finding its way into college courses in this country would prove that this country needs to know more about administration.”⁶ Implicit in this idea is that political science can inform public officials and the government of ways to improve. The roots of later debates within political science about its purpose and methods are also implied in Wilson’s perception of the growth of political science.

It is also important to note, however, that Wilson, like many of the founding generation of political scientists in the United States, was deeply racist. Blatt, in her study of race and the origins of modern political science, describes how the notion of a “Teutonic” or uniquely Anglo-Saxon state was a fundamental premise on which political science was formed.⁷ Far from divorcing race from politics, early political science was dominated by the idea that government, particularly democratic government, was a means of overseeing and governing those who were of minority status. Even as the field matured into the twentieth century, the focus remained on how institutions of the state may be implemented so as to acknowledge and accommodate racial differences rather than get rid of them. Blatt shows how many of these ideas continued on with comparatively little attention being paid to racial issues in political science even today. Even though political science evolved beyond these initial foundations, as discussed next, this growth at once minimized the role that race played in the study of politics and relegated it to a state of unimportance.⁸ As such, while some political scientists have been concerned with racial politics of civil rights policies, there is still an underrepresentation of studies of race and politics in modern political science.⁹

Twentieth-Century Political Science

Most of the political science research carried out in the first half of the twentieth century was primarily observational, comparative, and categorizing in its intent. But as political scientists watched other social sciences, particularly psychology, develop (this was the time of Freud, after all), a movement arose to bring more scientifically based methods to the field. This movement came to fruition with the behavioral revolution in political science at the midcentury mark. Behind the concept of **behavioralism** was the idea that all human action, and therefore political action, can be observed, quantified, and explained in an objective, scientific way.

Proponents of behavioralism argue that the only way to uncover and explain political behavior is in a way that is value neutral, objective, and replicable. In this sense, political scientists can use the model of the natural sciences to improve their field and contribute scientifically to a basic body of knowledge. However, behavioralism is not without its critics. People are people, after all; much of what they do is not objective and is not replicable, especially when it comes to

politics. How can political scientists expect to be objective and value neutral when their subjects are not? Additionally, the reasons people behave the way they do are varied, and often individuals are not even aware of why they behave in certain ways; what makes political scientists believe that they can distinguish these behaviors? While behavioralism has been discussed and debated within political science since the 1950s, many of its precepts abound today. Most political scientists seek to be objective, thorough, analytical, and explanatory. They use quantified data and statistical methods, and lacking that, they are methodical and precise in their analyses. Most political scientists are inculcated in statistical methodology and learn how to scientifically analyze data. Chapter 2 will discuss some of the ways in which statistics and quantitative analysis are used by political scientists to answer difficult questions.

Behavioralism is a view that political behavior can be explained through a focus on individual behavior; not everything in politics, however, is directed through individuals. Some things, such as laws and institutions, cannot necessarily be explained through a focus on the individual. **Institutionalism** and its proponents in the 1960s and 1970s sought to refocus the discipline on an analysis of institutions, their development, and their effects on politics. One way to think about the difference between institutions and individuals is to think about the rules of the game and the playing of a game. Any game has rules; those rules shape how individuals play the game. When those rules change, for whatever reason, it affects how the game is played. For institutionalists, the way political institutions are designed is like the rules in a game. Applied to something like Congress, institutionalists would focus on how things like committees are set up or how much power leaders have and the types of effects that might have on congressional productivity or power structures.

Institutionalists in the 1960s and 1970s brought to the field techniques that borrowed from the field of economics. Things like rational choice theory and game theory allowed institutions to be modeled in a formal way. These models also led to predictions, another hallmark of the push for a natural science approach in political science. Perhaps one of the most well-known game theoretic models in political science from this period was Downs's book *An Economic Theory of Democracy*.¹⁰ In it, Downs builds a formal model of political behavior working from the assumption of rationality—that people and institutions make decisions based on what their preferences are. One of the results that comes from his analysis is that the likely number of major political parties in a country is a result of the distribution of voters and what they believe. Political parties also have an incentive to make their platforms vague and rarely change them in order to appear stable and attract as many voters as possible.

The difference between institutionalism and behavioralism is one of where the origins of political behavior lie: Is it with individual people or with the institutions and rules of the game that shape people's behaviors? Like many of the conflicts inherent in political science, there isn't necessarily a right or wrong answer; it's merely a reflection of where political scientists believe is the appropriate area for study.

