

Intro to Human Sciences- Spring 2025

Political Science Module-Lecture 1

Intro to Human Sciences

Political Science Module

Lecture 1 : What is Politics?

Lecture 2 : Key Concepts: State, Government, Liberty, Equality, Justice, Rights

Lecture 3: Key Concepts: Democracy, Citizenship, Power, Authority, Legitimacy

Lecture 4: Features of Indian Political System



**“Man is by nature a
political animal.”
-Aristotle**

Aristotle- In *Politics*, Aristotle declared that 'man is by nature a political animal', by which he meant that it is only within a political community that human beings can live the 'good life'. According to him, Politics is an ethical activity concerned with creating a 'just society; and that is why Political Science is a master Science.

What is Politics?

Defining Politics

- Politics is an ‘**essentially contested**’ concept, in the sense that the term has a number of acceptable or legitimate meanings.
- Politics can be defined in different ways: as the exercise of power, the science of government, the making of collective decisions, the allocation of limited resources, the practice of deception and manipulation, and so on.
- **Politics, in its broadest sense, is the activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live.**
- Origin from the Greek word “**Polis**” (city-state: General form of political organisation in ancient Greece)
- Politics is inextricably linked to the phenomena of **conflict and cooperation**.

What is Politics?

Defining Politics

- Politics as art of Government
- Politics as Public Affairs
- Politics as compromise and consensus
- Politics as Power

A quote by Charles de Gaulle is displayed in white, bold, sans-serif text against a blurred background of a sunset or sunrise over water. The text is arranged in four lines, with the first three lines being larger and more prominent than the fourth line.

Politics is too
serious a matter to
be left to the
politicians.

Charles de Gaulle

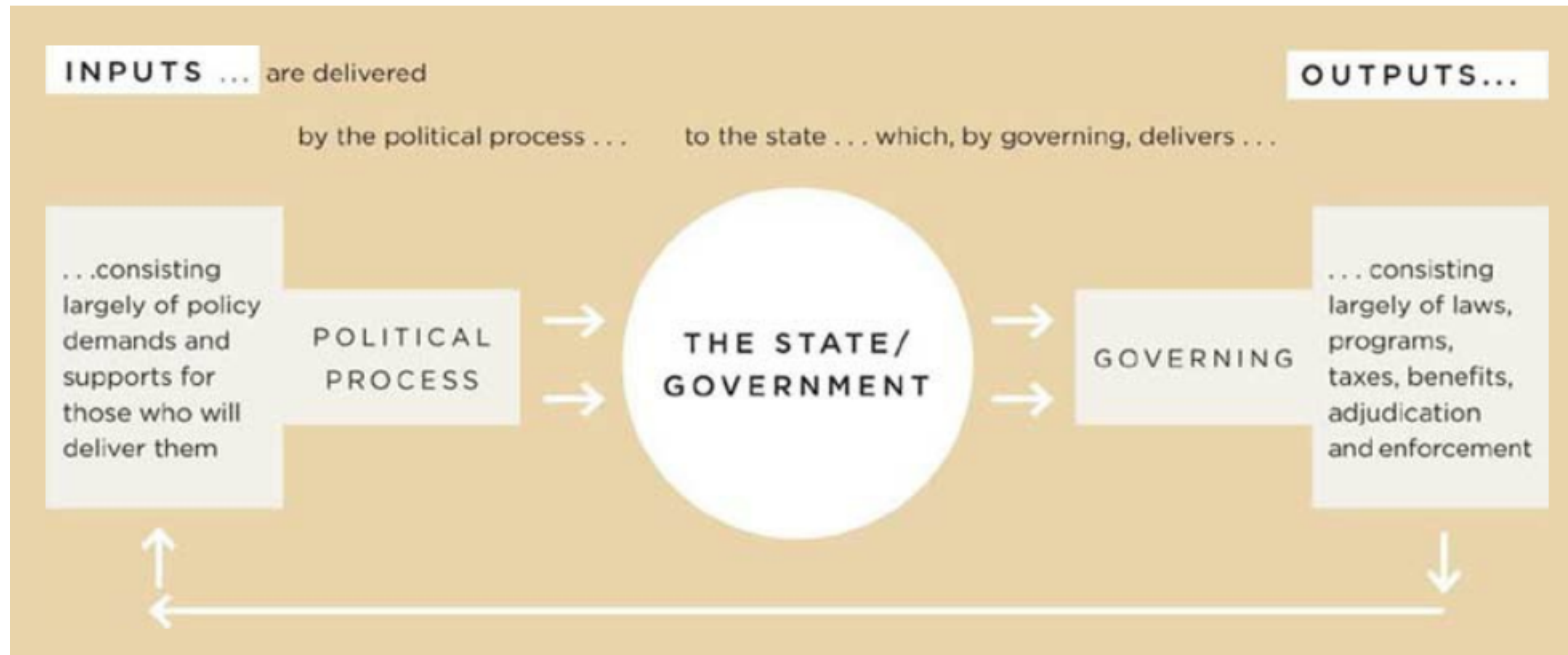
What is Politics?

