

TELECOURSE STUDY GUIDE for:

GOVERNMENT BY CONSENT

A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

By Sue Lee

FOURTH EDITION



DALLAS TELECOURSES
Dallas County
Community College District

GOVERNMENT BY CONSENT

A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Fourth Edition

Sue Lee

Produced by:



DALLAS TELECOURSES
Dallas County Community College District



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Sue Lee

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To You, the Student

The purpose of *Government By Consent* is to give you a solid foundation for becoming an informed, knowledgeable, and active participant in the government of the United States. But that is just a beginning. Whenever you watch the evening news or pick up a daily newspaper, the spotlight will shine on some event reflecting what you learn in this exciting telecourse.

As our production team was completing its work, Supreme Court rulings on flag burning and abortion highlighted the Court's role as interpreter of the U.S. Constitution. The decisions also illustrated federal-state issues and the impact of the Bill of Rights on individual rights.

Ethics questions in the House of Representatives caused two last-minute changes. Thomas S. Foley was interviewed in the video programs as majority whip of the House of Representatives and William Gray, when he was chair of the House Budget Committee. Before we went to press, Tom Foley had become speaker of the House and William Gray, majority whip.

As we wrap up this course, the U.S. Constitution has twenty-six amendments. But whether you study it next year or ten years from now, new amendments will be proposed continuously—and perhaps one or more will be ratified.

To develop this course in U.S. government, we talked with people who filled the leadership roles we study and with those who served as the watchdogs of government. In the Appendix of this study guide, you will find a list of participants and the roles they played when they contributed their knowledge and expertise to this project. Regardless of the person who currently serves in this capacity, the information the contributors share is as relevant today as it was when they first talked with us.

The excitement and change in this dynamic form of government is what first attracted me to a career in political science. I hope you, too, will be caught up in the vitality of Thomas Jefferson's "golden notion" as we move forward in its third century. The combination of television and textbook, directed by this study guide, will help you see not only how the U.S. government works affects you, but—even more importantly—how you make it work!



Sue Lee

Course Organization

Government by Consent is designed as a comprehensive learning system consisting of three elements: study guide, textbook, and video programs.

STUDY GUIDE

The study guide for this course is:

Lee, Sue. *Telecourse Study Guide for Government by Consent: A National Perspective*, 4th ed. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1995.

This study guide acts as your daily instructor. For each lesson it gives you a lesson assignment, an overview, learning objectives, key terms, text and video focus points, related activities for becoming more involved in the political process, and a practice test. If you follow the study guide recommendations and view each lesson carefully, you should successfully accomplish all of the requirements for this course.

TEXTBOOK

In addition to the study guide, the textbook required for this course is:

Schmidt, Steffen W., Mack C. Shelley II, and Barbara A. Bardes. *American Government and Politics Today*, 1995-96 edition. Los Angeles: West Publishing Company, 1995.

The textbook offers an interesting presentation of facts and sidelights about the U.S. system of government. Key terms are defined in side margins. The specific reading assignment for each lesson appears in the study guide at the beginning of the lesson. Be sure to read this material before viewing the video program.

VIDEO PROGRAMS

The video program series for this course is:

Government by Consent: A National Perspective.

Each video program is correlated to a specific reading assignment for that lesson. The video programs are packed with information, so watch them closely. If the lessons are broadcast more than once in your area, or if video or audio tapes are available at your college, you might find it helpful to watch the video programs again or listen to audio tapes for review. Since examination questions will be taken from the video programs as well as from the textbook, careful attention to both is vital to your success.

Study Guidelines

Follow these guidelines as you study the material presented in each lesson:

1. LESSON ASSIGNMENT—

Review the Lesson Assignment in order to schedule your time appropriately. Pay careful attention; the titles and numbers of the textbook chapter, the study guide lesson, and the video program may be different from one another.

2. OVERVIEW—

Read the Overview for an introduction to the lesson material.

3. LEARNING OBJECTIVES—

Review the Learning Objectives and pay particular attention to the lesson material that relates to them.

