

Chapter 2

Ideologies and Isms

Getting Started

My thought here is many students may be misinformed on a number of basic terms such as the isms listed below. I usually list the terms on the board and ask students to define them, and then walk them through better definitions.

One could also ask them what an ideology is, and get them to think about, maybe even write down the things they believe, and then add that up to see what ideology they identify with. As I always stress, the key here in part could be to get them to think about what they believe, so that their politics becomes more than a matter of blind faith.

Learning Objectives

1. Understand what a theory is, and what a political theory is.
 2. Understand how scientific method applies to political science.
 3. Learn what the two types of theory are, and what directions political theory tends to take.
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Teaching Suggestions

1. Students can again see that the evolution of politics and government stretches back throughout human history, and especially in recorded human history.
 2. Theory matters because it can give us a framework to understand why things have happened the way they did, and what the consequences of future decisions could be.
 3. Most theorists had something to contribute to our understanding of the world, although their prescriptions for the world's problems have been all over the map.
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Section Outline

1. An ideology is a set of beliefs about how the world is and how it ought to be.

- Ideology can give us a framework for understanding the world.
- It can also blind us to alternative explanations of how the world works or should work.
- Most ideologies contain some truth, so it can be useful to figure out what works in an particular ideology, discarding the rest, as opposed to rejecting something entirely because we disagree with some part of it.
- So, for example, an idea such as the social construction of reality can help us see the extent to which people create the “reality” they want to believe in. Taken to its logical conclusion, however, the idea of the social construction of reality itself would be socially constructed, and therefore no more true than anything else. So perhaps there is some reality that is not socially constructed.
- In judging any ideology, we should be careful to be aware of our own assumptions, and to test them when possible.

2. Political theory

- A political theory is a “Systematic reflection on the nature and purposes of government, characteristically involving both an understanding of existing political institutions and a view about how (if at all) they ought to be changed.” – *Blackwell’s Encyclopedia of Political Thought*.
- Systematic in this instance means organized and purposeful.
- Reflection in the sense of stepping back to take a broader look at something.
- Nature and purposes as in how government is constructed and what it’s supposed to do.
- Political institutions: Actual institutions such as Congress and the House of Commons, but also the structures of government such as electoral systems.
- Finally, theory seeks to ask if and how government should be changed.
- A **theory** is a testable proposition about the nature and reality of something. If we are to apply scientific method to a theory, theory becomes a hypothesis. We not only test it, we actively try to disprove it.
- A theory that withstands serious attempts to show that it is wrong might be a good one. This can be difficult to achieve in social sciences, particularly political science, because people object to having experiments performed on them. Testing in political science is often limited to observation and asking people what they think.

3. Positive theory tries to explain why things happen the way they do. It is also called empirical or explanatory theory.

4. Normative theory tries to say how things ought to be. It makes an argument that one system is better than another.

1. Three versions of politics

Learning Objectives

1. Understand different approaches to politics.
 2. Understand what ancient thinkers thought was the best state.
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Section Outline

1. Three versions of theory include:
 - The democratic model, which argues that people can understand enough about the world to govern themselves.
 - The authoritarian model argues that some people have sufficient knowledge for government, but others do not.
 - The anarchic model argues that it is in fact the institutions of power created by government that cause problems and lead people astray.
2. The three models necessarily include some overlap, so that elements of each may show up in the work of a single political philosopher.
3. The ancient Greeks and Chinese contributed greatly to the development of political philosophy.
 - Plato rejected democracy, since it put citizens who could be misled in charge of the state. He argued for a system that would produce philosopher kings, who could rule justly.
 - Plato's system looked very much like the medieval Catholic Church and Communist Party in the Soviet Union.
4. Aristotle identified three good forms of government.
 - Monarchy was rule by a just king.
 - Aristocracy was rule by the best members of society.
 - Polity was just rule by the people.
 - Each of these three forms of government could be corrupted, however: Monarchy could become tyranny; aristocracy could become oligarchy; polity could become democracy.
 - Aristotle also mistrusted ordinary citizens, but said that a mixed form of government, combining elements of monarchy, polity and aristocracy, would provide for the best

