

GOVERNMENT IN ACTION



Interest Groups (Review)

Bureaucracy

Congress (Review)

Presidency

Courts (Review)

Budget

NAME: _____

Block: _____

Changing Policy, One Branch at a Time

SUGGESTED TEXT MATERIALS: Edwards, George C. III, Martin P. Wattenberg, Robert L. Lineberry. *Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy*. 14th Ed. New York: Longman, 2009.

POLICY-MAKING INSTITUTIONS

Judicial Branch, Executive Branch/Bureaucracy, the Legislative Branch and Budget

Summary: The Judicial Branch (Courts)

Although the scope of the Supreme Court's decisions is broad, the actual number of cases tried in our legal system in the lower federal courts or state and local courts. This means that a great deal of judicial policymaking occurs in courts other than the Supreme Court. This chapter describes how the court systems are structured, how judges are selected, and how the courts influence the policy agenda in the United States.

Summary: The Executive Branch (Presidency)

This chapter examines *how presidents exercise leadership* and looks at *limitations* on executive authority. Americans expect a lot from presidents (perhaps too much). The myth of the president as a powerhouse distorts the public's image of presidential reality.

Presidents operate in an environment filled with checks and balances and competing centers of power. Other policy makers with whom they deal have their own agendas, their own interests, and their own sources of power. To be effective, the president must have highly developed political skills to mobilize influence, manage conflict, negotiate, and build compromises. Political scientist Richard Neustadt has argued that presidential power is *the power to persuade*, not to command.

Summary: The Federal Bureaucracy

Once Congress, the president, or the Supreme Court make a policy decision, it is most likely that bureaucrats must step in to implement those decisions. Because bureaucrats are typically less visible and are not elected to their positions, their actions and power are often subjects of considerable debate.

The classic conception of bureaucracy was advanced by German sociologist **Max Weber**; he stressed that the bureaucracy was a "rational" way for a modern society to conduct its business. To Weber, a **bureaucracy** depends upon certain elements, including a hierarchical authority structure, task specialization, and extensive rules, which allow similar cases to be handled in similar ways.

Summary: The Budget

The central political issue for many years has been how to pay for policies that most people support. A **budget** is a policy document allocating burdens (taxes) and benefits (expenditures). Over the past thirty years, the national government has run up large annual budget deficits. A budget **deficit** occurs when expenditures exceed revenues in a fiscal year.

Changing Policy, One Branch at a Time

Changing Policy, One Branch at a Time

In this challenge, you get to develop firsthand knowledge of immigration reform by taking on the role of a political advisory firm that is advising an interest group on what they can do to reach their policy goals.

To accomplish this goal, you will add to your knowledge about how the government is organized to make policy and where the entry points in that process are for citizens. You will also develop expertise about how interest groups are organized and what they do to create the policy changes.

You should think of this cycle as an advocacy/issues campaign. Your goal is to help your client win the policy agenda.

Immigration is an emotional issue that is tied to deeply held beliefs about what it means to be an American. In our class, we expect you to elevate the discourse above what we see in our political sphere. In all of your communication in this unit, be respectful, be responsive, and be kind.

You will be advising one of the following possible clients:

Americans for Immigration Reform: http://www.americansforimmigrationreform.com/ FAIR: http://www.fairus.org/site/PageServer Minuteman Project: http://www.minutemanproject.com/ Hispanic Coalition for Comprehensive Immigration Reform: http://hispaniccoalitionforcir.com/	No More Deaths: http://www.nomoredeaths.org/ Center for Immigration Studies: http://www.cis.org/ American Immigration Lawyers Association: http://www.aila.org/ Health Initiative of the Americas: http://hia.berkeley.edu/
--	---

Task 1: Get to know your client by using online resources to understand its mission, history, and key players. You will introduce your firm and your client at a town hall meeting.

Task 2: Give a press conference on behalf of your client. Pinpoint specific bureaucratic agencies that are involved in immigration enforcement.

Task 3: Write a memo to your client that will give advice on how they should use the courts to promote their agendas.

Task 4: Help your client write a letter to the president that will explain your client's position on the immigration issue and why the president should support your client.

Task 5: Help your client create a congressional testimony to be given to the bipartisan committee on immigration reform for the purposes of collecting information on the current immigration debate.

Task 6: Present a final comprehensive political action plan to your client.

Spiraling Discussion Questions

For each piece of this unit you will be ending by discussing the advantages and disadvantages of pursuing change through that branch. To participate fully in that discussion, you should answer these questions as you go:

- ✓ What does the branch do?
- ✓ How is the branch organized?
- ✓ How, when, and where does the public influence the branch? *Be sure to record specific tools.*

✓ Who are the key players in the branch?