4. KEY TERMS—

Look for the Key Terms as you proceed through the lesson assignments. Be able to discuss them upon completion of the lesson.

5. TEXT FOCUS POINTS—

To get the most from your reading, review the Text Focus Points, then read the assignment. You may want to write responses or notes to reinforce what you have learned.

6. VIDEO FOCUS POINTS—

To get the most from the video segment of the lesson, review the Video Focus Points, then watch the video. You may want to write responses or notes to reinforce what you have learned.

7. RELATED ACTIVITIES—

The Related Activities are not required unless your instructor assigns them. They are offered as suggestions to help you learn more about the material presented in the lesson.

8. PRACTICE TEST—

Complete the Practice Test to help you evaluate your understanding of the lesson.

9. ANSWER KEY—

Use the Answer Key at the end of the lesson to check your answers or to locate material related to each question of the Practice Test.

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Lesson 1

Government and You

LESSON ASSIGNMENT

Review the following assignment in order to schedule your time appropriately. Pay careful attention; the titles and numbers of the textbook chapter, the study guide lesson, and the video program may be different from one another.

Text:

Schmidt et al., *American Government and Politics Today*,
Chapter 1, “American Democracy and Political Culture,” pp. 3–31.

Video:

“Government and You,”
from the *Government by Consent* series.

OVERVIEW

The title of this lesson, “Government and You,” actually describes both this lesson and all of those that follow. The title of this course, *Government by Consent*, indicates who gives the government of the United States of America its power to make rules and see that they are followed: we, the people.

Those of us who were born in other countries, and choose to become U.S. citizens, promise to support this country’s government during our naturalization ceremony. But those of us born here don’t sign a contract saying that we agree to be governed by the rules of the United States of America. Instead, we give our consent tacitly, by not working to overthrow the government or to drastically change its basic organization and principles.

Yet all of us also show our consent to be governed in this fashion when we actively support the individuals and the issues we believe are best or right for our country—just as much as when we use our power

to change the persons we elect to represent us, or the rules they make, when we believe they are bad or wrong for our country. By thus giving our consent to be so governed, we allow the government of the United States to make decisions that control, direct, and influence each one of our lives.

In this lesson, and indeed throughout this course, we examine what the U.S. government does. We see how it affects almost every aspect of our lives—literally from the moment of conception or immigration here until well after we die.

But who comprises this government, and whom we let decide what it is going to do, also is our responsibility—a responsibility which we can accept or relinquish. For as citizens of these United States, it is we ourselves who “consent to be so governed.”

This lesson defines terms we frequently use, such as *government*, *politics*, *power*, *democracy*, and *liberty*. Even more important, it shows how these words apply to us.

Life is a series of choices: we either make these choices ourselves or let someone else make them for us. The same is true for the form of government in the United States: we can become personally involved and participate, or we can choose not to become involved, not participate, and let others act in our place. Either way, we live with the consequences of our decision.

The problem of how to help, or what to do about homeless people is only one of many issues facing this nation today. But it illustrates—both for them and for every one of us—how we choose what the relationship will be between our government and its people. The video portion of this lesson identifies who some of these homeless people are, investigates how they arrived in this situation, outlines possible solutions to the problem and, overall, addresses the ultimate question of how this might best be accomplished.

In every aspect of our lives, we have surprising power to influence the conduct of our government, to affect the choices that government makes in our behalf. Today, more than ever, it is up to us to learn how to use that power to make the best choices for ourselves and our nation—and, in the process, for generations to come.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Goal

You should be able to define the fundamental concepts forming the philosophical base of the government of the United States.

Objectives

Upon completing this lesson, you should be able to:

1. Define the fundamental concepts or forms of government, in terms of what it is and what it does.
2. Define the fundamental concept of politics in the United States, with specific reference to resolving conflicts.
3. Explain the difference between “power” and “compliance,” as they are exercised through citizen involvement in decision-making.
4. Describe the concept of democracy, specifically differentiating between direct and representative democracies as a basis for the common political heritage expressed by Thomas Jefferson’s “golden notion.”
5. Compare the two theories, elitism and pluralism, which illustrate approaches to formulating policies in our government.
6. Contrast the two most commonly held viewpoints, liberalism and conservatism, as they illustrate the basic U.S. values of liberty, equality, and property.
7. List some of the trade-offs and compromises that government has to resolve when making choices for society in the United States, and explain how individuals can affect these choices.

