



Chapter One

The Study of American Government

Two Key Questions

- **Who governs?** Those who govern will affect us.
- **To what ends?** How will government affect our lives?

What is Political Power?

- **Power:** the ability of one person to cause another person to act in accordance with the first person's intentions
- **Authority:** the right to use power
- **Legitimacy:** what makes a law or constitution a source of right

Kinds of Democracy

- **Direct democracy:** A form of democracy in which most, or all, of the citizenry participate directly.
- **Representative democracy:** A government in which leaders make decisions by winning a competitive struggle for the popular vote.

The Framers' View

- Government would mediate, nor mirror, popular views
- People were viewed as lacking knowledge and susceptible to manipulation
- Framers' goal: to minimize the abuse of power by a tyrannical majority or by officeholders

Theories of Government

- **Marxism:** Those who own the means of production, controlling the economic system, will control the government
- **Elitism:** A few top leaders, drawn from the major sectors of the United States polity, will make all important decisions

Theories of Government

- **Bureaucratic:** Appointed civil servants control the government, without consulting the public.
- **Pluralist:** Competition among affected interests shapes public policy decision-making