

What is Government?

- Defined
 - Body of people & institutions that make and enforce laws for a society
- Purpose
 - Do things for whole society that are beyond powers of an individual
 - In US (from Dec of Ind)
- Laws
 - Body of rules emanating from gov't; enforceable by courts
- Purpose
 - Give formal structure to society
- Gov't different from social institutions
 - Rules of social org apply only to members
 - Rules of gov't apply to all citizens
 - Gov't rules =authoritative
 - Gov't sets procedures to join
- Purpose of US gov't

- Preamble of the Constitution of the United States

- Form of government
 - Not a democracy

 - Federal, representative, democratic republic formed of an indivisible union of 50 sovereign states

 - Three levels of government

 - “Of the people, by the people, and for the people

 - Democracy vs. Republic

- Constitutionalism
 - Label for our political system

 - System forces leaders to consider “general will”

- Basic tasks of gov’t
 - Ensure the nation's survival

 - Politics = process of fulfilling basic tasks

 - Process made easier by dominant culture w/in our society

 - Conflict of interests/values?