- practical government. The three forms together could be used to keep the excesses of each individual form in check.
- Confucius and his successors argued for a just state based on custom, tradition and respect. The Confucian system provided a measure of stability for the Chinese empire for 2,000 years.
5. The Romans were not great philosophers, but in practice created a legal system that influences systems in use today.
- The Romans also created an enduring republic with checks and balances on the power of the state. However the checks on power were so severe that it became impossible to achieve needed reforms, and the republic was replaced by an imperial system.
 - The empire foundered in part because its tax system failed to provide enough revenue to effectively defend it against foreign invasion.

Key Takeaways

1. Political theory is a systematic way of studying the performance of government.
2. Political theories tend to fall into authoritarian, democratic and anarchic models.
3. Plato thought that average people were not fit to rule, and that people would need to be carefully trained to make them into rulers.
4. Aristotle didn't trust common people either, but thought that a balanced constitution, combining elements of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy would be best.
5. Confucius thought that emphasis on order, tradition and respect would lead to the best government.
6. The Roman Republic had so many checks and balances it was unable to act when it needed to.

Exercises

1. Assume you were studying to be a member of Plato's guardian class. What things would you need to know to be an effective ruler?
Answer: Presumably knowledge of economics, politics and military affairs, so as to be able to understand and mediate between different factions in the state.
2. In what ways to order and tradition play a role in everyday life today? Do these help or hinder progress?
Answer: Laws generally provide stability and predictability in the state, which necessarily means some limits on individual freedom.

Another exercise: Ask students how the Roman Republic, short of becoming an imperial

state, could have solved the problem of too many checks and balances.

Answer: Possibly some mechanism by which someone could make a final decision with rules that such a decision will be enforced.

Key Terms

1. Political theory

- Systematic study of government, including how it works and how it might be improved.

2. Theory

- A testable proposition about what is true or not true.

3. Positive theory

- Theory that attempts to explain how things actually are.

4. Normative theory

- Political theory that argues how governments should be organized and run.

5. Monarchy

- Rule by a king.

6. Demagogue

- Someone who aspires to political power by telling people what they want to hear, including demonizing his or her opponents, but often doing things that benefit themselves once they are in power.

6. Aristocracy

- Rule by the best people.

7. Polity

- According to Aristotle, a fair, just government featuring rule by the people, as opposed to democracy, which he saw as rule by the mob.

8. Democracy

- A system of government involving direct rule by the people.

2. From Antiquity to Modernity

Learning Objectives

1. Understand how early Christian and Moslem thinkers tried to reconcile the competing spheres of church and state.
 2. Understand how political science was reinvented, and how that changed views on government.
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Teaching Suggestions

Students should understand the trade-offs made between liberty and security in the Dark and Middle Ages. Compare this to steps taken by the United States after 9.11.

Students can also be shown how the roots of modern government are in some ways developed at this time, with rising wealth and greater social stability leading to new, broader forms of government.

Section Outline

1. The chief question to be answered by medieval political thinkers, both Christian and Moslem, was to reconcile the power of the church with the power of the secular state.
2. Medieval Christian philosophers such as St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas argued that the church was in fact superior to the secular state.
3. Moslem philosophers built on the work of Plato and Aristotle. Philosophers such as Al-Farabi (872–950 CE), Avicenna (980–1087 CE) and Averroes (1126–1198 CE), built on Plato's idea of a philosopher-king (in this case, a prophet-imam) who would combine both religious righteousness with just rule.
 - In each case, the king and the church are bound by God's law as explained in the Bible or the Quran.
 - Aquinas helped rehabilitate Aristotle in the West, broadening potential approaches to politics and government from those expressed by Plato.
4. Renaissance philosophers increasingly avoided religious justification for the existence of

the state.