Defining Politics: Politics as art of government

- **Bismark-** Politics is not a science, its an art. It is the art of government, the exercise of control within society through the making and enforcement of collective decisions.
- **Davis Easton-** Politics can be defined as the ‘authoritative allocation of values.’ Politics encompasses the various processes through which government responds to pressures from the larger society, in particular by allocating benefits, rewards or penalties.
- **Lord Acton-** “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely’

What is Politics?

Defining Politics: Politics as Art of Government



David Easton's
'authoritative
allocation of values'

What is Politics?

Defining Politics: Politics as Public Affairs

- As per this definition, distinction between ‘the political’ and ‘the non-political’ coincides with the division between public and private sphere of life.
- Traditionally, the distinction between the public realm and the private realm was thought to conform to the division between the state and civil society.
- Alternately, it is conceived as the **distinction between ‘the political’ and ‘the personal’**. This notion regards institutions such as businesses, community groups, clubs and trade unions as ‘public’.

What is Politics?

Defining Politics: Politics as Public Affairs

Public	Private
The state: apparatus of government	Civil society: autonomous bodies – businesses, trade unions, clubs, families, and so on
Public	Private
Public realm: politics, commerce, work, art, culture and so on	Personal realm: family and domestic life

What is Politics?

Defining Politics: Politics as Compromise and Consensus

- This conception of politics relates not to the arena within which politics is conducted but to the way in which decisions are made.
- Specifically, politics is seen as a particular means of resolving conflict: that is, by **compromise, conciliation and negotiation**, rather than through force and naked power.
- Stoker (2006)- ‘Politics is designed to disappoint’; its outcomes are ‘often messy, ambiguous and never final’.

What is Politics?

Defining Politics: Politics as Power

Three faces of power

Decision-making	Agenda setting	Thought control
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to influence the content of decisions• Dahl's Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City (1961) - assessment of who holds power based on the decision-making abilities of the actors involved.• Keith Boulding: difference between force (the stick), productive exchanges (the deal), and the creation of loyalty (the kiss)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bachrach and Baratz (1962): ability to prevent decisions being made: that is, in effect, 'non-decision-making'• Involves the ability to set or control the political agenda, thereby preventing issues or proposals from being aired in the first place• Eg: Lobbying	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to influence another by shaping what he or she thinks, wants, or needs• Ideological indoctrination or psychological control• Eg: Advertisements, propaganda

What is Politics?

Theoretical and Applied Politics

Theoretical Politics	Applied Politics
1. Theory of the State (Origin, nature, development, classification of the forms of government, sovereignty)	1. The State (Actual existing forms of government)
2. Theory of Government (Forms of institutions, executive, developments, province and limits of law)	2. Government (The working of the government and administration etc)
3. Theory of Legislation (Object of Legislation, philosophy of law, interpretation and administration and process of law making)	3. Law and Legislation (Legislative procedure and court of law)
4. Theory of State as an artificial person (Relation to other states and international law)	4. The State Personified (Diplomacy, Peace, War, conferences and other international dealings)