Bureaucracies

• A bureaucracy has three key features:
  – Hierarchical authority
  – Job specialization
  – Formalized rules
Criticisms of Bureaucracies

- People often criticize bureaucracies for having too many employees and procedures.
The Federal Bureaucracy

- consists of all the agencies, people, and procedures through which the federal government makes and carries out public policy.

- Most of the federal bureaucracy is part of the executive branch.

- Bureaucrats are appointed, not elected, officers of the federal government.
Executive Departments

• The Constitution refers to the presence of executive departments

• The Constitution does not specify the number, powers, or organization

• The structure of the federal bureaucracy has developed over time
  – to meet the needs of policy makers
  – carry out their decisions.
The Executive Branch

- The Executive Office of the President
- The 15 Cabinet-level departments
- A large number of independent agencies
• The Executive Office of the President is an umbrella agency composed of several sub-agencies staffed by the President’s closest advisors and assistants.

• Often called the Cabinet departments, the executive departments and their subunits carry out much of the work of the Federal Government.

• The independent agencies are not attached to any of the Cabinet departments and exercise a wide range of responsibilities in the carrying out of government business as well as serving the public.
• The units of the executive branch can have many different names.

• The most common names are agency, administration, commission, corporation, authority, bureau, service, office, branch, and division.
Assigning Names

• There are few clear guidelines on how to assign these names.
  – The titles **agency** or **administration** often refer to major units.
  – **Commission** refers to units that regulate business.
  – **Corporation** or **authority** refer to units that have business functions.
  – Many federal agencies are referred to by their initials, such as the EPA, FBI, or NASA.
EOP Background

• All of the agencies and employees in the executive branch are legally subordinate to the President and exist to help the President wield executive power.

• The EOP works closely with the President.

• The EOP was formed in 1939. Today it has some 900 advisors and assistants.
The EOP is centered on the White House Office, home to much of the President’s key personal and political staff.

This staff includes individuals such as the chief of staff, the counselor to the President, and the press secretary.

A large number of advisors and assistants in the White House Office provide the President with information on a range of topics, including the economy, congressional relations, political affairs, national defense, and public relations.
The West Wing

- The White House includes two office buildings and the President’s residence.
- The East and West wings extend from the residence.
- The President’s closest advisors are located in the West Wing near the Oval Office.
The NSC is a staff agency that advises the President on all domestic, foreign, and military matters that relate to national security.

It also gives direction to U.S. intelligence agencies.
NSC Members

• The President chairs the NSC, whose members also include the Vice President and the secretaries of state, treasury, and defense.

• The Director of National Intelligence and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff also attend NSC meetings.
• The small staff of experts in foreign and military policy employed by the NSC work under the President’s assistant for national security affairs, who is often called the national security advisor.
The OMB

• The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is the largest unit in the Executive Office of the President. It prepares the federal budget submitted by the President to Congress each year.
  – The federal government’s fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30.

• Each federal agency provides the OMB with estimates of its spending needs, which the OMB reviews and adjusts to fit the President’s overall policy and budget plans.
Preparing an official budget can take more than a year. The result is a carefully crafted plan for how the federal government should operate.
• The OMB must consider a variety of factors before it creates the President’s final budget proposal. These factors include:

  – What the **government** can spend
  – What **Americans** want
  – What the **President** wants
Other OMB Duties

• The OMB also monitors the work of all agencies in the executive branch and works to ensure that their policies agree with those of the President.

• In addition, the OMB helps the President prepare executive orders and veto messages.
The EOP and the Senate

– Like the OMB, other EOP Agencies are run by officials appointed by the President. The Senate must approve some of these appointments.
• The Office of National Drug Control Policy was established in 1988 to prepare the nation’s drug control strategy and coordinate the federal agencies that take part in the war on drugs.

• The three-member Council of Economic Advisers advises and informs the President on economic policy and helps prepare the annual Economic Report to Congress, submitted in January or February each year.
EOP Agencies, cont.

• Other agencies in the EOP advise the President on topics such as science and technology, the environment, foreign trade, and public policy. They include:
  – The **Office of Science and Technology Policy**
  – The **Council on Environmental Quality**
  – The **Office of United States Trade Representatives**
  – The **Office of Policy Development**.

• The Office of the Vice President, which has grown in recent years, houses the Vice President’s advisors and staff.
Chapter 15: Government at Work: The Bureaucracy
Section 3
Lecture Notes
Executive Departments

• The 15 executive departments are also called the Cabinet departments.

  – The First Congress created the Departments of State, Treasury, and War in 1789.
Department Secretaries

- Each department is headed by a secretary appointed by the President.
  - The Department of Justice (DoJ) is headed by the attorney general.
  - The department heads ensure that their departments carry out presidential policy.
  - They also represent the interests of their departments when dealing with the White House, Congress, other departments, and the public.
  - Each department head has many assistants and aides to help with issues such as public relations, planning, and budgeting.
Executive Departments

- The executive departments employ nearly two-thirds of the civilian federal workforce.
  - Roughly 80 percent of these employees are career civil servants, not appointees.
  - Nearly 90 percent of federal civilian employees work outside Washington, D.C.

- Each department is divided into smaller subunits with specific line or staff duties.
  - For example, the Criminal Division of the DoJ is further divided into sections dealing with counterterrorism and narcotics.
• The executive departments vary widely in visibility, size, and importance.

