Lesson 1: Governance & Political Thought

What is government?
- Government creates rules and manages services that require ‘community’ or shared commitment for shared benefit
- These are often services that can’t be effectively delivered by a private business, or a service that is essential for all people
- A simple example is a community where all members pay a portion of the development and maintenance costs of a water system

How are we Governed?
- In Canada, there are 3 levels of Government
  - Federal (National – Government of Canada)
  - Provincial (Our Province – Government of BC)
  - Municipal (Local – District)
- At each level we vote for our representatives
- People pay taxes to the three levels of Government so they can provide services and regulations
- Service Examples
  - Defense
  - Welfare
  - Health Care
  - Roads
- Regulation Examples
  - Criminal Code
  - Land Zoning
  - Car Licensing
- The Government represents us internationally
  - Foreign Affairs
  - UN
  - Ambassadors
- Government also issues money
- Our Government is called “Westminster Government”
- This model of Government is both Representative and Responsible
- Both the Federal and Provincial Governments follow the Westminster Model
- Government can be described as:
  - A Representative Democracy (we elect leaders)
  - A Constitutional Monarchy (written laws – King and Queen)
  - A Federation (collection of Regional Government)

Who Governs Us?
- In Canada, Federal Level:
  - Queen Elizabeth II
  - Governor General is the Head of State (Hon. David Johnston)
  - Prime Minister is the Head of Government (Stephen Harper)