The Role of Political Theory

The history of political science, detailed here, began with a discussion of political philosophy ranging from Plato to Montesquieu with Machiavelli and St. Augustine in between. Once

political science as a discipline was formed, it would appear to a casual observer that political theory had been relegated to the dustbin of history. It is certainly true that since the late nineteenth century, the role of political theory and philosophy had been downgraded to an extent, but it has not disappeared entirely. Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, political theory experienced a resurgence of sorts with theorists reconsidering the role and purpose of the state. Theorists such as John Rawls published *A Theory of Justice*, exploring the shape that a truly just state would take.¹¹ Meanwhile, Nozick contributed to a critique of *A Theory of Justice* from a libertarian perspective (libertarians believe in as little government involvement in life as possible).¹² Political theory has increasingly explored the values of marginalized communities, such as women, minorities, and the LGBTQ+ community. Books such as Pateman's *The Sexual Contract* and Mills's *The Racial Contract* take on the very ideas of what a social contract might mean in today's society.¹³ There have even been political theorists exploring the role of multiculturalism in politics.

Despite this renaissance of political theory in the past fifty years, some political scientists and even some political theorists have argued for a separation between the two fields. Grant explores the relationship between political theory and political science in her article for *Political Theory* titled "Political Theory, Political Science, and Politics." She writes that political scientists see no place for political theory because it discusses normative questions—questions that by their very nature have no real answer. Further, theorists, political scientists argue, "lack meaningful standards for assessing what constitutes good research." On the other hand, "Political theorists, on their part, find their work evaluated by people who believe that research must have a 'cutting edge' and that its aim is to produce new knowledge, beliefs that they often do not share."¹⁴

The debate, then, goes to the heart of whether the purpose of political science is to produce scientific knowledge or knowledge of what is good or bad, just or unjust. It is indeed ironic that political theory is at the very roots of what political science is, and yet today, some argue it does not belong. This book approaches political theory as not only a subfield but also as a foundational part of political science that will be taken up further in Chapter 3.

IS POLITICAL SCIENCE A SCIENCE?

One of the basic questions of political science that permeates the field today is whether political science is a science or can ever be a science. **Science** is defined as a systematic search for knowledge through observation, experiments, and tests and is associated with the scientific method. The **scientific method** (see box) is a series of steps that, when followed, allows scientists to thoroughly and methodically ask a question and answer it using observational evidence.

If we take this as the basic meaning of science, then political science is clearly science. Practitioners ask questions, make hypotheses, and systematically test the hypotheses. Even qualitative analyses follow the same pattern of asking a question and very carefully testing and analyzing the evidence. But the deeper meaning of the question is whether political science can ever build a body of knowledge that can be used to better government and politics or at least predict what will happen.

The idea of prediction is built into the natural sciences. Physicists can predict the behavior of molecules on the tiniest scale; astrophysicists can predict the movement of the planets. Biologists can discuss evolution, genetics, and the appearance of different physical characteristics. Medical professionals can predict how the human body will respond to various sorts of treatments for various sorts of ailments. Perhaps one of the greatest stories of predictions is on the part of physicists, who, on the basis of what's called the standard model, predicted the existence of something called a Higgs boson, otherwise known as "the God particle." According to physicists, the Higgs boson is what gives mass to all other particles. While the existence of such a particle has been predicted for some time, it was not until 2012 that scientists at the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland confirmed its existence through physical tests.

SCIENTIFIC METHOD

The scientific method is a series of steps through which researchers can systematically study and analyze a given topic or question. While some scholars would add to the steps that follow, the basic steps of the scientific method are these:

1. Form a research question.
2. Formulate a hypothesis, a reasonable guess as to what the answer to the question is.
3. Do background research.
4. Design a test through which to answer the question.
5. Perform the analysis, and gather the results.
6. Make conclusions based on your data. Was your hypothesis right or wrong?

It is hard to name one thing that political scientists can predict with certainty on the scale of the Higgs (at least in terms of importance). There are any number of studies analyzing congressional voting patterns on policies varying from health care to immigration; however, just because members of Congress behaved a certain way in the past does not guarantee they will behave the same in the future. A good way to think about this is in how political parties change over time. Following the Civil War, the Republican Party, the party of Abraham Lincoln, was known (at least in the North) to be more supportive of freed slaves, whereas the Democrats (the party of the South) were not. Just 100 years later, this disposition had shifted; Democrats were the party of civil rights and Republicans were not. If there had been any voting studies of how Republicans during the 1800s had voted on civil rights issues, the findings would not hold in voting studies in the twentieth century.

The question thus becomes whether the findings of political scientists are contingent on history. By contingent, we mean dependent on historical circumstances of the type noted previously. For example, given our current state of political polarization, perhaps any findings political scientists have about politics today might be contingent on the polarization that already exists. This historical contingency is apparent when political scientists claim unique historical factors for why something happens in politics. For example, both historians and political scientists have argued

that President Lyndon B. Johnson's passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other elements of the Great Society agenda were only possible in the wake of President John F. Kennedy's assassination and the Democratic landslide that it helped contribute to in the 1964 elections.