5. Machiavelli said that there was no point in playing fair if your enemies were not going to do the same.
 - Machiavelli also argued that the just state, once established, needed a balance of power to maintain stability.
6. The increasing separation of church and state helped to demystify the world and create the era known as modernity. The challenge of modernity is how do we maintain a stable, civil state without reference to a higher power.
7. Thomas Hobbes said that security was the chief justification for the state, and that citizens surrender their liberty when they establish the sovereign by mutual consent.
 - Although it is in the sovereign's interest to treat the citizens well, the citizens are bound to obey the sovereign until he can no longer protect them.
8. John Locke said that the legislative body of government should be supreme, with regular elections as a check on the power of parliament.
 - Locke had a huge impact on the Founding Fathers of the American republic, including his statement that the state existed to preserve "life, liberty and property."
 - This makes Locke the father of classical liberalism: A reliance on democratic institutions for political decision-making and markets for economic decision-making.
 - Oppression by the state nullifies the social contract that created it, he said.
9. The French philosopher Montesquieu argued that power should be divided between different branches of government, so that each part was dependent on the others to get anything done.
10. Rousseau argued for a republican form of government, established by way of a social contract between citizens.
 - Rousseau's republic would feature direct democracy with administration by elected magistrates, who could not make policy on their own.
 - Rousseau said the general will which constitutes the state should not be used to oppress any part of the state.

Key Takeaways

1. Medieval philosophers tried to reconcile the competing powers of church and state.
2. Modern philosophers presumed the existence of the state, and set about trying to make it better.
3. Social contract theory saw government as a contract between the government and the governed.

Exercises

1. Do you practice a particular faith? What should be the role of religion in civil society?
Answers, obviously, could vary quite a bit. Ask the students to justify their responses.
2. Is government a social contract? How does that contract work for people who weren't born when it was agreed upon?
Apply this thought to Edmund Burke's analysis of the state and the social contract.

Key Terms

1. Modernity
 - The era after the Middle Ages, and the problem of a world where reason and rationality have begun to replace faith.
2. social contract
 - An agreement between people to create a certain type of government.
3. From modernity to the present.

Learning Objectives

1. Learn what liberalism is.
 2. Understand the different types of liberalism.
 3. Learn the difference between American liberalism and American conservatism.
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Section Outline

- Classical Liberalism
- Classical liberalism describes a major direction in western politics, of which American liberalism is a subset.
- Classical liberalism has two prominent features:
 - A reliance on markets for economic decision-making.
 - A reliance on democratic institutions for political decision-making.
- Capitalism aims to promote maximum wealth by letting people try, fail and succeed in business.
- It got its first systematic description in the work of Adam Smith in his work *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776.
- Capitalism succeeded mercantilism as the prevailing economic theory of the western world.
- Mercantilism suggested that states collect gold, carve out colonies for raw materials and as export markets, and limit imports while maximizing exports.
- In fact, states talked capitalism but practiced mercantilism, and no state has become rich by adopting a policy of unfettered free trade.
- Smith criticized mercantilism's obsession with gold, pointing out that it's just a commodity like any other.
- He also noted that mercantilism was too focused on supply and not enough on demand.
- Smith did not believe in the perfection of markets, and noted that firms would try to rig the market to limit competition.
- Smith's reference to "the invisible hand" was simply a way of saying that hard work, savings and investment by individuals would benefit the community by producing more wealth.
- Overall, classical liberalism thus claims to provide people with maximum freedom and maximum wealth.
- It does tend to produce greater wealth and to allow a higher degree of political participation, allowing outlets for citizens' discontent.
- It may also distribute the wealth unevenly, which can lead to wealthy interests dominating the political system.
- Connecting wealth to personal and political freedom may make it more difficult to address collective problems such as pollution.
- The democratic nature of the state, coupled with the power of interest groups, may impede the state's ability to make decisions and address reforms.
- American Liberalism is a variation of classical liberalism.
- American liberalism tends to argue for a higher degree of government involvement in the economy, usually by way of regulation, taxation, and more support for the non-wealthy.
- Progressivism tries to do this while being careful not to overwhelm business with regulation and taxes.

