

# Political History of the United States

## Theme: Politics and Power

- In what ways and to what extent did different political and social groups compete for influence over society and government in colonial North America and the United States?
- In what ways and to what extent have Americans agreed on or argued over the values that guide the political system, as well as who is a part of the political process?

## Theme: Ideas, Beliefs, and Culture

- In what ways and to what extent did moral, philosophical, and cultural values affect the creation of the United States?
- In what ways and to what extent have changes in moral, philosophical, and cultural values affected U.S. history?

## Period 2: 1607-1754

1. Conflicts in Europe spread to North America, as French, Dutch, British, and Spanish colonies allied, traded with, and armed American Indian groups, leading to continuing political instability.
2. Several factors promoted Anglicization in the British colonies: the growth of autonomous political communities based on English models, the development of commercial ties and legal structures, the emergence of a trans-Atlantic print culture, Protestant evangelism, religious toleration, and the spread of European Enlightenment ideas.
3. As regional distinctiveness among the British colonies diminished over time, they developed largely similar patterns of culture, laws, institutions, and governance within the context of the British imperial system.
4. Resistance to imperial control in the British colonies drew on colonial experiences of self-government, evolving local ideas of liberty, the political thought of the Enlightenment, greater religious independence and diversity, and an ideology critical of perceived corruption in the imperial system.
5. House of Burgesses, 1619
6. Mayflower Compact, 1620
7. Bacon's Rebellion, 1676
8. Establishment of the Dominion of New England, 1686
9. Leisler's Rebellion, 1689
10. John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, 1689

### Period 3: 1754-1800

11. Protestant evangelical religious fervor strengthened many British colonists' understandings of themselves as a chosen people blessed with liberty, while Enlightenment philosophers and ideas inspired many American political thinkers to emphasize individual talent over hereditary privilege.
12. The movement for independence from Great Britain was fueled by established colonial elites, as well as by grassroots movements that included newly mobilized laborers, artisans, and women, and rested on arguments over the rights of British subjects, the rights of the individual, and the ideas of the Enlightenment.
13. The colonists' belief in the superiority of republican self-government was based on the natural rights of the people found its clearest American expression in Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* and in the Declaration of Independence.
14. Many new state constitutions and the national Articles of Confederation, reflecting republican fears of both centralized power and excessive popular influence, placed power in the hands of the legislative branch and maintained property qualifications for voting and citizenship.
15. Difficulties over trade, finances, and interstate and foreign relations, as well as internal unrest, led to calls for significant revisions to the Articles of Confederation and a stronger central government. Delegates from every state except Rhode Island worked through a series of compromises to create a Constitution for a new national government that would replace the government operating under the Articles of Confederation.
16. The American Revolution and the ideals set forth in the Declaration of Independence had reverberations in France, Haiti and Latin American, inspiring future rebellions.
17. Although George Washington's Farewell Address warned about the dangers of divisive political parties and permanent foreign alliances, European conflict and tensions with Britain and France fueled increasingly bitter partisan debates throughout the 1790s.
18. As the first national administrations began to govern under the Constitution, continued debates about such issues as the relationship between the national government and the states, economic policy, and the conduct of foreign affairs led to the creation of political parties.
19. As national political institutions developed in the new United States, varying regionally based positions on economic, political, social, and foreign policy issues promoted the development of political parties.
20. The Enlightenment (Age of Reason)
21. republican government
22. Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, 1776
23. Declaration of Independence, 1776

24. Articles of Confederation, 1781-1789
25. Shays' Rebellion, 1786-1787
26. Constitutional Convention, 1787
27. Great Compromise, 1787
28. *Federalist Papers*, 1787-1788
29. creation of a new government, 1789
30. Judiciary Act of 1789
31. Bill of Rights, 1791
32. formation of political parties in the 1790s (Federalists vs. Democratic-Republicans)
33. Whiskey Rebellion, 1794
34. Alien and Sedition Acts, 1798
35. Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, 1798

#### **Period 4: 1800-1848**

36. As various constituencies and interest groups coalesced and defined their agendas, various political parties, most significantly the Federalists and Democratic-Republicans in the 1790s and the Democrats and Whigs in the 1830s, were created or transformed to reflect and/or promote those agendas.
37. Supreme Court decisions sought to assert federal power over state laws and the primacy of the judiciary in determining the meaning of the Constitution.
38. Federal government attempts to assert authority over the states brought resistance from state governments in the North and the South at different times.
39. Election of 1800 (Revolution of 1800)
40. midnight judges
41. John Marshall Court, 1801-1835
  - *Marbury v. Madison*, 1803
  - *McCulloch v. Maryland*, 1819
  - *Gibbons v. Ogden*, 1824
  - *Worcester v. Georgia*, 1832
42. Hartford Convention, 1814

- 43. Era of Good Feelings, 1817-1824
- 44. Democrats vs. Whigs, 1820s-1850s
- 45. Jacksonian Democracy
- 46. Webster-Hayne Debate, 1830
- 47. Election of 1840