To be sure, there is nothing wrong with historical contingency; if accidents of history have helped contribute to certain political events, it would be malpractice to ignore or deny it. The problem is that historical contingency often prohibits political scientists from making sweeping pronouncements that allow for future prediction. And if we cannot make predictions, then what is the purpose of political science? Is it all right for the purpose of political science to be simply the discovery of new knowledge or does it need to go further to justify its own existence? Again, these are existential questions built into the very foundation of what political science is as a discipline and, again, the answers to the question do not lie in the category of right or wrong but in the mind of individual political scientists.

One way we use predictions in political science is in presidential elections. For the past five presidential election cycles, the political science journal *PS: Political Science and Politics* has published the results of several predictive models of the election. Each model takes different factors into account, ranging from the economy to public opinion. The models take data from previous election cycles and combine it with current data to predict which candidate is more likely to win the presidential election. However, issues of data availability and contingent historical events are also important. Campbell notes that “an implicit assumption of election forecasting is that no *major* idiosyncratic events intervene between the forecast and the vote that divert the election's results from what would be historically expected by the fundamentals incorporated in the models.” Should an “October surprise” happen, an unexpected event or announcement that can interrupt political campaigns, those forecasts may lose their predictive power.¹⁵

In the end, human nature and the confluence of history conspire to make prediction difficult. Human brains cannot be looked at and taken apart in petri dishes in some lab; they are real and living and able to change. In fact, a well-known phenomenon known as the observer effect acknowledges the idea that when people are told how they act or how they may act in the future, they will likely change their behavior. Applying the observer effect to politics, it could be possible that once members of Congress are told the factors that make them likely to vote for a bill (political party, salience, importance to their constituents), they may in fact change their behavior confounding any possible prediction that may have once come about.

So, is political science a science? It is insofar as political scientists adhere to the scientific method, but attempts to make predictions, while admittedly few and far between, are much more difficult to model than the natural sciences. Recognizing the difficulties in predictions, it does not mean that political scientists do not try to learn and understand why politics happens the way it does, it just means that we are cautious in making any long-term predictions.

MAJOR CONCEPTS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Before moving on to look at the individual fields of study that can be found within political science, we will examine some of the primary ideas and concepts that are found throughout. These include things such as states, forms of government, civil liberties and civil rights, power,

representation, political culture, and ideology. While there are certainly many others that can be added to this list, these concepts can be found throughout the study of political science regardless of subfield.

CAREER GUIDANCE

The use of the scientific method is not exclusive to science, whether it is a hard science or political science. The scientific method can also be seen as a way of critical thinking or analysis, which many employers find useful. You can transfer this way of thinking to solve problems, analyze markets, or consider strategy for a future employer. This is an excellent skill to highlight in future job hunts.

Public Goods, the Tragedy of the Commons, and Free Riders

One of the key reasons often cited for the need for a government is the provision and protection of what are called public goods. **Public goods** are goods that are “available for, and consumed by, all individuals. Their consumption by any one person does not diminish their consumption by others. People cannot (easily) be excluded from sharing in their consumption and at times have no other choice.”¹⁶ Public goods include things like roads, schools, police, and the military—these are all things that everyone can partake in and cannot be excluded from.

To further understand what happens when these goods and services are provided, political scientists use the concept of the **tragedy of the commons**. Imagine a small village with no government to speak of and imagine that in the middle of this village is an open field. This open field can be used for farming or for animals to graze on. While this field is available to all, if too many people use it for too many purposes, its value to animals and crops will be limited. In other words, private individuals may abuse the common goods for private gain without thinking about the needs of others. A more modern example of this tragedy of the commons is in overfishing. With seas and oceans being openly available resources, private businesses will often overfish to their own gain. However, when fish populations become sufficiently limited as a result, it ruins the opportunities for others to use that public good and even eventually for the business that overfished in the first place. Since nobody can be excluded from the field or the seas, everybody uses the good so that at some point it is overused, thereby reducing the benefit to everyone. In this sense, governments are needed not only to provide public goods that may not be otherwise provided by the group but to protect the public goods that do exist.

If part of the purpose of a government is to regulate and provide these public goods, how can that government assemble the necessary resources to do so? Roads must be built, and police and military must be trained and fielded. If citizens know that they will receive these public goods no matter what, what incentive do they have to participate and/or pay for them? This concept is often called the **free rider problem**; if public goods cannot be exclusive to only the people who pay for them, there are bound to be those who seek to cheat the system and not pay. In terms of



The tragedy of the commons involves the abuse of common resources for private gain, seen here with the cutting of rainforest trees for personal farmland.

RAUL ARBOLEDA/AFP/Getty Images

the government, this problem is circumvented by the requirement of taxes through which public goods can be provided.

