

## Definitions of Politics

### *Oxford English Dictionary, New Edition*

3. *pl.* **politics.** a. The science and art of government; the science dealing with the form, organization and administration of a state or part of one, and with the regulation of its relations with other states (hence *imperial, national, domestic, municipal, communal, parochial, foreign politics*, etc.) also *the politics* public or social ethics, that branch of moral philosophy dealing with the state or social organism as a whole.

**1529**, Skelton, *Col. Clout*, 625 But noble men borne to lerne they haue scorne, ... Set nothinge by polytykes. **1565** Cooper, *Thesaurus s.v. Ciuilus, Scientia ciuilus*, morall philosophie, the politikes. **1619** Fotherby, *Atheom.*, II XIV Ecclesiastickes, Oeconomickes, and Politickes. **1644** Milton, *Educ. Wks* (1847) 100/2 The next removal must be to the study of politics, to show the beginning, end and reasons of political societies. **1739** Hume, *Hum. Nat.* (1874) I. Introd. 307 Politics consider men as united in society, and dependent on each other. **1789** Gouv. Morris in Sparks *Life & Writ.* (1832) II. 94. I mean politics in the great sense, or that sublime science which embraces for its object the happiness of mankind. **1791-1823** D'Israeli, *Cur. Lit.* (1866) 339, 'The art of governing mankind by deceiving them', as politics, ill-understood, have been defined. [*Cf* POLICY *sb.* 2 quot. 1796] **1883** J.A. Symonds in *Encycl. Brit.* XV, 150/1 Machiavelli ... founded the science of politics for the modern world, by concentrating thought upon its fundamental principles. **1900** E. Jenks *Hist Politics*: By *Politics* we mean the business of Government, that is to say, the control and management of people living together in a society.

**b.** *the Politics*: name of the treatise on political science, [ta politika], by Aristotle...

**1651** Hobbes *Govt and Soc.* iii § 13.46 Aristotle in his first book of Politiques affirms as a foundation of the whole political science, that some men by nature are made worthy to command, others only to serve. a. **1656** Ussher *Power Princes* II (1683) 134 As is observed... by Aristotle in his Politicks. **1831** *Encycl. Brit.* (ed. 7) III. 529/1 His [Aristotle's] two treatises of the *Nichomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* are together a refutation of the erroneous doctrines in moral and political philosophy contained in Plato's political speculations.

**c.** Political actions or practice; policy. Freq. in unfavourable sense. Phr. *to play politics*: see play *v.* 16d...

**1644** [H. Parker] *Jus Pop.* 23 O that our Courtiers at Oxford would admit of such politicks, and blush to publish any directly contrary. **1706** Evelyn *Mem.* (1819) II. 137, I looke upon our neglect of severely punishing them as an high defect in our politiques. **1711** Pope *Temp Frame* 411 Calm, thinking villains, whom no faith could fix, of crooked counsels and dark politicks. **c.** **1740** Carey *God Save the King*, ii Confound their politicks, Frustrate their knavish tricks...

**d.** Political affairs or business; political life.

**1693** *Humours Town* 42 The Coffee-house politicks are but Fewel to Factions. **1710-11** Swift *Lett* (1767) III. 141, I was an hour with him [Harley] this morning dep in politicks, where I told him the objections of the October Club. **1714** Mrs. Manley *Adv. Rivella* 117 She now agrees with me, that Politicks is not the Business of a Woman. **1826** Disraeli *Viv. Grey* iv. i. There is no act of treachery, or meanness of which a political party is not capable; for in politics there is no honour. **1879** Gladstone *Sp at Dalkeith* 26 Nov., I said mayself in 1865, and I believed, that it was out of the range of practical politics, that is to say the politics of the coming election. **1891** *Law Times* XCII. 124/1 Sugden...re-entered politics and sat in the House of Commons.

**e.** The political principles, convictions, opinions, or sympathies of a person or party.

**1769** Junius *Lett.* iv (1772) I. 35. Most men's politics sit much too loosely about them. **1842** Miall in *Nonconf.* II 656 Whig politics... appear to exert a peculiarly unhappy influence upon character. **1856** Emerson *Eng. Traits Aristocr.* Wks (Bohn) II. 77. Too pleasing a vision to be shattered by ... the politics of shoemakers and costermongers. **1897** Rhoscomyl *White Rose Arno* 74 Oh what are all your politics to women? A woman's politics are the man she loves.

## ***Politics and the political system***

“...any persistent pattern of human relationships that involves...power, rule or authority.”

Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis*, p. 6

“Power is thus neither the center nor the essence of politics...the essence of politics: (is) the dependable coordination of human efforts and expectations for the attainment of the goals of society.”

K. Deutsch, *The Nerves of Government*, p. 124.

“...network of individuals, groups, and organizations whose relationships help to determine, enforce and interpret rules governing the behaviors of society.”

Khan, *Introduction to Political Science*, p. 22

“Politics denotes processes of human action by which conflict concerning the common good and ... the interests of groups is carried on or settled, always involving the use of, or struggle for, power.”

Banfield in Gould, ed. *Dictionary of the Social Sciences*.

Politics is “...standardized arrangement for taking decisions affecting the group and for giving effect to them... (It) is a response to (a)political predicament, where the group...has to adopt a common policy, but where rival bodies of members advocate policies which are mutually exclusive...the condition of self-division must be replaced by one of unanimity.”

Finer, *Comparative Government*, pp. 37-8.

The “political system is the organization through which society formulates and pursues its collective goals.”

Almond, *Comparative Politics Today*, p. 4.

“Politics is the authoritative allocation of values.”

Easton, *The Political System*, 1953, p. 146.

“Political Science is the study of who gets what, when and how.”

Lasswell, *Politics: Who gets what, when and how* 1936.