### **Period 5: 1844-1877**

- 48. The second party system ended when the issues of slavery and anti-immigrant nativism weakened loyalties to the two major parties and fostered the emergence of sectional parties, most notably the Republican Party in the North and the Midwest.
- 49. Lincoln's election on a free soil platform in the election of 1860 led various Southern leaders to conclude that their states must secede from the Union, precipitating civil war.
- 50. Efforts by radical and moderate Republicans to reconstruct the defeated South changed the balance of power between Congress and the presidency and yielded some short-term successes, reuniting the union, opening up political opportunities and other leadership roles to former slaves, and temporarily rearranging the relationships between white and black people in the South.
- 51. Radical Republicans' efforts to change southern racial attitudes and culture and establish a base for their party in the South ultimately failed, due both to determined southern resistance and to the North's waning resolve.
- 52. Republican Party, 1854
- 53. Election of 1860
- 54. Radical Republicans
- 55. Impeachment of President Andrew Johnson, 1868
- 56. Southern Redeemers
- 57. Compromise of 1877

### **Period 6: 1865-1898**

- 58. The growth of corporate power in agriculture and economic instability in the farming sector inspired activists to create the People's (Populist) Party, which called for political reform and a stronger governmental role in the American economic system.
- 59. In a urban atmosphere where the access to power was unequally distributed, political machines provided social services in exchange for political support, settlement houses helped immigrants adapt to the new language and customs, and women's clubs and self-help groups targeted intellectual development and social and political reform.

60. Corruption in government — especially as it related to big business — energized the public to demand increased popular control and reform of local, state, and national governments, ranging from minor changes to major overhauls of the capitalist system.
61. patronage (spoils system)
62. Tweed Ring (Tammany Hall)
63. Whiskey Ring
64. Mugwumps
65. Pendleton Act, 1883
66. Australian (secret) ballot
67. initiative and referendum
68. People's (Populist) Party, 1891
69. Election of 1896

### **Period 7: 1890-1945**

70. In the late 1890s and the early 1900s, journalists and Progressive reformers — largely urban and middle class, and often female — worked to reform existing social and political institutions at the local, state, and federal levels. Progressive reformers promoted federal legislation to regulate abuses of the economy and the environment, and many sought to expand democracy.
71. Radical, union, and populist movements pushed Roosevelt toward more extensive reforms, even as conservatives in Congress and the Supreme Court sought to limit the New Deal's scope.
72. Although the New Deal did not completely overcome the Depression, it left a legacy of reforms and agencies that endeavored to make society and individuals more secure, and it helped foster a long-term political realignment in which many ethnic groups, African Americans, and working-class communities identified with the Democratic Party.
73. Progressive Era, 1901-1917
74. Election of 1912
75. New Nationalism (T. Roosevelt) vs. New Freedom (Wilson)
76. 17th Amendment, 1913
77. New Deal Democratic Coalition

78. Election of 1932

## **Period 8: 1945-1980**

79. Americans debated policies and methods designed to root out Communists within the United States, even as both parties tended to support the broader Cold War strategy of containing communism.

80. Liberal ideals were realized in Supreme Court decisions that expanded democracy and individual freedoms, Great Society social programs and policies, and the power of the federal government, yet these unintentionally helped energize a new conservative movement that mobilized to defend traditional visions of morality and the proper role of state authority.

81. Groups on the left also assailed liberals, claiming they did too little to transform the racial and economic status quo at home and pursued immoral policies abroad.

82. Conservatives and liberals clashed over many new social issues, the power of the presidency and the federal government, and movements for greater individual rights. Conservatives, fearing juvenile delinquency, urban unrest, and challenges to the traditional family, increasingly promoted their own values and ideology.

83. House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), established 1938

84. McCarran Internal Security Act, 1950

85. McCarthyism

86. Earl Warren Court, 1954-1969

- *Baker v. Carr*, 1962
- *Engel v. Vitale*, 1962
- *Gideon v. Wainwright*, 1963
- *Griswold v. Connecticut*, 1965
- *Miranda v. Arizona*, 1966

87. Students for a Democratic Society

88. Berkeley Free Speech Movement, 1964-1965

89. Nixon's Southern Strategy

90. Watergate, 1972

91. New Right

- Right-to-Life Movement
- Phyllis Schlafly

## Period 9: 1980 to the Present

92. Public confidence and trust in government declined in the 1970s in the wake of economic challenges, political scandals, foreign policy “failures,” and a sense of social and moral decay.
93. The rapid and substantial growth of evangelical and fundamentalist Christian churches and organizations, as well as increased political participation by some of those groups, encouraged significant opposition to liberal social and political trends.
94. Conservatives enjoyed significant victories related to taxation and deregulation of many industries, but many conservative efforts to advance moral ideals through politics met inertia and opposition.
95. Jimmy Carter’s “Malaise” speech, 1979
96. Election of 1980
97. Moral Majority
98. Focus on the Family sagebrush rebellion
99. Contract with America, 1994
100. Impeachment of Bill Clinton, 1998
101. Election of 2008

## Party Systems in U.S. History

102. **First Party System: 1796-1824**
  - Federalist vs. Democratic Republicans
103. **Second Party System: 1828-1854**
  - Democrats vs. National Republicans (Whigs)
  - Significant third parties during this era included the Anti-Masonic Party, Free Soil Party, Liberty Party.
104. **Third Party System: 1854-1896**
  - Democrats vs. Republicans
  - Significant Third Parties: American Party (Know Nothings), Prohibition Party, Greenback Party, Populist Party.
105. **Fourth Party System: 1896-1932**
  - Democrats vs. Republicans
  - Significant Third Parties: Socialist Party, Progressive Party.
106. **Fifth Party System: 1932-1968**
  - Democrats vs. Republicans
  - Significant Third Parties: the short-lived Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (1964), American Independent Party (1968).
107. **Sixth Party System: 1968 to the Present**
  - Democrats vs. Republicans
  - Significant Third Parties: Black Panther Party, Green Party, Libertarian Party.