The free rider problem can also be applied to smaller groups and associations like interest groups. In interest groups that are organized around the public interest, the benefits they pursue cannot be provided solely to the group members. For example, one of the missions of the American Cancer Society (ACS) is to support research looking for a cure for cancer. If a cure was ever found, the ACS cannot keep nonmembers from accessing that cure. What is the incentive, then, for people to join the ACS if they know they will receive the benefits anyway? Olson addressed this very problem in his book *The Logic of Collective Action*.¹⁷ He theorized that groups like the ACS must use selective benefits in order to entice people to join their groups, things like material benefits (discounts, T-shirts, magazines, etc.), purposive benefits, or solidarity benefits. In sum, then, the government can overcome the free rider problem through its power to require taxes, but other groups must find some other incentive to cause people to want to join.

States

When we think of the term *state* in America, we usually also think of the fact that the country is called the United *States* of America. Although some political scientists may debate the true meaning or conceptualization of the term *state*, in general, **states** refer to groups of people

living under a single governmental system.¹⁸ Often, the term denotes sovereign states in the sense that those states have complete control over what happens to them, their government, and their people in the same way that the United States of America is a single group of people who have control over their political lives. The origins of the name *United States of America* comes from the period following the Declaration of Independence when each of the former colonies truly was sovereign, or all powerful, within its territory. Despite the existence of the Articles of Confederation, power resided with these thirteen states, and no central body had authority over them. When the Constitution was created and ratified, those thirteen formerly independent and sovereign entities became the *United States of America*.

States are often the main subject of study in political science. Political scientists study patterns of governmental or political behavior within a single state or compare such behaviors across multiple states or regions. Some try to understand the philosophy and reasoning behind the governmental structures of a state. Still, others seek to understand what makes states succeed, thrive, and prosper and others fail. In fact, the question of failed states is one that perplexes political scientists today; failed states are those entities that lose power and authority over their territory or people. Whether that is because those states have been overthrown by invaders or their own people, because of war or famine, or simply because the government did not operate as effectively as it could have are all up for debate. What is not up for debate is the effect that these failed states can have throughout the world. For example, Somalia, located in the Horn of Africa, is a failed state, and the lack of any control over the territory has allowed terrorist groups like al-Qaeda to thrive and for pirates to operate off its coasts. These effects, therefore, are not simply local but of a global nature. The topic of states, while important in establishing constitutions and governments, is an essential part of the comparative politics subfield and will be addressed in Chapter 9.

One way of understanding what a state is can be to know what a state is not. Many people confuse states with nations or even governments. This is natural, and we hear it all the time—particularly from people who may argue this or that about the “nation of the United States.” While country is often (correctly) used as a synonym for state, it is not necessarily appropriate to use the term *nation* in this way. A **nation** refers to a group of people who have a common background, history, culture, language, etc. For example, the Native American nation of the Sioux represents a distinct cultural heritage, yet they do not have their own state in the sense that they have a piece of territory that they solely have control over. Some may argue that the United States comprises a single people brought together in a melting pot of immigration; others still see the United States as a multicultural entity with separate groups of Hispanics, Irish, Chinese, Middle Eastern, etc. For most of history, the main actors in global politics were called nation-states, representing a state that also encapsulated one group of nationals or peoples. For this, we can think of historical Europe, where England represented a single cultural group and the French another. In turn, each of these peoples managed to establish states in their territories, earning the label of nation-state.

Government

Where states are groups of people living under one governmental system, the very term **government** means the style and structure of the institutions that make authoritative decisions for a society. Governments come in many different styles, from democratic republics of the

American type to authoritarian regimes under dictators. One way to think about these different types of governments or regimes is to categorize them by how many people are involved in making decisions for society, from the one to the many (see Figure 1.1). We can begin with those governments in which only one person has the ultimate authority, and in this case, there are two potential styles of government: monarchy and authoritarian dictatorships.

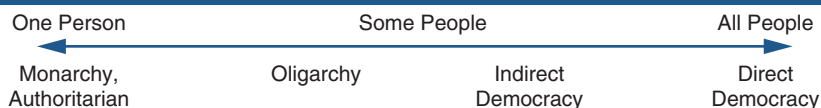
In a monarchy, the highest authority is the king or queen. While the United Kingdom immediately comes to mind as an example of a monarchical system, today the United Kingdom is actually a constitutional monarchy where power resides with Parliament, an elected legislative body, and the ruling monarch is merely a figurehead. A better modern example of this style of government is the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which is currently ruled by the House of Saud. These differences are important. For a system to be a true monarchy, the king or queen must have final say; this is not the case in the United Kingdom, but is true for Saudi Arabia.

An authoritarian dictatorship, on the other hand, is rule by one individual with no constraints of law, institutions, or custom. When we use the term, it generally infers a malevolent nature, invoking the tenures of dictators like Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, or Mao Zedong. However, that doesn't necessarily have to be the case because the term could potentially be used in a more positive manner—for instance, in what might be called a benevolent dictatorship. While we have never witnessed such a regime in history, the fact remains that a dictatorship or government of one does not automatically imply either the intentions or the ideology supporting it. For example, Hitler's regime was one that operated under a fascist ideology, or a belief that the state came before all. On the other hand, Stalin's dictatorship utilized communist ideology, and, as such, Hitler and Stalin intensely disliked each other. Thus, despite them being fellow dictators, they could neither cooperate nor respect one another because of differing positions on ideology. This is all a means of illustrating how the structure of government (dictatorship) can be separated out from ideology (a consistent set of beliefs about how the world or government should work, discussed later in this chapter).