8. List the various levels of the hierarchy of political involvement, including who are likely and not likely to participate at each level.
9. Describe the homeless and their plight, as the government debates how to assist them.

KEY TERMS

Look for these items as you proceed through the lesson assignments. Be able to discuss them upon completion of this lesson.

Institutions	Universal suffrage
Politics	Limited government
Government	Elite theory
Public policies	Pluralism
Authority	Political culture
Legitimacy	Political socialization
Power	Liberty
Compliance	Equality
Totalitarian regime	Inalienable rights
Anarchy	Popular sovereignty
Direct democracy	Ideology
Consent of the people	Liberalism
Representative democracy	Conservatism

TEXT FOCUS POINTS

The following focus points are designed to help you get the most from your reading. Review them, then read the assignment. You may want to write notes to reinforce what you have learned.

Text: Schmidt et al., *American Government and Politics Today*, Chapter 1

1. What is the fundamental concept of the United States' government, and how are we affected by this concept?

2. What are the major definitions of “politics,” and how does politics resolve conflicts?
3. What is “government,” and what does it do?
4. What is “compliance,” and why do people comply with government decisions?
5. What is “power,” and how can it be exercised?
6. What is a “democracy,” and what is the ideal form of a democracy?
7. Why did the founders fear a “direct democracy”?
8. What is a “representative democracy,” and how is it practiced in the United States?
9. What two theories describe who makes policy decisions in the United States?
10. What gives the people of the United States a common political heritage?
11. What are the two most commonly held ideologies within the United States’ electorate?

VIDEO FOCUS POINTS

The following focus points are designed to help you get the most from the video segment of this lesson. Review them, then watch the video. You may want to write notes to reinforce what you have learned.

Video: “Government and You”

1. What was Thomas Jefferson’s “golden notion,” penned in the Declaration of Independence, and how else can it be expressed?

2. How can individuals shape the institutions that make binding decisions for society, and how many people actually become involved?
3. What are some of the theories developed to determine why people don't participate in government?
4. What does government do for us?
5. What are some of the trade-offs and compromises that the United States government has to resolve when making choices for its society?
6. What are the issues regarding government assistance to the homeless?
7. What are the various levels of the hierarchy of political involvement, and who is likely to participate at each level?

RELATED ACTIVITIES

These activities are not required unless your instructor assigns them. They are offered as suggestions to help you learn more about the material presented in this lesson.

- Note the "Getting Involved" section in your textbook at the end of Chapter 1.
- Write to the World Future Society [4916 St. Elmo Avenue; Bethesda, Maryland 20814-5089] to learn if there is a local chapter in your community. Ask the organization to send you information about what is being done by citizens in your community to impact governmental decision-making about the future.

PRACTICE TEST

The following items will help you evaluate your understanding of this lesson. Use the answer key at the end of the lesson to check your answers or to locate material related to each question.

Essay

Reflect on the item(s) listed below, then respond clearly and concisely.

1. Describe how government pervades and influences our lives each day.

Multiple-Choice

Select the one choice that best answers the question.

1. One of the most fundamental concepts of U.S. government is that the
 - A. United States is a direct democracy.
 - B. United States is the “melting pot” of the world.
 - C. people can demand changes in the government.
 - D. people have inalienable rights.
2. Most major definitions of politics are based on the concept of
 - A. abundant resources.
 - B. real political problems.
 - C. social conflict.
 - D. some type of limited democracy.
3. For most societies, government is
 - A. based on a form of democracy.
 - B. not relevant to the average person in his or her daily activity.
 - C. ultimately the authority which allocates values.
 - D. formulated by individuals who have received formal training.