**Unit 1: Constitutional Underpinnings**

***Unit Description*:**

We will begin by comparing the various philosophical perspectives regarding power in democratic government. Next, we will identify the motivations behind the founders choice to divide power between three branches, as well as between the state and federal governments. Finally, we will analyze this division of power in contemporary America.

***Essential Questions*:**

1. Which theory of democracy does the United States most embody today?

2. To what extent was Madison correct in fearing factions? Did the Constitution successfully mitigate the problem of factions as Madison intended?

3. How have Federalism and Separation of Powers changed over time?

1. Should there be a rebalancing of Constitutional power?

***Unit Objectives:***

1. Explain the need for and importance of government. (HSA 1.1)

2. Trace the evolution and theories of government up to the Declaration of Independence. (HSA 1.1)

3. Define and explain the idea of political power.

4. Explain the structure of unitary, confederation and federal governments. (HSA 2.2.1)

5. Compare and analyze authoritarian vs. democratic political systems. (HSA 2.2.1)

a. direct democracy vs. representative democracy

b. how power is distributed in a democracy

6. Describe the significance and revolutionary nature of the Declaration of Independence. (HSA 1.1.1)

7. Describe the goals and weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation. (HSA 1.1.1)

8. Describe the background and challenges the United States Constitution is based on.

9. Describe the basic principles upon which the United States Constitution is built.

(HSA 1.1.2, 1.2.1)

a. checks and balances, government structure

b. federalism, debates regarding its meaning

c. limited government, including federal vs. state relations: McCulloch v. Maryland

d. representative democracy

e. separation of powers

10. List and describe the rights and protections provided for in the United States Bill of Rights. (HSA 1.1.1)

a. first ten amendments (Amendments 4,5, 6 and 14 are covered in detail in Chapter 19)

b. familiarity with remainder of the amendments

***Reading Assignment Questions*: Answer the following questions in the space provide, using your own words. Begin by restating the question.**

**Chapter 1**

1. List the two basic questions to be asked about American (or any other) government, and analyze how they are distinct questions.
2. Explain what is meant by power in general human terms and by political power in particular, relating the latter to authority, legitimacy, and democracy in the context of American government.
3. Distinguish among the two concepts of democracy mentioned in the chapter, explaining in which of these senses the textbook refers to American government as democratic.
4. Differentiate between majoritarian politics and elitist politics, explaining the four major theories of the latter.
5. Explain how political change makes political scientists cautious in stating how politics works or what values dominate it.

**Chapter 2**

1. Describe what the “Colonial Mind” was thinking at the time of the Revolution.
2. Make a detailed list of the weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation.
3. What was Shay’s Rebellion and what role did that play in the push for changing the Articles of Confederation?
4. Why were the Framers suspicious of democracy? What is the delicate problem for the Framers as stated on page 25?
5. Make a chart comparing and contrasting the Virginia Plan, New Jersey Plan, and the Great Compromise.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Virginia Plan | New Jersey Plan | Great Compromise |
|  |  |  |

1. Explain the other compromises involving the President and the Supreme Court decided at the Convention?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| President | Supreme Court |
|  |  |

1. Evaluate the difference between democracy and a republic, and how did the Constitution strike a balance between these two forms of government?
2. Discuss judicial review?
3. Analyze the two major principles of American representative democracy.
4. Identify specific checks and balances listed on p. 29 in the box. We will be referring to this list for the rest of the year. You also need to start learning which powers are only given to the Senate.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Congress | President | Courts |
|  |  |  |

1. What was the Founders solution to the problem that the people will pursue their own self-interest? How is that different from what ancient philosophers believed? What did Madison argue and propose in this context?
2. Contrast the Federalist and Antifederalist arguments about the Constitution.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Federalist | Antifederalist |
|  |  |

1. List and explain specific liberties that are guaranteed in the body of the Constitution.

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1. Examine arguments made concerning a bill of rights?
2. Summarize the three provisions in the Constitution regarding slavery. Why didn’t the Founders abolish slavery?