It might also appear easy to confuse a monarchy with a dictatorship; after all, one country's king could be another's dictator. Under a monarchical government, power is traditionally passed on by family ties; however, in dictatorships, this is not an absolute. When Stalin died in the Soviet Union, there was no clear successor to his duties; Nikita Khrushchev eventually came to power but was unable to secure it for more than a few years. In the authoritarian regime of North Korea, leadership has been passed down in the Kim family from the founder of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Kim Il-sung, to his son, Kim Jong-il, and finally to his son, Kim Jong-un.

Some states, instead of being ruled by one, may be ruled by a few; this is called oligarchy. In these situations, oligarchs usually represent the most prosperous or most powerful individuals in

FIGURE 1.1 ■ Types of Government by Number of People in Power



a state, and it is among these people where power is brokered and decisions are made. Following the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215, England went from an absolute monarchy to what could be arguably termed an *oligarchy*, where the king's power came from the landed aristocracy who could control some of what the king intended to do. The Soviet Union following Stalin and then Khrushchev could also be considered an oligarchy with the Soviet Politburo, the top communist organization in the state, controlling much of what went on in the country and replacing leaders when necessary. Today's modern Russia can also be seen as an oligarchy as Russian president Vladimir Putin is backed in his position by a small group of oil barons who have made billions of dollars from Russian oil reserves.

As more and more people gain power and the ability to contribute to decisions in a government, the type of government changes. This is where we may begin to think about democratic governments. There are two main types of democracies: indirect and direct. Indirect democracy is where citizens vote on people to represent them in the halls of government; this is called a republic and is the type of government that we have in the United States. In this sense, even though it is a democracy, *all* people do *not* have direct input in decisions; they exercise this power only indirectly through elected officials. If all people are involved in all decisions, this would be a direct democracy.

What good is understanding different types of governments, or rather, what type of analytical leverage can this gain us in political science? The concept of government can be quite helpful not only when comparing different governments but can also give political theorists a sense of the best form of government or even the worst. This was the subject of Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle in their early studies of government. Being able to recognize and identify different types of governments also helps us to explain why states behave the way they do. How do dictators preserve their power? How do voters vote? What constraints are placed on a state's leadership? Thus, the concept of government has significant value in understanding and explaining behavior in a global context and many of these types of governments are further explored in Chapter 9.

Power

In both of the previously given concepts, the idea of power is central to defining a state and a government. Both have the authority and legitimacy to wield power over their citizens, yet the concept of power is not easily defined or measured. Many scholars define **power** as the ability to get one to do something they otherwise would not do. For example, making citizens pay taxes or obey laws they would otherwise not pay or obey is the exercise of power. In these examples, this power is legitimate in the sense that the government has the privilege and ability to do these things. But how do we know power when we see it? And are there different types or forms of power? These questions are far more complicated than simply defining a word.

One of the most popular conceptions of power, at least in American politics, is from Neustadt, who argued that power is persuasion, or the ability to convince someone that they want to do this on their own, not simply because an individual is forcing them to do it.¹⁹ Neustadt's argument, while appearing similar to the description of power that was just given, is subtly different in the sense that you would be convincing someone that what you want them to

do is *their* best interest, not just yours. Therefore, Neustadt, who was writing this with respect to the US president, adds another layer to the power equation: not only making someone do what you want them to but do it because *they* want to.

Power is also a key concept in the realm of international relations where Barnett and Duval have defined it as “the ability of states to use material resources to get others to do what they otherwise would not.”²⁰ Again, this definition, while appearing similar, invokes a different layer of interpretation. States are using their military, economic, and diplomatic resources to force others to act in a particular way. Theoretically, these assets might not be needed in a more general conception of power, but for international relations theorists, the fact that different means of persuasion, to use Neustadt’s term, are being used is key. Nye has identified different types of power in global politics, differentiating between hard and soft power. Hard power represents the military and economic resources that a country possesses that can make countries respond in a positive way to what a country wants. However, soft power encompasses the values, example, prosperity, and openness that Nye says can “co-opt people rather than coerce them.”²¹ Nye, then, makes a distinct difference between force and persuasion of the Neustadt type.

In any case, it is quite difficult to measure power or to see it in action. Sometimes, for example, diplomatic negotiations or negotiations among policymakers may take place in public view, through public statements, news reports, and an interplay with public opinion. When this happens, it is somewhat easy to identify who is powerful and who is successfully using their power. However, far more often these types of actions take place hidden from public view, which makes it much harder to discern what is happening.

