



# American Politics in a Changing World

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(Credits continue on p. 815.)





**To our families:**

**Joseph, Gloria, Richard,  
Barbara, Lee, Alexander,  
Jacob**

**Penelope,  
Clare Elizabeth, Gerry,  
Robert, Linda**

**Betty Ann, John, Paul,  
Elaine**

**Jenny, Sonja, Ken, Dana,  
Raymond**

Tues<sup>2</sup> May 29

★★★★★★★★★★

3:30-5:00

## Preface

at faculty club

4 student paper!

In this American politics text, we emphasize certain themes to help students come to terms with the complex nature of our political system in the 1990s. One major theme is the growing importance of global affairs in American political life. In the past, it was only during times of war that the line between domestic and foreign affairs was significantly blurred. Today, the line has been virtually erased. Consider, for example, the impact of foreign trade on our domestic economy. Although protectionism has been a long-standing issue, with roots deep in our past, today most Americans recognize that their prosperity is directly linked not just to foreign competition but to such issues as global interest rates, "off-shore" investment, access to raw materials in the Third World, and even defense spending. It is, therefore, important to understand how these links have been forged.

Moreover, the issues and problems raised by an increasingly fragile world ecology, expanding global communications, the arms race, and other international political, economic, and social forces greatly affect the development of our governmental institutions. A major reason for the growth in the power of the modern presidency, for example, has been the need to respond effectively and decisively to changing international crises and events. Congress, too, has had to face new issues dictated by both positive and negative aspects of global interdependence. The attachment of human rights criteria to foreign aid, the overseeing of intelligence-gathering activities, and the appropriation of funds to combat the international drug trade, have all reflected the changing focus and agenda of the legislative branch.

Thus, although our primary goal is to offer the essential information traditionally covered in introductory government courses, we present that information in a global perspective when it seems appropriate. International examples are used alongside more traditional domestic examples and case studies. We hope that the results of our efforts will be a student well versed in the basics of American politics who is also sensitive to the undeniable impact of global forces.

In addition to considering the interdependence of foreign and domestic affairs, we try to take advantage of the tools developed by policy analysts. The growing complexity of American politics requires more precise and sophisticated tools of investigation. The field of public policy assumes we cannot understand change and its consequences by focusing only on the traditional institutions and processes of American government. Thus, we have included chapters on public policies to intro-

duce students to the methods used by decision makers and analysts to sort through the costs and benefits of different policies. By looking at public policies from a problem-solution perspective, students can better appreciate how difficult it is to evaluate a simple program or determine why one program should be favored over another.

In the chapter on national character, we also acknowledge the rebirth of a more traditional mode of analysis, such as that used in Robert Bellah et al.'s *Habits of the Heart* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985). That title is derived from an expression used by the nineteenth-century French observer Alexis de Tocqueville to describe the mix of traits he thought essential to our national character. In the tradition of Tocqueville, we recognize the benefits of investigating how key values play a role in defining what a country is all about. National-character analysis lends itself to cross-country comparisons, which is in keeping with our efforts to help students see how they fit into the global political puzzle.

In addition to these basic themes, the book contains several other useful features. To help the reader understand that politics is the activity of human beings, a more personal look has been given to the presidency, Congress, the Supreme Court, and other major governmental institutions. These institutions are all examined in terms of the individuals who occupy them. Presidents, members of Congress, and Supreme Court justices are portrayed as citizens who have reached positions of significant political power and who can be expected to wield that power in terms of their own values and ambitions, as well as with regard to the rules and regulations of their respective offices.

The importance of the human element also underscores our belief that a clear and accurate picture of American politics demands constant, not intermittent, attention to the contributions of women and ethnic minorities. Thus, our analysis, examples, and language have been chosen so as not to diminish the importance of the rich diversity of influences and values in the American political system.

In addition, the book offers several tools to help students think creatively. For example, we present varying interpretations of the American power structure in a separate chapter describing the ruling elite, pluralist, and bureaucratic interpretations of American politics. The implications of these theories reappear at various times throughout the text, drawing the student into the controversies and debates surrounding the relationship between people and government.

Because many students are not going to study political science beyond the introductory course, the book also examines politics in ways useful to them as citizens. At appropriate times, it presents and evaluates specific action strategies open to the citizen, ranging from voting to joining interest groups. Even if students do not intend to engage in political activities, these evaluations will help them understand the obstacles and rewards of trying to effect change in our political system.

At all times, we have tried to limit political science jargon to tolerable levels. Although the introductory course is crucial for political science majors, it is also taken by nonmajors whose future is better served by an enhancement of citizenship skills than by specialized vocabulary skills. Thus, we have aimed for a lively style of writing that, we hope, will stimulate, rather than inhibit, interest in the subject.

Finally, we have assembled a package of learning aids to help the reader understand the material. For example, key terms are highlighted when they first

appear in the text, then listed at the end of each chapter, defined in the glossary, and discussed in the *Study Guide* and *Instructor's Manual*. In addition, we have provided a summary of the main points covered in each chapter and punctuated the text with self-contained vignettes. We also offer suggested reading lists at the conclusion of each chapter to assist in term papers and other forms of student research.

## Acknowledgments

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A special note of thanks is also extended to Lucy Valentine Wurtz, who prepared the *Instructor's Manual* and the *Study Guide*. Ms. Wurtz is a graduate of Santa Clara University and a fellow at the Coro Foundation. Her dedication to scholarship and its translation into political action reaffirms our commitment to the teaching profession.

Authors are not the only ones who burn the midnight oil. The editing, production, and marketing professionals involved in our project performed amazing feats with style and grace. Cindy Stormer, Political Science Editor at Brooks/Cole, has been with us from the start. Her encouragement, steadfastness, and good humor were crucial. And we are grateful for the first-rate contributions of manuscript editor Barbara Salazar, production coordinator Fiorella Ljunggren, production editors Cece Munson and Sue Ewing, and designer Katherine Minerva. We also wish to acknowledge the developmental help by Janet Hunter on the main text and Pat Gadban on the photo essays.

Janet A. Flammang  
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