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1. How did Charles Beard portray the Framers of the Constitution in his book? What is now known to counter his interpretation?
2. Describe the economic divisions of those who favored the Constitution.
3. What are the arguments that women were or weren’t left out of the Constitution?
4. Summarize how to propose and ratify an amendment as identified on p. 41.
5. Explain the criticisms regarding the separation of powers.
6. Describe the proposals of those who think the government is too large, and would seek changes in the Constitution to limit the government? What are the counter arguments?

**Chapter 3**

1. Differentiate between federalism, a unitary system, and a confederate system.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Federalist | Unitary | Confederate |
|  |  |  |

1. Why did the Founders choose federalism as the system for the new government? What ambiguities did they place in the Constitution?
2. Compare and contrast the positives and negatives of Federalism.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Positives | Negatievs |
|  |  |

1. Using the chart on p. 55 and the rest of the material in the book, list the elements of the Constitution that 1) restrict the powers of the states 2) protect the powers of the states 3) describe how the states should deal with each other and 4) have been used to expand the power of the federal government.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Restrictions on State Power | Protection of  State Powers | Interactions Between States | Expansion of Federal Powers |
|  |  |  |  |

1. Explain Dual Federalism.
2. Identify and explain how “police powers” relates to state power?
3. Why did grants-in-aid programs grow rapidly? What was the appeal to state officials?
4. How did federal grants change in the 1960’s?
5. Explain the impact on the intergovernmental lobby.
6. Differentiate between categorical grants, block grants, and revenue sharing.
7. What was the appeal of block grants and revenue sharing, and why did they not achieve their goals?
8. Identify and explain the drawbacks of mandates? .
9. Analyze the ways that the federal government imposes costs on state and local government. How have the courts responded?
10. Explain what devolution is, and how changes in the federal welfare law exemplify devolution. What has been the results of that reform?
11. What is the situation now between the states and the role of Congress in regard to federalism?

**Chapter 1 Vocabulary**

**Define** and provide a **relationship/picture representation/context clue** for every word.

Definition Relationship

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| power: |  |
| authority: |  |
| legitimacy: |  |
| democracy: |  |
| direct democracy: |  |
| representative democracy: |  |
| elite: |  |
| Marxists: |  |
| bureaucrats: |  |
| pluralist: |  |

**Chapter 2 Vocabulary**

**Define** and provide a **relationship/picture representation/context clue** for every word.

Definition Relationship

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| unalienable: |  |
| Articles of Confederation: |  |
| Constitutional Convention: |  |
| Shay’s Rebellion: |  |
| Great Compromise: |  |
| republic: |  |
| judicial review: |  |
| checks and balances: |  |
| federalism: |  |
| separation of powers: |  |

**Chapter 2 Vocabulary**

**Define** and provide a **relationship/picture representation/context clue** for every word.

Definition Relationship

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| faction: |  |
| Federalists: |  |
| Antifederalists: |  |
| Federalist papers: |  |
| coalition: |  |
| writ of habeas corpus: |  |
| bill of attainder: |  |
| Ex post facto law: |  |
| Bill of Rights: |  |
| amendments: |  |
| line-item veto: |  |

**Chapter 3 Vocabulary**

**Define** and provide a **relationship/picture representation/context clue** for every word.

Definition Relationship

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| devolution: |  |
| block grants: |  |
| sovereignty: |  |
| unitary system: |  |
| confederation: |  |
| federal system: |  |
| necessary and proper clause: |  |
| nullification: |  |
| dual federalism: |  |
| police power: |  |

**Chapter 3 Vocabulary**

**Define** and provide a **relationship/picture representation/context clue** for every word.

Definition Relationship

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| referendum: |  |
| initiative: |  |
| recall: |  |
| grants-in-aid: |  |
| categorical grants: |  |
| revenue sharing: |  |
| conditions of aid: |  |
| mandates: |  |
| second-order devolution: |  |
| third-order devolution: |  |