- Both movements grew out of the apparent failures of market capitalism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries—domination of markets by big business, high unemployment and widely unequal distribution of wealth.
 - Both liberalism and progressivism, as with all philosophies, offer costs and benefits—tradeoffs in terms of efficiency and equity.
 - Edmund Burke, who supported the American Revolution, was driven by the excesses of the French Revolution to develop a conservative response to efforts at political change.
 - Burke argued that human institutions are worth preserving because they represent the accumulated wisdom of the people who have gone before us.
 - Burke thought that the individual, who had been born into organized society, must accommodate him or herself into society, not the other way around. Individual rights must be compatible with the reality of a pre-existing state, which is what makes civilized life possible.
3. Thomas Paine argued that the people always retain a right to revolution if the state does not protect their interests.
 - Paine believed that rights are inherent in the individual. If they are granted by government, they are mere privileges that can be taken away.
 4. The Industrial Revolution created more wealth but also poor working conditions for many people. It increased pressure on the state to evolve into a system that invited more widespread political participation.
 5. Rapid transit and communications made large commercial enterprises possible, while rising productivity reduced agricultural employment but increased it in others.
 6. John Stuart Mill argued for broader political participation.
 - Mill's concept of utilitarianism argued for the greatest good for the greatest number. He also argued for equal rights for women.
 - American conservatism also is a variant of classical liberalism.
 - American conservatism favors low government involvement in the economy and lower tax rates, including less regulation.
 - It grew as a reaction to American liberalism in the mid- to late 20th century.
 - Conservatism can mean a commitment to maintaining existing political and economic institutions.
 - This kind of conservatism derives, in part, from the work of Edmund Burke, an 18th century British politician.
 - Burkean conservatism features respect for the rule of law; an independent court system; representative government; respect for private property; and preservation of an international balance of power.
 - Conservatives may view poverty as a moral failing as opposed to a problem with the system.

7. Neo-conservatives have a broad social agenda, including opposition to marriage rights, abortion and support for traditional views on marriage, family, patriotism and religion, appealing to morality as well as to economic self-interest.
8. Neo-conservatives also tend to support free trade along with free markets.
9. Christian conservatives have a similar domestic agenda, with frequent reference to their interpretation of the Bible. They argue that American was founded an explicitly Christian state.
10. People in fact tend to hold a variety of opinions, which may in fact be in conflict with each other.
 - Populism is not ideology, but is a common theme in American politics.
 - Populists claim to represent the interests of the ordinary citizen against those of the rich and power. Many candidates and elected officials make these sorts of claims.
 - Populists don't seem to govern in the same way that they talk.
11. Libertarianism argues for the least amount of government possible—national defense, police and fire, and not much else.
 - True libertarians, unlike neo- and Christian conservatives, are not concerned with social issues.
 - Libertarianism grew out of reaction to the excesses of Soviet-style communism.
 - Opponents of libertarianism argue that it would produce economic and environmental problems by restricting the role of government.

Key Takeaways

1. Classical liberalism is currently the dominant political and economic philosophy in the world.
2. Classical liberalism and its variants all have strengths and weaknesses.

Exercises

1. What seems to be different between American conservatives and liberals at present? In what ways would you say you are conservative or liberal in your

political beliefs?

American conservatives favor less government involvement in the Economy—sometimes. American liberals can favor more of such involvement—sometimes. American conservatives are more likely to have a traditional social agenda.

2. If Libertarians were to win enough elections to take charge of a government, what changes would happen? How would people respond to the changing mix of public services and taxes? How would this work?

Libertarians would try to dismantle the social safety net provided by government. This might provoke a political backlash by both recipients and supporters of that approach to government as the gap between the rich and the poor grew wider. This is what happened in the early to mid-20th century with both the progressive and liberal political movements.

