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***US GOVERNMENT, AN  
INTRODUCTION FROM A BIBLICAL  
PERSPECTIVE***

**STUDENT TEXTBOOK**

***Compiled and edited by J. Parnell McCarter***

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FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE  
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## FOREWORD

This free on-line textbook is itself compiled from various free on-line resources:

Bible passages were found at the website <http://www.blueletterbible.org> .

Quotes from the Westminster Standards and the Belgic Confession were found at the website <http://reformed.org/documents/index.html> .

Quotes from Dr. John Calvin's *Commentaries* were found at the website <http://www.ccel.org/> .

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[http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/United States Government](http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/United_States_Government)

The material on these websites were used extensively in preparing this course textbook.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This textbook is an introductory study of US government.

## CHAPTER 1 :

[http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_Government](http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/United_States_Government) :

*The Constitution and Government of the United States of America*

### **Part I- Before the Constitution**

1. [Colonial Government in America](#)
2. [The United States under the Articles of Confederation](#)
3. [The Constitutional Convention](#)
4. [Ratification](#)

### **Part II- The Constitution**

1. [The Three Branches of Government](#)
2. [The Federal System](#)
3. [General Provisions](#)
4. [The Bill of Rights](#)
5. [The Later Amendments](#)

### **Part III- Present Government Structure**

1. [The Legislative Branch](#)
2. [The Executive Branch](#)
3. [The Judicial Branch](#)

### **Part IV- American Government: Theory and Analysis**

1. [Criticism of the Legislative Branch](#)
2. [Criticism of the Executive Branch](#)
3. [Criticism of the Judicial Branch](#)
4. [Federalism and State Authority](#)
5. [Constitutional Issues](#)
6. [Civic Society](#)
7. [Foreign Policy](#)
8. [Domestic Issues](#)

### **Part V- Appendices**

1. [Civics Glossary](#)
2. [The Declaration of Independence](#)
3. [The Articles of Confederation](#)
4. [The Constitution and Amendments](#)
5. [The Annotated Constitution of the United States](#)

--- [Authors](#)

Retrieved from "[http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_Government](http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/United_States_Government)"

## CHAPTER :

This article lists **forms of government** and [political systems](#), according to a series of different ways of categorising them. The systems listed are of course not mutually exclusive, and often have overlapping definitions (for example [autocracy](#), [despotism](#), [totalitarianism](#), [monarchy](#) and [tyranny](#)).

- [Anarchism](#) (perhaps better defined as a system of non-hierarchical government)
  - [Anarcho-communism](#)
  - [Anarcho-capitalism](#)
  - [Eco-anarchism](#)
  - [Anarcho-socialism](#)
  - [National anarchism](#)
  - [Anarcho-syndicalism](#)
  
- [Autocracy](#)
  - [Absolutism](#)
    - [Enlightened absolutism](#)
  - [Despotism](#)
  - [Dictatorship](#) (not all dictatorships are autocracies)
    - [Military dictatorship](#)
    - [Benevolent dictatorship](#)
  - [Monarchy](#)
    - [Absolute monarchy](#)
    - [Constitutional monarchy](#)
    - [Despotate](#)
    - [Duchy](#)
      - [Grand Duchy](#)
    - [Elective monarchy](#)
    - [Emirate](#)
    - [Hereditary monarchy](#)
    - [Popular monarchy](#)
    - [Principality](#)
    - [New Monarchs](#)
    - [Self-proclaimed monarchy](#)
    - [Viceroyalty](#)
  - [Patriarchy](#)
    - [Patrimonialism](#)
  - [Totalitarianism](#)
    - [Communist states](#) (their relationship with the [communist movement](#) is disputed)
    - [Nationalism](#)
    - [Single-party state](#)
  - [Tyranny](#)
  - [Police state](#)
    - [Corporate police state](#)

- **Democracy**
  - Deliberative democracy
  - Direct democracy
  - Participatory democracy
  - Representative democracy
    - Westminster system
    - Parliamentary system
      - Consensus government
    - Presidential system (Congressional system)
    - Semi-presidential system
  - Social democracy (also a political movement)
  - Soviet democracy
  
- **Oligarchy**
  - Aristocracy
  - Corporatism
  - Gerontocracy
  - Kleptocracy
  - Meritocracy
  - Plutocracy
  - Technocracy
  
- **Theocracy (Hierocracy)**
  - Caliphate
  - Holy See
  - Islamic Republic
  - Sultanate
  
- **Tribalism**

*By approach to regional autonomy*

This list focuses on differing approaches that political systems take to the distribution of sovereignty, and the autonomy of regions within the state.