✓ How can interest groups influence the branch?

Vocabulary Terms

Record definitions and notes on the following words as they are introduced through lectures, course readings, and activities. As concepts and terms are revisited throughout the project cycle, add to or adjust definitions to build understanding.

<p>The Presidency Twenty-Second Amendment impeachment Watergate Twenty-Fifth Amendment cabinet crisis veto pocket veto presidential coattails legislative veto War Powers Resolution presidential limits presidential powers balancing the ticket viability executive privilege regulatory agencies</p>	<p>The Bureaucracy bureaucracy patronage civil service merit principle Hatch Act independent regulatory agency issue network government corporation Pendleton Civil Service Act independent executive agency policy implementation regulation deregulation executive orders iron triangles</p>	<p>Interest Groups faction interest group free-rider problem nongovernmental organization (NGO) Collective Action Federal Register amicus curiae brief lobbyist lobbying political action committee (PAC) bundling soft money independent expenditures issue advocacy 527 organization grassroots going public</p>
<p>The Budget budget deficit expenditures revenues income tax Sixteenth Amendment federal debt tax expenditures Social Security Act Medicare incrementalism entitlements Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 Congressional Budget Office (CBO) authorization bill appropriations bill</p>	<p>The Courts standing to sue class-action suits amicus curiae briefs original jurisdiction appellate jurisdiction senatorial courtesy opinion stare decisis precedents original intent judicial implementation <i>Marbury v. Madison</i> judicial review judicial restraint judicial activism litigants rule of four trial courts appellate courts</p>	

Government in Action FRQs

The Federal Courts

1. The judicial branch is designed to be more independent from public opinion than are the legislature or the executive. Yet, the United States Supreme Court rarely deviates too far for too long from prevalent public opinion.

- a. Describe two ways in which the United States Supreme Court is insulated from public opinion.

- b. Explain how two factors work to keep the United States Supreme Court from deviating too far from public opinion.

The Presidency

2. The Constitution makes several provisions for the case of war. However, modern technology has radically changed the way government goes about engaging in war. The president, who serves as commander in chief, now has instant decisions to make, affording him the opportunity to bypass Congress.

How do the new conditions of war affect the system of checks and balances between the executive and legislative branches? Address each of the following points in your response.

- a. Define the military powers of the legislative and executive branches.
- b. Discuss how these powers changed as a result of modern technology.
- c. Provide one example of a president's use of expanded power to act independently in a crisis.

3. Presidential approval ratings fluctuate over the course of each presidential administration.

- a. Identify two factors that decrease presidential approval ratings, and explain why each factor has that effect.
- b. Identify two factors that increase presidential approval ratings, and explain why each factor has that effect.

4. A number of factors enable presidents to exert influence over Congress in the area of domestic policy. However, presidents are also limited in their influence over domestic policy in Congress.

- a. The Constitution grants the president certain enumerated powers. Describe two of the powers that enable the president to exert influence over domestic policy.
- b. Choose **TWO** of the following terms. Define and explain how each one limits the president's ability to influence domestic policy making in Congress.
 - mandatory spending
 - party polarization

- lame-duck period

The Federal Bureaucracy

5. Iron triangles, or sub-governments, often form around a specific policy area to shape and administer relevant policies.
- Select TWO of the following policy areas: agriculture, the environment, product safety, and oil.
 - For the policy areas you selected, describe how an iron triangle might form. Identify the political participants and explain their roles and responsibilities to each other.
6. Is Congress effective in exercising legislative oversight of the federal bureaucracy? Respond by providing a look at both sides of the issue.
- Explain two specific methods Congress uses to exercise effective oversight of the federal bureaucracy.
 - Give two specific explanations for the failure of Congress to exercise effective oversight of the federal bureaucracy.

Congress

7. The committee system in Congress distributes the responsibility of assessing proposed legislation to smaller groups of congressional representatives, allowing them to specialize in fewer policy areas. This system, however, is composed of dozens of committees and subcommittees in both houses, each attempting to generate new policies from the perspective of their different policy areas.
- Does the committee system do more harm than good, or does it contribute to effective policy making?
 - Identify and explain **three** advantages or disadvantages to the system.

Budget

8. Using the information in the pie charts below,
- identify two budgetary barriers that hinder the creation of new policy initiatives.
 - explain why each of the barriers you identified persists.
9. Using your knowledge of United States politics,
- identify one non-budgetary barrier.
 - explain how this barrier hinders the creation of new policy initiatives.

GROWTH OF MANDATORY SPENDING IN THE FEDERAL BUDGET