Key Terms

1. Ideology

- A set of beliefs about politics that seeks to explain both what's wrong with the world and also how things could be made better.

2. Classical liberalism

- A system of social organization that relies on markets and democratic institutions for decision making.

3. Capitalism

- An economic system that relies on markets to make decisions on production and pricing.

4. Mercantilism

- An economic philosophy that encourages nations to maximize exports, minimize imports, and develop colonies as sources of raw materials and markets for finished goods.

5. American liberalism

- A variant of classical liberalism, which prescribes a bigger role for government in the economy.

5. Progressivism

- A political philosophy of the late 19th and early 20th century that saw a role for government in breaking up the power of large business and political interests.

6. American conservatism

- A variant of classical liberalism that seeks less government involvement in the economy.

7. Populism

- An approach to politics in which candidates claim to represent the interests of the common people as opposed to those of the rich and the powerful.

8. Libertarianism

- A political philosophy that argues that people will be better off with the least amount of government possible.

4. Alternatives to liberalism

Teaching Suggestions

It should be useful for students to understand that there are alternatives to the dominant ideologies of the 21st century, and why these alternatives arose. I try to get students to understand that every ideology has something to offer—except fascism, etc.—and that they should understand what the trade-offs are in each choice. I try very hard to make clear that while I have my own views, I don't expect them to adopt my views. I do want them to at least understand what they believe at a level beyond mere faith.

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the difference between socialism and communism.
 2. Understand the difference between fascism and Nazism.
 3. Learn what anarchism is, and understand how its views of people and politics differ from many other philosophies.
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Section Outline

1. Karl Marx argued that capitalism and democracy had failed people.
 - Marx said the means of production determined the form of government, and that each system “sowed the seeds of its own demise” by creating the conditions that would lead to its downfall.
 - The end result of human political and economic evolution would be socialism. Profit in capitalism, he said, is simply uncompensated labor.
 - Marx saw no hope for democratic forms of government rescuing workers from their plight, as they were dominated by the interests of capital.
 - Marx said that a dictatorship of the workers would be necessary so that they could learn that capitalism would never work. True communism would occur when the state was no longer needed and simply “withered away.”
 - Marx’s basic ideas were put to the test in the Soviet Union, China and other states. With no check on the power of the state, abuses occurred, and the system proved to be bad at providing consumers with the goods that they wanted.
2. Socialism is purely an economic system, involving public ownership of productive resources.
 - Socialism has the goal of providing work and basic living standards for all citizens.
 - It tends to reduce unequal distribution of wealth.
 - It often is economically less productive and less efficient than capitalism. More people benefit from the economy, but the benefit level may be lower.
 - Consumer goods may be substandard and in short supply.
3. While socialism has currently been rejected as a dominant economic approach, most states in fact have a mixed economy, combining elements of both socialism and capitalism in different parts of the economy.
4. Communism features a socialist (planned) economy plus a one-party dictatorship of the state.
 - Communism was developed by the 19th century thinkers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and refined by the Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin.
 - In practice, communism tended to reduce inequality of wealth and guarantee minimum standards of living. It also produced political repression and a lack of consumer goods.
 - Marx argued that excesses of industrial capitalism would drive workers to demand creation of a communist state, which eventually would itself wither away, leaving a workers’ paradise.

- Communism in fact only occurred in poor, largely agrarian societies, or by force of arms.
 - North Korea and Cuba are the only remaining truly communist states.
5. Anarchism argue that government in fact is what makes people worse, because whatever its form, it becomes a tool of power and oppression.
 - In practice, anarchism has been based on localized cooperation and decentralized power.
 - 19th century experiments in anarchic communities tended to founder because some people were willing to work and others were not, producing discord in the community.
 - The Tiv people of Nigeria were very successful in maintaining a peaceful, productive society based on familial and social relationships.
 6. Anarchist thinkers have included Lao Tze Henry David Thoreau and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon.
 7. Nazism and Fascism are not coherent political philosophies.
 - Fascism seems to claim that some people are simply better than other people, and glorifies the power of the state over the value of the individual.
 - Nazism does the same thing, but further argues that the superiority of some people is based on race.
 - Both arose out of the economic and political turmoil that followed World War I, and largely ended with the defeat of Germany and Italy in World War II.
 8. The United States and other western powers supported authoritarian, right wing governments during the Cold War because their leaders opposed communism.

