Video Information
Framework for Democracy
Political Science 1
A study of the U.S. Constitution and the major principles, institutions, and policies of the American Federal system.

Lesson 1 - American Heritage
American politics today cannot be understood apart from the Latinos heritage. Government does not begin over again with each generation; it builds on the past. In the case of the United States, the most significant link between past and present lies in the Latinos founding ideals. This episode examines the key principles that have shaped American politics since the country's earliest years.

Lesson 2 - The American Experiment
Narrative story of the settlement and early days of the colonies, culminating in the fight for independence and the evolution of a constitutional framework of government for the new United States. Comments of scholars interwoven with excerpts from writings of those who were on the scene.

Lesson 3 - The Living Constitution
A look at the Constitution in contemporary terms: 1. short document, 7,000 words long, shorter than every state constitution except Varmints 2. difficult to amend; of the more than 11,000 amendments that have been proposed to Congress only 33 have been submitted to states after having been passed by Congress, and only 27 have been ratified. 3. informal methods of constitutional change by congressional legislation, presidential actions, judicial review (interpreting the intentions of the Framers); custom and use. 4. the Constitution as an unfinished work

Lesson 4 - A Question of Sovereignty
One national government; fifty state governments; town, city, and county governments...foreign visitors are often overwhelmed by the complexity of the U.S. system of government. There are various waves of ordering relations between central governments and local units. Federalism is one of them. Understanding federalism and how it differs from other forms of government is critical to understanding the American political system.

Lesson 5 - The Most Basic of Rights
Without government, people live in a state of anarchy. With unbridled government men and women may live in a state of tyranny. The civil liberties imbedded in the U.S. Bill of Rights, place specific limitations on governmental power. For example, the freedoms of religion, speech, press, and assembly cannot be abridged or taken away. But the Bill of Rights, like the rest of the Constitution is relatively brief. The Framers set forth broad guidelines, but the courts apply them to specific situations. Episode covers first amendment rights and the right to privacy.
Lesson 6 - Rights of the Accused
The United States has one of the highest violent crime rates in the world. It is not surprising, therefore, that many citizens have extremely strong opinions about the rights of those accused of criminal offenses. When an accused person is set free because of an apparent legal technicality, some people feel that the rights of the accused are being given more weight than the rights of society and victims of crime. The courts and the police must constantly engage in a balancing act of competing rights. At the basis of this discussion is the U. S. Bill of Rights. The Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Eighth Amendments deal specifically with the rights of criminal defendants.

Lesson 7 - The Struggle for Equality
We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal. The struggle for equality is never easy. When these words from the Declaration were written in 1776, the term "men" had a somewhat different meaning than it has today. It did not include slaves, Native Americans, men without property, or women. It has taken this nation over two hundred years to strengthen and to expand constitutional guarantees of equality to all persons in our society—a struggle that still continues. Minority rights have often been called civil rights. In this program we examine the rights of minorities and groups, and their struggle for equal treatment in the United States.

Lesson 8 - Frames of Reference
In The Federalist Papers James Madison and others argued that because public opinion is potentially dangerous, it must be diffused through a large republic with separation of government powers. At times in the recent history, we have seen public opinion play a powerful role in the politics of the United States. When public opinion became divided over the Vietnam War in the mid-sixties, and there was a surge of support for antiwar candidate Eugene McCarthy in the New Hampshire primary, then president Lyndon Johnson decided not to seek reelection. When the scandal surrounding the 1972 Watergate break-in unfolded, and Congressional hearings and tape recordings began to reveal the role President Richard Nixon may have played, the precedent's approval rating dropped to less than 25%. Threatened with possible impeachment proceedings, Nixon resigned from office.

Lesson 9 - Voice of the People
In recent years, voter participation in the United States has declined. Some view low voter turnout as a threat to representative democracy, whereas others believe it simply indicates greater satisfaction with the status quo. What factors influence why some Americans vote and others do not? Studies have shown an association between voting and a person's age, education, and economic status. Another factor is the competitiveness of the race itself. In addition to voting, people participate in the political process through community and campaign activities, lobbying groups, actively following political news, and participating in social movements and protests.

Lesson 10 - Political Parties
A political party is an ongoing coalition of interests joined together in an effort to get its candidates for public office elected under a common label. Such organizations can be looked at from several points of view. There is, first, the electorate itself voters who identify with the party and support its candidates. A political party also manifests itself as an organization, staffed and led by party activists. And finally the party is the candidates, those individuals who run for public office under its label. Although the U. S. electoral system discourages the formation of third parties, there have been more than a thousand minor parties in the Latinos history. Most of them have been short-lived and only a few have had a lasting impact. Only one minor party, the Republican party, has ever achieved majority status. This episode explores patterns of party politics in the United States.
Lesson 11 - Campaign Trail
Today, party organizations are alive and well in America, but they are not the driving force in contemporary campaigns. Much of what goes on is better described as candidate-center politics in which candidates for the presidency and Congress raise their own funds, form their own campaign organizations, and choose the issues on which they will run. This episode will look at the people who run for office and the modern campaign, from organization and financial support to strategy.