- Sovereignty located exclusively at the centre
  - Empire
  - Unitary state
- Sovereignty located at the centre and in peripheral areas
  - Federation and Federal republic
  - Confederation
  - Supranational union

[[edit](#)]

*By political franchise*

This list shows a division based on differences in political franchise (*suffrage*).

- rule by all
  - [anarchy](#)
- rule by majority
  - [democracy](#)
- rule by minority
  - [oligarchy](#)
- rule by one
  - [autocracy](#)

[[edit](#)]

*According to Weber's tripartite classification of authority*

[Max Weber](#) in his [tripartite classification of authority](#) distinguished three [ideal types](#) of political leadership, domination and authority:

- [charismatic domination](#) (familial and religious)
- [traditional domination](#) (patriarchs, patrimonialism, feudalism)
- [legal domination](#) (modern law and state, bureaucracy)

[[edit](#)]

*According to an etymologist approach*

Finally, the list below present an [etymologist's](#) approach to forms of government: the following are real, possible or imaginary forms of government, all made different by the prefix and suffix combination. Nearly all use one of two suffixes: [-archy](#) meaning "leadership" (eg. anarchy - no leadership), and [-cracy](#) suffix from Greek "kratos" and means "strength" and "power" (e.g., democracy - people's power). The major exception is the Republic, which is derived from the Latin *res publicae*, which means "the public matter" or, more literally, "the thing of the people", i.e. socio-political affairs. For various extant terms, an example or annotation is juxtaposed.

- [adhocracy](#) government in an unstructured fashion; an unstructured organization
- [anarchy](#) absence of government
- [andrarchy/androcracy](#) government by men
- [aristocracy](#) government by the nobility (aristo="the best")
- [autarchy](#) government by an absolute ruler
- [autocracy](#) government by one individual, autarchy
- [bureaucracy](#) government by civil servants; also the civil servants themselves
- [confederacy](#) a union of sovereign states
- [corpocracy](#) government by corporations (industry)
- [demarchy](#) government by the people by lot
- [democracy](#) government by the people, either direct (through referendum or popular assembly) or via elections (representative form)
- [ethnocracy](#) government by a particular ethnic group
- [geniocracy](#) government by those of a high average intelligence
- [gerontocracy](#) government by the aged - see the Spartan [gerousia](#)
- [gynarchy](#) government by women
- [gynocracy](#) government by women; gynarchy

- [hierarchy](#) government by a ranked body; government by priests
- [hierocracy](#) government by priests or religious ministers
- [judiciocracy](#) government by judges
- [kakistocracy](#) government by the worst
- [kleptocracy](#) government by thieves - not an existing form, but a negative appreciation of any regime where corruption is excessive
- [klerostocracy](#) government by all, by sortition (random selection, lot)
- [kritarchy](#)
- [krytocracy](#) government by judges
- [matriarchy](#) government by women or mothers
- [meritocracy](#) government by those with merit
- [minarchy](#) government with the smallest possible bureaucracy or size
- [monarchy](#) government by one individual
- [ochlocracy](#) government by mobs
- [oligarchy](#) government by the few; sometimes specified after their fixed number :
  - [dyarchy](#) government by two, as in a dual monarchy
  - [heptarchy](#) government by seven people
  - [triumvirate](#) government by three people
  - [tetrarchy](#) government by four people
- [panarchy](#) universal rule or dominion
- [pantarchy](#) (literally) rule by all
- [particracy](#) government by political parties
- [patriarchy](#) government by fathers - the original Roman Senate, styling itself Patres ('fathers'), came close; usually just said of rule by men
- [plantocracy](#) government by plantation owners
- [plutocracy](#) government by the wealthy
- [polyarchy](#) government by many people, a vague antonym to monarchy and oligarchy
- [pornocracy](#) government by prostitutes
- [republic](#) government by elected politicians
- [sociocracy](#) government by equal individuals, based on consent
- [stratocracy](#) government by the armed forces - usually termed military dictatorship or [junta](#)
- [synarchy](#) joint sovereignty, just as the condominium of [Andorra](#)
- [technocracy](#) government by technical experts
- [thalassocracy](#) sovereignty of the seas
- [theocracy](#) government by a deity through [clergy](#) or by religious law
- [timocracy](#) government by the propertied class

