

Political culture (PC)

- Defined
 - “The beliefs, values, and attitudes that help shape a given society's political behavior, political institutions, and political outcomes”
 - Not political behavior
 - Linked to history, dominant religion, & shared views of justice & morality
 - Culture & institutions influence each other
 - "Unwritten Constitution“
- PC = useful
 - Provides insights into political system & people
- Political socialization
 - Passing PC from generation to generation
 - Allows PC to remain stable over time
- PC = always evolving
 - Long term = changes in society, activities of citizens & political leaders
 - Short-term = dramatic events shapes generation

- PC = uniting of people; not divisions
 - Commonality is necessary for Republic
 - Electoral processing works only if divisions kept w/in reasonable bounds
 - PC ignores minority cultures or subcultures
 - Subcultures = division

- Is America different?
 - American exceptionalism
 - Tocqueville's four factors for uniqueness
 - U.S. PC = “liberal” (19th cen)
 - National divisions do impact culture

- The American Creed
 - American PC = unique
 - Blends views, assumptions, & aspirations
 - Not universal
 - Creed defines differences in politics
 - Major conflicts revolve around interpretations of shared values

- Elements of American Creed:
- Creed blends diverse/competing ideals
- Most Americans:
- Resolutions of conflicts w/in Creed = basis competing political ideologies
- American Political Ideologies
 - Defined:
 - Help people make sense of political world
 - Dominant ideologies = liberalism & conservatism
 - Categorize divisions thru policy clusters
- Dark Side of American Politics
 - Intolerance/pressure to conform
 - Distrust
 - Paranoia & Conspiracy