Lesson 12 - Pressure Politics
Alexis de Tocqueville observed in 1834 that no country of the world has the principles of association been more successfully used or applied to a greater multitude of objectives than in America." The French traveler was amazed as the degree to which Americans formed groups to solve civic problems, establish social relations, and speak for their economic or political interests. The structure of the American government invites the participation of interests groups. The system has many points of access or places in the decision-making process where interest groups may make their opinion known.

Lesson 13 - The Fourth Estate
The press is an increasingly important political actor. New technology, from television to cable to satellites, has dramatically increased the reach and speed of communication. In addition, the press has filled some of the void created by the decline in political parties and other political institutions. Like political parties and interest groups, the press is a key link between the public and its leaders. On a daily basis, Americans connect to politics more through the news that is produced than through the activities of parties or groups. It brings events and problems into public view, serves as a channel through which political leaders can address the public, and scrutinizes political behavior for evidence of deceitful, careless, or corrupt acts. However, the press cannot do the job of political institutions, even though increasingly it tries to do so.

Lesson 14 - The First Branch
The founders of the American republic believed that the bulk of power exercised by a national government should be in the hands of the legislature. Article I of the Constitution deals with the structure, the powers, and the operation of Congress beginning in Section I with the separation of powers. The division of Congress into two legislative houses - the House of Representatives and the Senate - was an outgrowth of the Connecticut Compromise which attempted to balance large-state demands for representation based on population with small-state needs for an equal voice in policymaking. The Constitution is both highly specific and vague about the powers Congress may exercise. The first seventeen clauses of Article I, Section 8, specify most of the enumerated powers expressly given to the House and Senate. Beyond this, Section 8 gives Congress the right to "make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof." This episode looks at why Congress was created; its powers related to lawmaking, representing the needs of constituents and society as a whole, oversight, education, and conflict-resolution; and congressional elections.

Lesson 15 - Government by Committee
Most of the actual work of legislating is performed by the committees and subcommittees within Congress. Thousands of bills are introduced in every session of Congress, more than any single member can be knowledgeable about. The committee system is kind a division of legislative labor, a
way to provide for specialization. This episode explores the committee structure and formal leadership of Congress, and follows a bill through what is often a torturous route on the way to becoming law.

Lesson 16 - The Glorious Burden
The writers of the Constitution created the presidency of the United States without any models on which to draw. Nowhere else in the world, at the time, was there a democratically selected chief executive. After much debate, the delegates created a chief executive who had enough powers to balance those of Congress. The requirements for the office of the presidency are outlined in Article II, Section I, of the Constitution. This episode explores the foundations of the modern presidency, the campaign for nomination and election, and staffing the presidency.

Lesson 17 - Leader of a Nation
The president operates within a system of separate institutions that share power. Congress in particular more than the courts or the bureaucracy holds the key to presidential success. Without congressional authorization and funding, most presidential proposals are nothing but ideas, empty of action. Theodore Roosevelt longed to be the president and Congress, tiif only for a day, so that he would have the power to adopt as well as propose programs. Whether a precedent's initiatives are likely to succeed or fail depends on several factors, including the force of circumstance, the stage of the precedent's term, the precedent's support in Congress, and the level of public support for the precedent's leadership.

Lesson 18 - The Federal Workplace - The Power (1)
Modern government would be impossible without a bureaucracy. The government enormous administrative capacity makes it possible for the United States to have such ambitious programs as space exploration, social security, environmental protection, interstate highways, and universal postal service. In fact, is the only practical way of organizing large-scale government programs. Yet the bureaucracy is also a problem. Even those who work in federal agencies bemoan its rigidity and costliness. Although agencies are subject to scrutiny by the president, Congress, and the judiciary, bureaucrats are able to achieve power in their own right. They tend to take an agency point of view because of their expert knowledge, support from clientele groups, and backing by Congress or the president. These episodes depict the nature of the federal bureaucracy and the politics that surrounds it.

Lesson 19 - The Federal Workplace - The Power (2)
Modern government would be impossible without a bureaucracy. The government enormous administrative capacity makes it possible for the United States to have such ambitious programs as space exploration, social security, environmental protection, interstate highways, and universal postal service. In fact, is the only practical way of organizing large-scale government programs. Yet the bureaucracy is also a problem. Even those who work in federal agencies bemoan its rigidity and costliness. Although agencies are subject to scrutiny by the president, Congress, and the judiciary, bureaucrats are able to achieve power in their own right. They tend to take an agency point of view because of their expert knowledge, support from clientele groups, and backing by Congress or the president. These episodes depict the nature of the federal bureaucracy and the politics that surrounds it.

