

# Introduction to the American Political Process

Final Thoughts

## Managing Conflict ...

- Competition over scarce resources
- "If men were angels..."
- How can we manage conflict?

## ... But Pursuing Ideals

- Politics is rarely pretty
  - Abortion
- The Structure of Conflict
  - Institutions
  - Interests
- Rules are not neutral

## A Recurrent Theme: Equality and Intensity

- Equality
  - Varying responsiveness across institutions
- Intensity
  - Who should be heard?
- The Tradeoff
  - Costs and benefits
  - No easy answers

## A Big Mess

- Importance of acknowledging tradeoffs
  - Varying responsiveness across institutions
- American system is complicated by design
  - Federalism
  - Separated powers

## Can We Do Better?

- The possibility of reform
- Sticky culture; Sticky institutions
- Back to Dahl