Much of politics is a game of power, getting people to agree, to act in a particular way, or to make something happen; this makes power an important element of political analysis and helps to explain political outcomes. Take health care reform, for example. When former president Bill Clinton attempted policy change in 1993, he could not muster the support needed to get the reform he desired passed by Congress. However, President Barack Obama was far more successful in 2009. A fair question, then, is what made Obama more powerful in regard to health care reform than Clinton? While both were Democratic presidents with Democratic majorities in the House and Senate, Clinton could not wield his power in a way that would induce Congress to pass reform but Obama could. While the answers to this conundrum are out of the scope of this text, the question is nonetheless an excellent example of how the concept of power is often used in political science to help understand and explain outcomes.

Ideology

In the same way state, nation, and country are often confused, so are the ideas of ideology and government, and ideology and political party. An **ideology** is a consistent and coherent set of ideas concerning any number of things, from religion and morals to theories about politics and how states should be run. Some of the ideologies that interest us most include liberalism, conservatism, and even communism. The reason that ideology is often confusing is that ideologies are often conflated with types of government—for example, communist dictatorship or liberal democracy. And while it is completely appropriate to use these terms together to signify a dictatorship that is run under a communist ideology or a democracy that is run under a liberal

ideology, all too often the terms are taken to mean the same thing. Ideologies are not forms of government or *how* states are run, they are the theoretical underpinnings as to what the government should do or how they do it.

Two of the major ideologies that are often discussed today are liberalism and conservatism, although these ideas as ideologies may be quite different from the way you have heard them discussed by politicians or the news media.

Liberalism as an ideology developed out of the Enlightenment period—the same moment when Locke and Hobbes debated the rationales of government and natural rights. Classical liberals, in fact, based many of their beliefs on Locke's philosophy, including a belief in natural rights, a social contract view of government, and the values of liberty and individualism. This early view of liberalism emphasized limited government as the best means of protecting these values; however, modern liberals have evolved to endorse a more active role for government in society. Modern liberal ideology espouses the belief that government can and should be used to enforce the equality and liberty of all people, including racial and gender equality.²² They also believe that government can be more broadly used to better the overall condition of society.

Because of the philosophical and political upheaval of the 1600s, many in Britain were concerned about the pace of political change and urged a slower movement toward it. They believed in order and tradition and, at least in Britain, felt that there was a place for the monarchy and the aristocracy. These early conservative proponents would give rise to the conservative ideology that we are more familiar with in the United States today. Modern conservatives also value law and order, but they believe that rather than slowing down change, change in government should be sped up. Specifically, they believe that that change should be toward reducing the scope of government and what government is asked to do and instead allow private and community organizations to take the place of the services that government currently provides. Thus, while liberals maintain that government involvement in society is desirable, necessary, and proper to better all of society, conservatives believe that the government should be limited and that it is this type of situation that best serves society as a whole.

Based on these two descriptions, it is easy to see the difference between ideology and government; government provides the vehicle, whereas ideology provides the direction. In many ways, central tenets of ideology refer specifically to government and to ideas about the proper size and scope of it. Despite the possibility for confusion, ideology plays a key role in political science. Not only does it form the central questions of political theory—a subfield of political science to be discussed in Chapter 3—but it helps to explain why political actors behave as they do. If an ideology becomes dominant across a country or region, this too can explain the ultimate actions of these players. People and countries do not act simply to act; there is a cause and an underpinning as to why they are behaving the way they are, and in this sense, ideology can form the basis of those justifications.

Another pair of ideas that is too often confused is ideology and political party. Because political parties also put forward their own ideas about how government should work and what it should do, it is easy to see how this mistake may be made. However, these two concepts are quite different in one major respect: Where ideologies represent consistent and coherent beliefs (one belief does not contradict another), political parties do not. Take, for example, the

Republican Party. Many Republicans believe in the need for smaller government—something that conservatives would also agree with. But many Republicans also call for a larger military or a government that is more involved with social choices like abortion. The belief in the need for a smaller government and the belief in a larger military are contradictory; you cannot have a smaller government while having a larger defense force. Political parties, as the aggregate representation of a large group of people, have these sorts of contradictions built into their platforms. Because of this, their beliefs are not coherent and consistent and are thus not ideologies.

This does not make political parties any more or less worthwhile. Indeed, they are an intrinsic part of political science and understanding group political behavior. Now more than ever, the political party is an important concept in political science. Following the contentious presidential primary battle that ultimately led to the matchup between Hillary Clinton and Trump, many were asking how the Democrats and Republicans, respectively, came to nominate such disliked candidates. Understanding how and why political parties behave and operate are key to answering this puzzle. These types of questions will be taken up in Chapter 5, which focuses on electoral and party systems.

