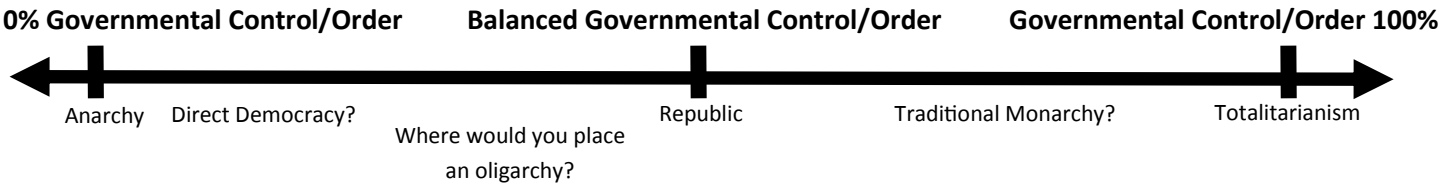
United States Government… Where do we start?

Why form a government?

- guidance or control; system of maintaining order in a state (people occupying a fixed territory)
- fundamental rules & principles; regulation of social interaction
- written contract (in some cases)
- framework of political institutions that implement the business of the state
- regulate, restrain, supervise, control, protect
- republic—sovereignty rests with people, indirectly exercised through representatives



A Few of the Basic Forms of Government…

⇒ **monarchy**/dictator/emirate/sultanate—rule of monarch/single individual; often hereditary rule
⇒ **oligarchy**—rule of the few; usually based on power, money, or both
⇒ **confederacy**—rule by multiple co-equal entities; compact, treaty, limited central authority
⇒ **direct democracy**—rule by simple/popular majority
⇒ **republic**—representative government; consent of the people/governed

Declaration of Independence

July 4, 1776

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable **Rights**, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. —That to secure these rights, **Governments are instituted** among Men, deriving their just powers from the **consent of the governed**... *(usa.gov, emphasis added)*

Preamble to the U.S. *Constitution*

We the **People** of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect **Union**, establish **Justice**, insure domestic **Tranquility**, provide for the common **defence**, promote the general **Welfare**, and secure the Blessings of **Liberty** to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.
(Charters of Freedom, National Archives, emphasis added)

Class Notes:

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Terms To Remember…

⇒**Consent:** individual citizens give their approval to the government

⇒**Unalienable Rights:** individual rights possessed by human beings; inseparable; not conferred/given by any government

⇒**Politics:** process of gaining/exercising control for setting & achieving goals relating to division of resources

⇒**Policymaking System:** People with an interest, problem, or concern connect with linkages or access points like parties, the media or interest groups who help set a **policy agenda** to influence policymakers in the legislative, executive, judicial or bureaucratic institutions of government in order to influence the making of policy, which in turn impacts people.

- ⇒**Public Goods:** Clean air, clean water, national defense, etc.
- ⇒**Private Goods:** provided by private business for profit
- ⇒**Toll Goods:** available for a price

⇒**Public Policy and Types of Policy**

- ⇒Course of action taken with regard to some perceived problem
- ⇒Congressional statute or law from legislative branch
- ⇒Presidential action or decision from executive branch
- ⇒Court decision or opinion
- ⇒Budgetary action through taxes or expenditures
- ⇒Regulation

⇒**Traditional Ideals of Democratic Theory:**

- ⇒ Majority Rule
- ⇒ Minority Rights
- ⇒ Representative Government responsive to the People

REMINDER…
What are the **basic functions** of government according to the Founders?

form a union (strength in unity)
system of justice (accountability)
domestic safety & security (at home)
common defense (outside threats)
general welfare (basics of life)
secure liberty (make sure government does not curtail liberty any more than absolutely necessary for security)

⇒ **Theories of Government:**

- ⇒ elitism/elite: small group of rich, powerful or connected people or groups rule
- ⇒ pluralism/pluralist: power rests with competing interest groups sharing in government influence

⇒ **Shared Political Culture:** shared values and beliefs; **ideal** (hoped for) vs. **real** (actually exists) culture

- ⇒ egalitarianism—everyone should be treated equally
- ⇒ individualism—self-determination; independence
- ⇒ populism—people in control of government; civic engagement and access of government
- ⇒ capitalism—market-based economy
- ⇒ liberty/freedom—political, social and economic liberty