**Politics and Elections US Gov & Cit**

**Political Ideology** – A consistent pattern of beliefs about political values and the role of government an individual has.

Liberal ideology – Favors an active central government with social and economic responsibilities. **Liberalism** – A belief that government can and should achieve justice and equality of opportunity, equal distribution of wealth, government regulation of big business, government spending on social programs, pro-choice, opposed to tax breaks for the wealthy, believe in limited defense spending and military actions, support alternative energy, against prayer in school and support gay marriage. - Women, minorities, those in poverty, not religious, and with less education tend to be liberal

Conservative Ideology – Favors limited government and freedom of the private sector. **Conservatism** – A belief that limited government ensures order, competitive markets, and personal opportunity, more likely to support military spending, prayer in school, and reduced taxes. They oppose abortion, affirmative action, government spending on social programs, green energy and support utilizing all energy resources. Conservatives are anti-regulation on business. - Wealthy, white, religious, and those with advanced degrees tend to be conservative.

**Political Parties –**The main vehicle for nominating candidates, raising funds, and running campaigns. They serve as **linkage institutions** that help bring the concerns of the electorate to the political arena through elections. The United States is mostly a **two-party system**.

**Political Parties** – Organizations that seek political power by electing people to office who will help advance the party’s positions and philosophy as public policy. They do the following: *Connecting citizens to their government, Running candidates for political office, Informing the public, and Organizing the government.*

***Party Systems* -** The U.S. has a two-party system with many minor parties. **Republican** – Conservative **Democrat** - Liberal **Minor party** – A small political party that persists over time, is often composed of ideologies on the right or left, or that is centered on a charismatic candidate. Also known as a **third party** (occasionally rise to challenge the two major parties, but they rarely gain enough support to put a candidate in office). **Multiparty** **system** – Found in countries that have a parliamentary government. They usually have a head of state, often called the president, or a prime minister. With this system, coalition governments are necessary to rule. **Proportional representation** – An election system in which each party running receives the proportion of legislative seats corresponding to its proportion of the vote. **Winner-take-all- system** – An election system in which the candidate with the most votes wins. **Third parties -** occasionally rise to challenge the two major parties, but they rarely gain enough support to put a candidate in office - Some parties form around a specific cause or issue - Some are splinter parties, formed from smaller factions of the two major parties - Some form around a specific individual - Though they rarely win, third-party candidates do force particular issues onto the political agenda and allow Americans to express their discontent with the two major parties - **Prominent Third Parties –** Constitution, Green, Libertarian, and Reform.

**Electoral College**: The EC is a process, not a place. It is the way we elect a President.

The Electoral College process consists of the [selection of the electors](http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/electors.html#selection), the meeting of the electors where they vote for President and Vice President, and the counting of the electoral votes by Congress.

The Electoral College consists of 538 **electors** (an individual chosen by the winning party to cast an electoral vote). A party nominee (the candidate for president for each party) needs a majority of the electoral votes to win the presidency (270). It is possible, and has happened on four occasions when a candidate wins the popular vote, but loses the electoral vote, and therefore loses the election.

Your state’s entitled allotment of electors equals the number of members in its Congressional delegation: one for each member in the House of Representatives plus one for each of your two Senators. Utah has 4 representatives and 2 senators, therefore Utah’s allotment is 6.

**Winner-take-all system:** Under the EC system, 48/50 states award their total Electoral votes to the individual candidate who wins a **plurality** of the popular vote within their state. (*A plurality is simply the most votes - nobody is required to win a majority [more than 50%] of the vote*).\