American Politics - If asked to describe our system of government, most people will reply, "We live in a democracy". If pressed further to define democracy, most people will simply say, "A government where the people rule." What does it mean to live in a system where the people rule but, by many measures, often appear not to want to? What is the status of politics as a separate sphere of action? Taking this as a central question we will explore the development of democracy in the United States. We will study the development of the American political system as well as the detailed workings of our main institutions. Underlying all of our questions, efforts, and arguments is an examination of the myriad ways in which government and politics matters in our daily lives. We will also pay particular attention to the impact of elections, especially the 2008 election, on policy and civic life in America.