[\[edit\]](#)

*See also*

Typical contents of Government Textbook:

## **I. Constitution and Foundations of Government**

1. Principles of Government
2. Beginnings of American Government
3. The Constitution
4. Federalism

## **II. Political Behavior and Participation**

5. Political Parties
6. Elections and Campaigns
7. Political Participation and Voter Behavior
8. Public Opinion and Mass Media
9. Interest Groups

## **III. Institutions of National Government**

10. Congress and the Legislative Branch
11. The Presidency
12. The Executive Branch and the Bureaucracy
13. The Courts and the Judicial Branch

## **IV. Civil Liberties and Civil Rights**

14. 1st Amendment Freedoms
15. Rights of Due Process
16. Civil Rights

## **V. Public Policy and Comparative Government**

17. Public Policy
18. Comparative Economic and Political Systems

## **VI. State and Local Government**

19. Structure of State and Local Government

## 20. Policies and Finances of State and Local Government

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<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government> :

A **government** is the body that has the [authority](#) to make and the [power](#) to enforce laws within an [organization](#) or group. In its broadest sense, "to govern" means to administer or supervise, whether over an area of land, a set group of people, or a collection of assets. The word *government* is derived from the [Greek](#) κυβερνήτης (*kubernites*), which means "steersman", "governor", "pilot" or "rudder".

In commonwealth usage, **Government** refers to the executive branch of government and a specifically named government, i.e. the [Blair](#) Government or the [Thatcher](#) Government, refers to the tenure of the named executive. The [Welsh Assembly Government](#) is the name of the executive branch of Wales, and Scottish Government is the unofficial term to describe the [Scottish Executive](#).

### *Attributes of governments*

Effective governments possess two attributes, authority and legitimacy.

[Authority](#) is the ability to compel obedience. Authority can be derived from naked force or terror as was the case in [Stalinist](#) Russia or [Baathist](#) Iraq or from a [social contract](#) between governed and government as is the case in many western [democracies](#).

Physical violence is not the only form of duress that compels loyal behavior. [Corporate](#) organizations use economic leverage to motivate. Indeed, the most coercive venue for governmental bullying may be the ecclesiastical which promises the unfaithful, the heretical, or the infidel an eternity of hellish suffering and thereby garners obedience.

[Legitimacy](#) is the attribute of a government that prompts the governed to acquiesce willingly to its authority. Legitimacy is gained through the acquisition and application of power in accordance with recognized or accepted standards or principles. That is to say that a legitimate government will "do the right thing" and therefore deserves to be respected and obeyed.

Authority can be upheld through violent means while legitimacy must be earned. As legitimacy is challenged the use of violence to maintain authority increases.

[\[edit\]](#)

### *Functions of governments*

Governments perform three functions. Governments make rules, the legislative function. They enforce the rules, the executive function; and the judicial function wherein the rules are interpreted.

All three functions may be combined into a single institution as is the case in autocracies or they may be distributed among separate branches as in the system in place in the United States. The parliamentary system combines legislative and executive functions in one branch and judicial in another.

[\[edit\]](#)

### *Forms of Government*

*Main article:* [Forms of government](#)

Two taxonomies are recognized for the categorization of government types. In the first governments are described by who gets to rule. Monarchies have hereditary rulers, less chosen than nurtured into the post. Oligarchies are governed by a few wealthy members

of the community, democracies are governed by the governed, and anarchies are regulated by no one.

A more useful taxonomy examines the concentration of power. In an autocracy all power is vested in a single individual. Czarist Russia is an example, as is a 19th century British Man-of-War at sea.

A continuum of government types may include a limited monarchy (post Runnymede England), a constitutional monarchy, a representative democracy (The United States), and direct democracy.