  – The **Department of State** is the oldest and most prestigious, but among the smallest.

  – The **Department of Defense** is the largest, with more than 2 million civilian and military employees.

  – The **Department of Health and Human Services** has the largest budget, accounting for about a fourth of all federal spending.
Executive Departments, cont.

- Each of the now 15 executive departments was created by Congress.

- Their respective areas of responsibility generally reflect the conditions of the period and the major issues facing the nation when each of them was established.
The Cabinet

• The Cabinet is a vital but informal group that advises the President.

• Neither Congress nor the Constitution created the Cabinet.

• George Washington began the custom of meeting regularly with the heads of the executive departments.
Cabinet Members

- The Cabinet includes the heads of the 15 executive departments.
- Today, it also includes:
  - The Vice President
  - The President’s chief domestic policy adviser
  - The White House Chief of Staff
  - The director of the OMB
  - Other officials as chosen by the President, often from within the ranks of the Executive Office of the President
• The President appoints the head of each of the 15 executive departments, who are then confirmed by the Senate. The Senate rarely rejects an appointee.
Cabinet Members, cont.

– Party affiliation and influence
– Professional qualifications and experience
– Regional background and ties to key issues handled by a given department
– A desire for gender, racial, and ethnic balance
Role of the Cabinet

- Cabinet members have two key roles:
  - To run their respective executive departments
  - To advise the President as a group
Decreasing Importance

• The importance of the Cabinet has declined in recent years.
  
  – This is due largely to the growth of the Executive Office of the President.
  
  – No President has suggested getting rid of the Cabinet, though they may rely more on other unofficial advisers.

▲ President Franklin Roosevelt meets with Raymond Moley, a member of his "Brain Trust." *Why might a President rely on the advice of people outside of the Cabinet?*
Independent Agencies

- Some perform work that does not fit easily into any existing executive department.

- Some are independent to protect them from partisan politics or to satisfy the desires of various interest groups.
Independent Agencies, cont.

- Some are independent because they perform sensitive work, like financial regulation.

- Several agencies perform tasks similar to those of executive departments.

- A few, like the Social Security Agency, are larger than several executive departments.

- Most independent agencies remain under the authority of the President.
Executive Agencies

• Most independent agencies are executive agencies.
  – The largest of these agencies are organized like executive departments
  – The majority have small staffs and budgets and receive little public attention.
Major Executive Agency

- NASA was created in 1958 to guide the nation’s space programs.
  - NASA’s research and development programs have led to many scientific advances with commercial applications.
The Civil Service

- The **civil service system** replaced the patronage system in the late 1800s.
- The **patronage system** rewarded political supporters with public offices.
- Officeholders changed with each new administration and the system suffered from widespread corruption and inefficiency.
- The **Pendleton Civil Service Act of 1883** set up the foundation for the modern merit-based system of hiring and promotion.
The Civil Service Today

• Today the U.S. government is the nation’s largest employer, with some 2.7 million civilian employees.
• Nearly 90 percent of executive branch employees are now covered by the merit system.
  – Under this system, hiring and promotion are based on merit and scores on examinations.
  – The Merit Systems Protection Board ensures that the system is not abused, handling all complaints.
  – The Office of Personnel Management hires, pays, and promotes career civilian employees of the government who make up the civil service.
Selective Service System

• The national draft was introduced in 1917.
  – It was used for World War I and World War II, remaining in effect until it was suspended in 1973.
  – Some 2.8 million soldiers were drafted in WW I, more than 10 million in WW II, and some 5 million up through 1973.
• The draft law remains on the books.

  – All males between the ages of 18 and 26 must serve in the military if called. They must register with the Selective Service at age 18.

  – Congress must authorize a reactivation of the draft before troops can be conscripted.
Regulatory Agencies

• These agencies are largely independent of the executive branch.

• Each is headed by a board or commission whose members are appointed by the President and approved by the Senate.
  – These members serve long, staggered terms so that only one term per board expires each year.
  – Members can only be removed for causes specified by Congress.
  – Only a bare majority of members can belong to the same political party.
  – These conditions help keep the independent regulatory agencies truly independent.
– Independent regulatory agencies have quasi-legislative and judicial powers.
  • They can make rules and regulations with the force of law.
  • They can decide disputes in certain fields.

– These agencies are an exception to the idea of separation of powers.
– Some critics are concerned that these agencies have too much power or use it unfairly.
Regulatory Commissions

• The focus of the independent regulatory commissions is to ensure the stability of the nation’s economy.

• Eleven federal agencies have been established to set and enforce standards on financial markets, employment, business practices, and public safety.
Government Corporations

- These agencies were set up by Congress to perform businesslike activities.
  - They were rarely used until World War I and the Great Depression.
  - There are now more than 50 government corporations, including:
    - The U.S. Postal Service
    - The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
    - The National Railroad Passenger Corporation
    - The Tennessee Valley Authority
Government Corporations

– Government corporations are similar to private corporations, except that:
  • Congress decides their purpose and functions.
  • Their officers are public employees, typically chosen by the President and then approved by the Senate.
  • They are financed by public funds.

– Government corporations are supposed to have more independence and flexibility than other executive agencies.