Key Takeaways

1. Other ideologies outside of classical liberalism and its variants tend to offer greater equality of outcomes but generate less overall wealth.
2. Socialism is an economic system that provides greater equality of result but less equality of opportunity.
3. Communism combines a socialist economy with a one-party government.
4. Anarchism has not been tried on a large scale outside of the Tiv in Nigeria.
5. Fascism glorifies the state; individuals are important only as part of the state.
6. Nazism glorifies the state, with an expressly racist approach to politics
7. Mill thought that government and society should create the greatest good for the greatest number.
8. Marx thought that capitalism would so impoverish the workers that they would revolt and

create communism.

9. Contemporary theories have sought explain people's political actions by applying the disciplines of other social sciences.

Exercises

1. How would the place where you work be different if it was a government agency? If it's already a public agency, what would be different if it was privatized? Possible answers could include more or less efficiency, but not necessarily so. There are certainly efficient public enterprises and inefficient private ones—what would determine whether an operation is efficient? Possible answers there include leadership; a sense of belonging and mission on the part of employees; rewards for good performance.
2. Which countries still claim to be communist? What things could cause that to change?
North Korea and Cuba. In the case of North Korea, the expectation is that the government may eventually collapse as the state decays from within. In the case of Cuba, a gradual softening of the economic stance of the leadership may lead to internal calls for reform.
3. John Stuart Mill's concept of utilitarianism argued that the state should provide the greatest good for the greatest number. Is that always true? Can you think of times when you might prefer to protect the rights of a minority?
Students should easily be able to point to situations where people have differences of opinion, of ethnic heritage, or sexual orientation where they have been discriminated against by the majority.
4. Imagine Karl Marx's ideal state, run by and for workers. What could be better about this? What might be worse? How would this work? Could this work?
Possible answers could include be less exploitation of workers and higher pay in some fields of work. It's an open question as to whether some new group of elites won't arise, however, and dominate the system. The system might also be less economically efficient. The question in some ways isn't whether it would work, but how it would work.

Key Terms

1. Socialism

- An economic system that relies on public ownership of productive resources and relies on planning to determine what will be produced and how much it will cost.
2. Mixed economy
 - An economy that includes elements of both socialism and capitalism.
 3. Communism
 - A political system that relies on a socialist economy and a one-party state for political decision making.
 4. Anarchism
 - An ideology that argues that human institutions such as big government and big business make us worse off, not better.
 5. Fascism
 - An ideology that glorifies the power of the state and says that the individual is not important except as part of the state.
 6. Nazism
 - A variant of fascism that glorifies the state, based on appeals to alleged racial superiority.
 7. Institutionalism
 - The study of political institutions with an eye to understanding and improving them.
 8. Behavioralism
 - The scientific study of politics, through observation and collection of data and statistical measurement.
 9. Systems theory
 - The idea that people and politics form a living ecosystem, and the effort to understand political behavior by studying that ecosystem.
 10. Modernization theory
 - The idea that democracy becomes more likely as societies grow wealthier.
 11. Feminist political theory

- The effort to understand and end the political and economic subjugation of women.

12. Rational choice theory

- The idea that people are rational decision-makers, so that their political behavior can be predicted by looking at what choices would best serve their personal interests.

13. Critical theory

- The idea that political problems come down to cultural blinders and communication problems. If we can remove/solve these problems, we should be able to decide a right course in government.

