

# Political Science 300-The American Constitution

08/22/2012

**August 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**Political Language**

**Democracy:** Majoritarianism (Majority rule)

**Republicanism:** is representative government

**Liberalism:** 'liberal-democracy'

- 1.) individualism
  - o individual is the center of society, the individual is the only thing that matters, there wouldn't be groups without individuals
- 2.) Self (limited) government
- 3.) tolerance

**Monday August 27<sup>th</sup>**

READ: [www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtreat.htm](http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtreat.htm)

[www.ushistory.org/declaration](http://www.ushistory.org/declaration)

What is a Constitution?

The written and unwritten constitutions are reciprocal of each other

American examples:

- Political parties/interest groups
- Judicial review
- Exec Board

Institutional procedure

- Executive

- o 1.) 606
- Senate
- House
- Committee (electoral)

Only 1 person runs per district which is state law  
 Winner take all: if you get 51% you win

A constitution is:

- 1.) A fresh start (symbolic)
- 2.) limiting government power
- 3.) Safeguard power structure

**Wednesday August 29<sup>th</sup>**

**History: pre-independence**

Pre-independence: legitimate government

- Divine right of kings
  - o 1.) English Civil War (1647-1651)
    - Parliamentarians vs. royalist
  - o 2.) Renaissance
  - o 3.) Enlightenment

Social Contract theory

- **State of nature** (world absence of government) → **Social contract**  
 (what would these people decide when a government is thought of)  
 → **civil government**
- Locke:
  - o “war of all against all”

- self interest
  - o freedom and equality
  - o life liberty and property
- Hobbes:
  - o People are bad
  - o Social contract has to be drastic
  - o Totalitarian government
  - o Natural rights
    - Freedom and equality
  - o State of nature: "law of nature" Reason

Declaration of independence:

- Two sections
  - o The moral justification (all men are created equal etc.)
  - o The grievances → incorporates bill of rights
- Has a syllogistic structure
  - o All humans are mortal → Socrates is a human → Therefore Socrates is mortal
  - o Declaration says men are equal, we are men, therefore we are equal
- Treason line
  - o We dedicate

**Friday August 31, 12**

2 interpretation of the declaration of independence

- 1.) Hypocritical
- 2.) not a statement of fact, a moral back-drop of how we should be judged