Direct democracy is cumbersome and the most often cited example points to New England (US) town hall meetings where all of the citizens make all of the decisions.

[\[edit\]](#)

#### *Reasons for government*

There are a wide range of theories about the reasons for establishing governments. The four major ones are briefly described below. Note that they do not always fully oppose each other - it is possible for a person to subscribe to a combination of ideas from two or more of these theories.

[\[edit\]](#)

#### ***Greed and oppression***

Many political philosophies that are opposed to the existence of a government (such as [Anarchism](#), and to a lesser extent [Marxism](#)), as well as others, emphasize the historical roots of governments - the fact that governments originated from the authority of warlords and petty despots who took, by force, certain patches of land as their own (and began exercising authority over the people living on that land). Thus, it is argued that governments exist to enforce the will of the strong and oppress the weak.

[\[edit\]](#)

#### ***Order and tradition***

The various forms of [conservatism](#), by contrast, generally see the government as a positive force that brings order out of chaos, establishes laws to end the "[war of all against all](#)", encourages moral [virtue](#) while punishing [vice](#), and respects [tradition](#). Sometimes, in this view, the government is seen as something ordained by a higher power, as in the [divine right of kings](#), which human beings have a duty to obey.

[\[edit\]](#)

#### ***Natural rights***

[Natural rights](#) are the basis for the theory of government shared by most branches of [liberalism](#) (including [libertarianism](#)). In this view, human beings are born with certain *natural rights*, and governments are established strictly for the purpose of protecting those rights. What the *natural rights* actually **are** is a matter of dispute among liberals - both in the sense of a definition of "rights", and in the sense of listing which rights are natural. Indeed, each branch of liberalism has its own set of rights that it considers to be *natural*, and these rights are sometimes mutually exclusive with the rights supported by other liberals.

[\[edit\]](#)

#### ***Social contract***

One of the most influential theories of government in the past two hundred years has been the [social contract](#), on which modern [democracy](#) and most forms of [socialism](#) are founded. The social contract theory holds that governments are created by the people in

order to provide for collective needs (such as safety from crime, poverty, illiteracy) that cannot be properly satisfied using purely individual means. Governments thus exist for the purpose of serving the needs and wishes of the people, and their relationship with the people is clearly stipulated in a "social contract" (a [constitution](#) and a set of laws) which both the government and the people must abide by. If a majority is unhappy, it may change the social contract. If a minority is unhappy, it may persuade the majority to change the contract, or it may opt out of it by emigration or secession.

[\[edit\]](#)

*Governmental operations*

*Main article: [government operations](#)*

Governments concern themselves with regulating and administering many areas of human activity, such as [trade](#), [education](#), [medicine](#), [entertainment](#), and [war](#).

[\[edit\]](#)

### ***Enforcement of power***

Governments use a variety of methods to maintain the established order, such as [secrecy](#), [police](#) and [military forces](#), (particularly under [despotism](#), see also [police state](#)), making agreements with other states, and maintaining support within the state. Typical methods of maintaining support and legitimacy include providing the [infrastructure](#) for [administration](#), [justice](#), [transport](#), [communication](#), [social welfare](#) etc., claiming support from [deities](#), providing benefits to [elites](#), holding [elections](#) for important posts within the state, limiting the power of the state through [laws](#) and [constitutions](#) (see also [Bill of Rights](#)) and appealing to [nationalism](#). Different political ideologies hold different ideas on what the government should or should not do.

[\[edit\]](#)

### ***Territory***

The modern standard unit of [territory](#) is a [country](#). In addition to the meaning used above, the word [state](#) can refer either to a government or to its territory. Within a territory, [subnational entities](#) may have [local governments](#) which do not have the full power of a national government (for example, they will generally lack the authority to declare war or carry out diplomatic negotiations).

[\[edit\]](#)

*Size of government*

*Main articles: [government ownership](#), [government spending](#)*

The scale to which government should exist and operate in the world is a matter of debate. Government spending in [developed countries](#) varies considerably but generally makes up between about 30% and 70% of their [GDP](#). One major exception is the United States, where central government spending takes up less than 20% of GDP.