Civil Liberties, Civil Rights, and Human Rights

The twin concepts of civil liberties and civil rights are inherent in the ideologies of liberalism and conservatism; they are the natural rights of which liberals speak and believe government should expand to enforce, particularly when it comes to civil rights. They are also those rights and liberties that conservatives believe are best protected when the government is small. **Civil liberties** encompass these natural rights or our ability to do certain things that must be protected *from* government. These include freedom of speech, thought, and action; freedom of religion; the ability to own and possess firearms; and the right to be free from unwarranted search and seizure. While we often call these things “rights,” they are more properly termed *civil liberties*. One of the original concerns over the Constitution was that it did not contain a listing of these rights that many believed should be protected and that government should never be allowed to infringe on. As a compromise between those who supported the Constitution, the Federalists, and those who did not, the Anti-Federalists, the Federalists agreed to draft a Bill of Rights that would be amendments to the Constitution; this is where most of our American civil liberties are enshrined.

Civil rights, on the other hand, are our freedoms to be treated fairly and equally, and all too often these rights must be *enforced* by government rather than protected from it. Civil rights include the right to vote and have that vote count just as much as the next person’s and the freedom from discrimination by law. Over time, the application of civil rights has greatly expanded to include minorities, such as Black Americans, women, and, more recently, individuals from the LGBTQ+ community.

These ideas can be divisive in a global environment. While many in America may believe in the right to freedom of religion or equality of women, these are not universally accepted beliefs. Following the end of World War II and the discovery of the atrocities committed by the Germans in the Holocaust, efforts were made at the international level to establish a set of



Freedom of speech can be shown in a number of ways, such as this protest against the January 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol building.

Nathan Posner/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

human rights that could be agreed to across the world and, ultimately, ideally, enforced. The result of this effort was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which delineated many of the civil liberties and rights we find in our own Constitution as well as some that go above and beyond it, including a right to an education and an explicit right to privacy. However, many of the rights that we find in the UDHR are not actively implemented in some of the countries that originally voted for it, including Pakistan and Egypt. Other countries with significant Muslim populations have also decided not to sign on to it. The question quickly becomes, then, what should be done about countries that refuse to endorse or implement the idea of human rights, that all people should have certain civil liberties and civil rights regardless of who they are or where they are? This is a major question for international relations scholars today and will be taken up in further detail in Chapter 10.

Representation

Particularly for democratic countries, representation is a key concept through which we can view how the government operates. **Representation** is the idea that even though they are not there, the views of all the people in a society are considered when decisions are being made. The wishes and desires of those people may not always win out, but to be truly represented, they

must at least have been thought about and considered. The extent to which all are represented in government is important when asking whether a country is democratic or not or even how democratic a country is; these two questions are especially relevant in the field of comparative politics, which is discussed in Chapter 9.

To better understand the idea of representation, let's consider a few examples here in the United States. Mayhew posits that elected officials in Congress behave the way they do because they desire reelection more than anything else.²³ If this is the case, those members of Congress will want to please their constituents, but therein we run into a problem: Not everyone votes. It would not be rational for the member of Congress to try and please everyone—just those who vote. Who is being represented then: all constituents or just those who vote? Given that voter turnout in the 2020 presidential election was 66.8 percent of the voting age population, just how representative is our resulting government?²⁴ And if we're not representing everyone, just how democratic is the United States? While this figure is historically high, it still means that a third of the US population *did not* vote. This example also demonstrates that there are different types of representation. While elected officials may be technically representing *all* people in their district even though some of them didn't vote, we can say that those who didn't vote may only have *symbolic* representation and those who did vote have *substantive* representation. A key theoretical question is what effect there may be of having people both symbolically and substantively represented—for example, to which group of people will the legislator respond? Are those who are symbolically represented ignored in the political process? What are the ramifications of these differences?

We can further consider a different type of representation that many political scientists find important: descriptive representation. Descriptive representation is the idea that those we elect *look* like us. Again, consider the US Congress. In 2015, fewer than 20 percent of the members of Congress were female while more than 50 percent of the people of the United States are female.²⁵ While the gap has closed with 145 women serving in Congress after the 2020 elections (women now make up 27.1 percent of the Congress), this still-significant shortfall in ratio between the number of women in the United States and the number of women representing people in the United States demonstrates a lack of descriptive representation. Proponents of descriptive representation argue that when bodies of elected officials mirror proportions found in society, that government can better represent the ideas, beliefs, and desires of everyone involved. To this end, some Western European countries have instituted quotas in their legislatures to ensure that descriptive representation is better achieved. Again, some comparativists, those who study comparative politics, find these concepts quite useful in understanding the operations of governments around the world and what makes them better or worse or more or less democratic. Chapter 9, for instance, explores different definitions of democracy and considers how democratic governments around the world actually are.