Lesson 20 - The Rule of Nine - The Verdict (1)
The writers of the Constitution were determined that the judiciary would be a separate branch of the federal government but, for practical reasons, did not spell out the full structure of the federal court system. Article III establishes the Supreme Court of the United States, and then grants Congress the authority to establish lower federal courts of its choosing. Unlike the executive and legislative
branches, there are no age, residency, or citizenship qualification for federal judicial office, nor are top officials elected by the people. Federal judges are nominated by the president, and if confirmed by the U. S. Senate, appointed by the president to the office. In recent years the judiciary has become an increasingly powerful policymaking body. Although judicial decisions are constrained by applicable constitutional law, statutory law, and precedent, the courts have considerable discretion in the way they interpret these laws, which has caused some people to question the judiciaries proper role in a democracy. These episodes examine the federal judiciary and the questions that surround it.

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Lesson 22 - Balancing Act
When the Great Depression struck in the 1930s, there were no programs in place to stabilize and stimulate the U. S. economy. Businesses cut back on production, investors fled the stock market, depositors withdrew their bank savings, and consumers slowed their spending responses that only made the situation worse. This episode focuses on the economic role of government focusing on its promotion and regulation of economic interests, its fiscal and monetary policies, the politics of economic decision making and the public debt.

Lesson 23 - The Nation's Welfare
Poverty is a large and persistent problem in the United States, deeply affecting about one in seven Americans, including many of the countries most vulnerable groups: children, female ahead of household families, and minorities. Just what government role should be in alleviating this problem is an intensely debated, partisan issue. Democrats tend to support the view that government should provided sustained assistance to those who are less equipped to compete effectively in the marketplace, whereas Republicans believe that welfare payments discourage personal effort and create welfare dependency. Social welfare programs are designed to reward and foster self reliance or, when this is not possible, to provide benefits only to those individuals who are truly in need. Public support tends to be higher for social insurance programs, such as social security, than for public assistance programs such as TANF.

Lesson 24 - Health of the Nation; Health of the Planet
Despite attempts to provide an equitable baseline of healthcare for Americans, an estimated 44 million people in the United States have no health insurance at all, public or private. This episode looks at various governmental attempts to insure a "healthy" America, from the work of various research agencies (NIH and CDC) and regulatory units (EPA and FDA) to specific governmental programs, like Medicare and Medicaid.
Lesson 25 - Global Politics - Preserve, Protect, and Defend (1)
The primary goal of United States foreign policy is the preservation of the American state. This requires not only military readiness to protect the territorial integrity and international interests of the United States, but also global policies that foster economic growth and "protect" the nation's position in the international marketplace.14 The First Branch The founders of the American republic believed that the bulk of power exercised by a national government should be in the hands of the legislature. Article I of the Constitution deals with the structure, the powers, and the operation of Congress beginning in Section I with the separation of powers. The division of Congress into two legislative houses - the House of Representatives and the Senate - was an outgrowth of the Connecticut Compromise which attempted to balance large-state demands for representation based on population with small-state needs for an equal voice in policymaking. The Constitution is both highly specific and vague about the powers Congress may exercise. The first seventeen clauses of Article I, Section 8, specify most of the enumerated powers expressly given to the House and Senate. Beyond this, Section 8 gives Congress the right to "make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof." This episode looks at why Congress was created; its powers related to lawmaking, representing the needs of constituents and society as a whole, oversight, education, and conflict-resolution; and congressional elections.

Lesson 26 - Global Politics - Preserve, Protect, and Defend (2)
The primary goal of United States foreign policy is the preservation of the American state. This requires not only military readiness to protect the territorial integrity and international interests of the United States, but also global policies that foster economic growth and "protect" the nation's position in the international marketplace.14 The First Branch The founders of the American republic believed that the bulk of power exercised by a national government should be in the hands of the legislature. Article I of the Constitution deals with the structure, the powers, and the operation of Congress beginning in Section I with the separation of powers. The division of Congress into two legislative houses - the House of Representatives and the Senate - was an outgrowth of the Connecticut Compromise which attempted to balance large-state demands for representation based on population with small-state needs for an equal voice in policymaking. The Constitution is both highly specific and vague about the powers Congress may exercise. The first seventeen clauses of Article I, Section 8, specify most of the enumerated powers expressly given to the House and Senate. Beyond this, Section 8 gives Congress the right to "make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof." This episode looks at why Congress was created; its powers related to lawmaking, representing the needs of constituents and society as a whole, oversight, education, and conflict-resolution; and congressional elections.