5. Postmodern theories

Learning Objectives

1. Learn how new ideologies have developed in more recent times.
 2. Understand that as long as we have problems, and we probably always will, people will propose solutions to fixing them.
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Teaching Suggestions

Students can be led to see that the continuing imperfection of human economic and political organization continues to prompt thinkers to both try to understand the nature and scope of problems and to pose possible solutions. One could ask students to list some current problems, and apply solutions based on the ideologies they have encountered so far. Then ask them to consider the flaws in those approaches, and try to get them to suggest something new. Part of the point of this for me always is that A. there are no easy answers and B. there are always trade-offs involved in every answer.

Section Outline

1. Current theories are often referred to as post-modern, to distinguish them from “modern” theories which stretch from the Renaissance to the end of the Cold War.

2. Post-modern theories sometimes reject rationalism, the idea that we can make correct choices through evidence-based reasoning.
3. Post-modern theories also tend to address topics that have been somewhat ignored, such as race- and gender-based inequality.
4. Feminism argues for equal treatment for women in all walks of life.
5. Authors such as Christine de Pizan, Mary Wollstonecraft, and John Stuart Mill argued for equality for women.
6. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and other American women campaigned for much of the 19th and early 20th century for the right to vote, as well as equal economic and parental rights.
7. World War II both altered people's expectations and challenged notion that women and non-white citizens couldn't do everything that white men could do.
8. Feminism has many variants.
 - Radical feminists tend to fault capitalism for enforcing the subjugation of women.
 - Liberal feminists tend to see women as deserving equal opportunity within the framework of classical liberal society.
9. Environmentalism seeks to address environmental problems and bring them to the forefront of politics.
10. Environmentalism seeks to use the power of the state to address environmental degradation, arguing that environmental destruction and damage has a negative impact on people as well as plants and animals.
 - As with feminism, environmentalism has different factions, both radical and liberal.
 - Green political parties have made some progress win winning legislative seats in other republics around the world.
11. Institutionalism was the dominant school in the U.S. until recent times. It tries to look at the institutions of government to determine how politics will be conducted, but did not account for governments that looked good on paper but failed to protect people's interests.
12. Behavioralism attempts to collect data on people's actual behavior and analyze that to explain why they do the things that they do.
13. Systems theory attempts to view the political scene from an ecological/environmental perspective. How do the changes in the environment produce changes in actions by

government?

14. Modernization theory argues that as societies become wealthier they are more likely to become and remain democratically ruled.
15. Rational choice theory attempts to apply economic logic to politics. It says that people calculate what is in their own interests, and behave accordingly.
16. Critical theory argues that people need ideal conditions for communication to determine what they should do, since otherwise we may be deluded by our own cultural blinders.

Key Takeaways

1. Post-modernism is sometimes a reaction against rationalism, and sometimes a response to the confusion and problems of contemporary politics.
2. Feminism is a broad and longstanding movement that seeks to ensure equal rights and opportunity for women in all walks of life.
3. Environmentalism seeks to encourage people and policies to limit their impact on the planet and thereby preserve higher standards of living for all.

Exercises

1. Do you feel that women where you live are treated the same as men? Do they have the same opportunities? Are there parts of life where they don't?

Answers clearly could vary. One area where this is true is in terms of equal pay for equal work, which still does not always obtain in the world.

2. What environmental laws have an impact on your life? How would it be different if those laws didn't exist?

Answers could include water safety standards; tax-supported storm water runoff utilities; curbside recycling programs; restrictions and taxes on development. All types of such regulations raise some costs and lower others.

Key Terms

1. Rationalism

- The idea that correct choices can be made by use of reason and evidence.

2. Post-modernism

- A catch-all phrase used to describe different features of the contemporary world, from the rejection of rationalism to the idea that economic and political problems may not be easily solved by existing ways of thinking.

3. Feminism

- The broad historical and contemporary movement to advance the cause of women's rights in society.

4. Environmentalism

- The movement to preserve and protect the planet by limiting humanity's impact on the biosphere.