

4.1 American Attitudes About Government and Politics

Explain the relationship between core beliefs of U.S. citizens and attitudes about the role of government.

1. A shared consensus, codified in our constitution, has agreed that our political institutions have all of the following goals EXCEPT

- a. Protect our freedoms
- b. Promote the general welfare
- c. Keep us safe
- d. Minimalize diversity

2. The American political culture roots its governing political systems in

- a. The consent of the people
- b. Coercion
- c. Rule by elites
- d. Compulsion

3. It is argued that institutions alone, like our three branches, are insufficient to maintain a healthy political system. In addition to our institutions what else is necessary to preserve a strong democracy?

- a. A democratic political culture
- b. An army of volunteer servicemen
- c. A diverse demographic of people
- d. Wealthy landowners who create jobs

4. All of the following are tenets found in our unique political culture EXCEPT

- a. Rule of law
- b. Limited government
- c. Individual liberty
- d. Centralized planning

5. Political scientist William C. Mitchell has created a list of American beliefs, values and norms. On his list you would find: *“To be legitimate, political authority and power must be rational and legal.”* Which of the following would be a real life example of this American belief, value and norm?

- a. Reliance on a written constitution
- b. The War of Drugs
- c. The Senate minority leadership has decided to block and inhibit the president’s agenda
- d. The Supreme Court used judicial review to check the president’s unilateral immigration policy

6. Political scientist William C. Mitchell has created a list of American beliefs, values and norms. On his list you would find: *“Political interpretations and assessments tend to be moralistic.”* Which of the following would be a real-life example of this American belief, value and norm?

- a. A cabinet level appointee was forced to resign due to a conflict of interest
- b. The War of Drugs
- c. The Senate minority leadership has decided to block and inhibit the president’s agenda
- d. The Supreme Court used judicial review to check the president’s unilateral immigration policy

7. Political scientist William C. Mitchell has created a list of American beliefs, values and norms. On his list you would find: *“Political power is tangible and limited in quantity, and tends to be evil.”* Which of the following would be a real-life example of this American belief, value and norm?

- a. The Senate minority leadership has decided to block and inhibit the president’s agenda
- b. The Supreme Court used judicial review to check the president’s unilateral immigration policy
- c. A cabinet level appointee was forced to resign due to a conflict of interest
- d. The War of Drugs

8. Political scientist William C. Mitchell has created a list of American beliefs, values and norms. On his list you would find: *“Politics tends to be thought of as a game.”* Which of the following would be a real-life example of this American belief, value and norm?

- a. The Senate minority leadership has decided to block and inhibit the president’s agenda
- b. The Supreme Court used judicial review to check the president’s unilateral immigration policy
- c. A cabinet level appointee was forced to resign due to a conflict of interest
- d. The War of Drugs

9. Political scientist William C. Mitchell has created a list of American beliefs, values and norms. On his list you would find: *“Public office is a public trust, and political action should be taken only in the public interest.”* Which of the following would be a real-life example of this American belief, value and norm?

- a. The Senate minority leadership has decided to block and inhibit the president’s agenda
- b. The Supreme Court used judicial review to check the president’s unilateral immigration policy
- c. A cabinet level appointee was forced to resign due to a conflict of interest
- d. The War of Drugs

10. Which of the following is not part of our commonly held political culture?

- a. Liberty
- b. Equality of results
- c. Self-reliance
- d. Limited government

11. In his seminal description of American democracy, in 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville a disinterested Frenchman made numerous prescient observations. Taken from one of his letters at the time read the passage below and find the main idea.

“You say that institutions are only half my subject. I go farther than you, and I say that they are not even half. You know my ideas well enough to know that I accord institutions only a secondary influence on the destiny of men. Would to God I believed more in the omnipotence of institutions! I would have more hope for our future, because by chance we might, someday, stumble onto the precious piece of paper that would contain the recipe for all wrongs, or on the man who knew the recipe. But, alas, there is no such thing, and I am quite convinced that political societies are not what their laws make them, but what sentiments, beliefs, ideas, habits of the heart, and the spirit of the men who form them, prepare them in advance to be, as well as what nature and education have made them. If this truth does not emerge, at every turn, from my book...”

- a. The very success of American democracy is found in its institutions
- b. The very success of American democracy is found in its culture and customs
- c. The very success of American democracy is due to [g]od
- d. Corruption and graft threaten American democracy

12. Public trust in the government is an important indicator of a healthy democracy. What conclusion can be drawn from the longitudinal data below?

Public Trust in the Federal Government: 1958-2014

1958: 73%
1964: 77%
1968: 61%
1976: 35%
1980: 32%
1987: 48%
1998: 31%
2006: 30%
2010: 23%

- a. Public trust is an accurate indicator of government success
- b. Republicans are trusted more than Democrats
- c. Trust increases during war conditions
- d. Trust in government has steadily declined over time