Political Culture

Many of the ideas that we have discussed thus far contribute to this final concept to be discussed: political culture. Just as culture is the set of values, beliefs, behaviors, and norms that a society holds in common, a **political culture** consists of those *political* ideas, norms, beliefs, and

there are actually several that vary largely by region.²⁷ A moral political culture generally refers to regions where people believe society is more important than the individual and that government is generally good and can be used to benefit that society as a whole. Communities are more important than individuals, so individual rights or abilities may often be sacrificed for the good of the whole. In regions with an individual political culture, government is used for practical concerns even though it may be corrupt or seen as “dirty.” Governments are in place to serve individual needs, and individuals are placed above community. In the final type, traditional, politics follows a natural social order, where there is a hierarchy among families and groups, and those at the top run the government. While limited government is the dominant idea, those in a traditional political culture see it as a way to perpetuate the traditional order and hierarchy.

Elazar identifies states where these political cultures are dominant and those states that may have a mixture of ideas.²⁸ In any case, what these conceptions of political culture allow us as political scientists to do is compare and contrast dominant attitudes about politics and government and what effects those attitudes have on political outcomes. They are a means of analyzing both the structure of government—particularly at the state and local levels—and explaining what those governments may or may not do. For example, if we wish to compare the state of politics in California and Texas, the differing political culture may be one fruitful explanation to explore.

Plan of the Book

In the coming chapters, many of these concepts will continue to be essential in understanding the state of study in political science. For example, the nature and structures of things such as states and governments is further considered in Chapters 4, 5, and 9. While the ideas outlined previously are meant to provide you with a starting point from which to embark, this book is also structured in a way to give you a solid foundation about the field of political science and the state of research today. It is thus divided into three parts. Part I encompasses this chapter and the next two: Chapter 2 takes up how political scientists study politics or, in other words, the science in political science. Chapter 3 discusses political theory, which, as discussed previously, is the historical basis for today’s political science. Part II examines common institutions and political behavior. Chapter 4 discusses constitutions and their writing and systems of law and justice. Chapter 5, meanwhile, examines types of electoral and party systems—most specifically presidential and parliamentary systems. Chapter 6 examines the role of the media, which is vital in both democracies and nondemocracies alike. Chapter 7 highlights the purpose and role of social movements in enacting political change.

Finally, Part III focuses on the subfields of political science. Much like medicine, the study of political science can be subdivided into different fields of interest and specializations; in graduate education, and sometimes for your undergraduate degree, students in political science choose a particular subfield to concentrate most of their time in. Chapters 8 through 12 serve as introductions to some of the more commonly recognized subfields in political science, including American politics, comparative politics, international relations, public policy and administration, and political economy. To be sure, political scientists often disagree about whether one particular area or not should be elevated to subfield status, but it is reasonable to consider the ones discussed here as most, if not all, of the major subfields of political science.

Taken in total, Part I will provide you with common theoretical and methodological foundations while Part II fills in some of the operational details that apply across political science. Part III introduces you to how the concepts and ideas discussed in the previous two parts are put into practice in the various fields of political science. Given that *Political Science Today* is an introduction to a wide and diverse field, it is necessary to limit discussion of key issues and debates; however, at the end of each chapter, you will find resources that can help you build on what is presented here, including additional readings and resources and critical thinking questions. Case studies throughout the chapter will also allow you to see how political scientists see and think about current issues. Thus, *Political Science Today* is a book about the state of political science in the early 2020s—where we’ve been, where we are, and where we’re going.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Political science is the scientific study, analysis, and understanding of political processes and behavior.
- People have been studying politics since ancient Greek and Roman times. Only in the nineteenth century did political science become a formal field of study.
- Political scientists can study politics from a variety of angles, including from the perspective of individual actions (behavioralism) or institutions of governments (institutionalism).
- Political scientists use the tools of science and the scientific method to systematically study politics.
- No matter the subfield, political scientists across the discipline utilize common ideas or concepts to understand politics around the globe, including public goods, states, governments, power, ideology, representation, and political culture.

KEY TERMS

behavioralism
civil liberties
civil rights
free rider problem
government
ideology
institutionalism
nation
natural rights
political culture
political science

politics
power
public goods
representation
science
scientific method
social contracts
state of nature
states
tragedy of the commons

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does political science mean to you? Can you think of any real-life examples of political science that you've encountered?
2. Come up with a research question that relates to a political topic you're interested in. How might everyday interests be translated into political science questions?
3. What is the relationship of political theory to political science today? Do you believe that political theory should be treated as a separate subject area or remain embedded within political science?
4. What are some historical impacts that influence the practice of political science?
5. Do you believe political science is or could possibly be a science? Why or why not?

FOR FURTHER READING

American Political Science Association (APSA): www.apsanet.org

Blatt, Jessica. *Race and the Making of American Political Science*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018.

Farr, James. "The History of Political Science." *American Journal of Political Science* 32, no. 4 (1988): 1175–95.

Ricci, David M. *The Tragedy of Political Science: Politics, Scholarship, and Democracy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984.

"Universal Declaration of Human Rights," United Nations, December 10, 1948, www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights.

Do not copy, post, or distribute