

# Three Versions of Republicanism

The Founder's views on Government

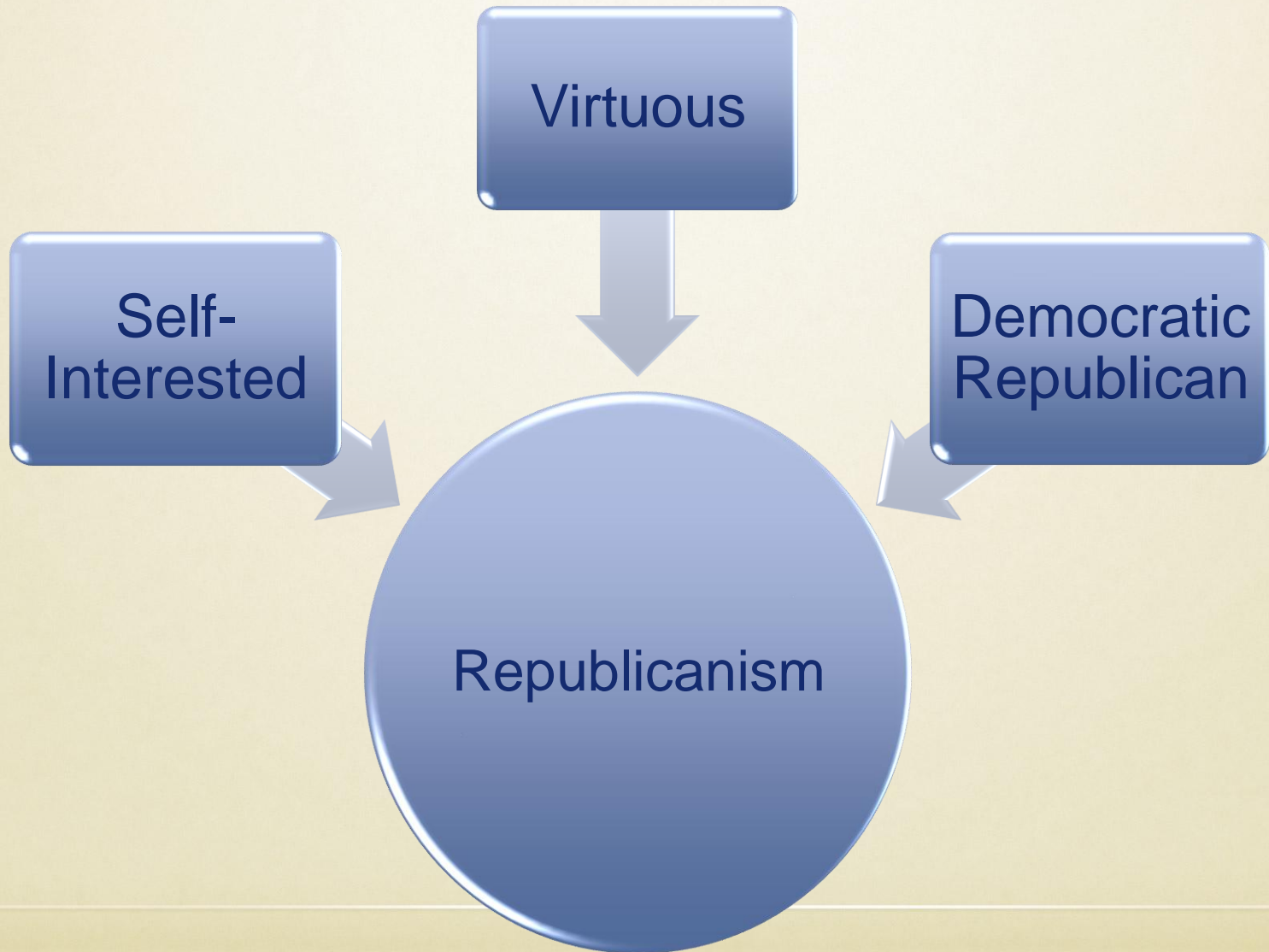
# Republicanism to the Founders

- **Symbolized a commitment to civic virtue**
  - Citizens must exercise self-control for the common good
- **Liberty and power continually battle**
  - Citizens must protect a fragile liberty from destructive power
- **Citizens should be judged by merit and not ancestral lineage (Aristocracy)**

# Republicanism in Practice

- **Weak executive**
  - Less likely to influence and corrupt legislators
- **Frequent elections**
  - Ensures that officials remain committed to the public good
- **Series of checks and balances**
  - Prevents any political faction or sector of society from threatening the majority

# Three Interpretations



# Virtuous Republicanism



**John Winthrop “City upon a hill”**

- Inspired by classical ideals
- Selfless, educated citizenry, Republican mothers
- Leadership considered a privilege
- Leaders should be virtuous, wealthy, upper class (i.e. well educated and above petty self-interest)
- Rule by the wise should lead to enlightened government, above petty squabbles of self-interest
- Early Federalists such as Washington internalized these ideals

# Self-Interested Republicanism



**Alexander Hamilton**

- Applied Adam Smith's economic views to politics... balance of power would result from all people pursuing their own self-interest
- Leaders should be drawn from those with a vested interest (landowners, wealthy, etc.)
- Political parties in power should use the apparatus of the national government to pursue their political and economic interests

# Democratic-Republicanism



Thomas Jefferson

- People are ultimate source of political power...
- “The government which governs least, governs best.”
- Natural Rights & States’ Rights
- Envisioned a nation of self-sufficient small farmers
- Examples include Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine