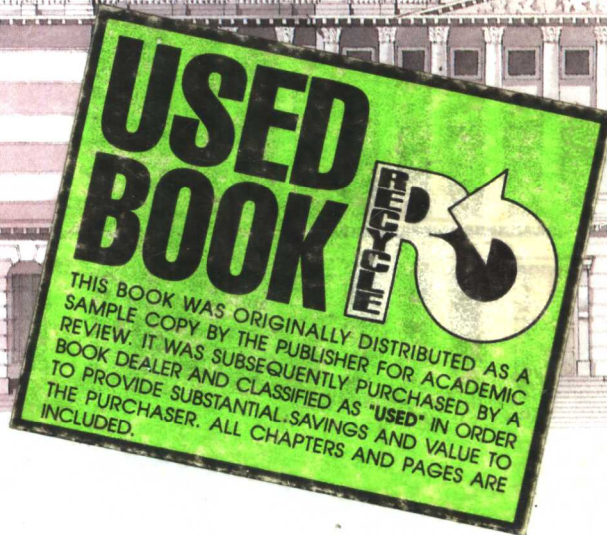
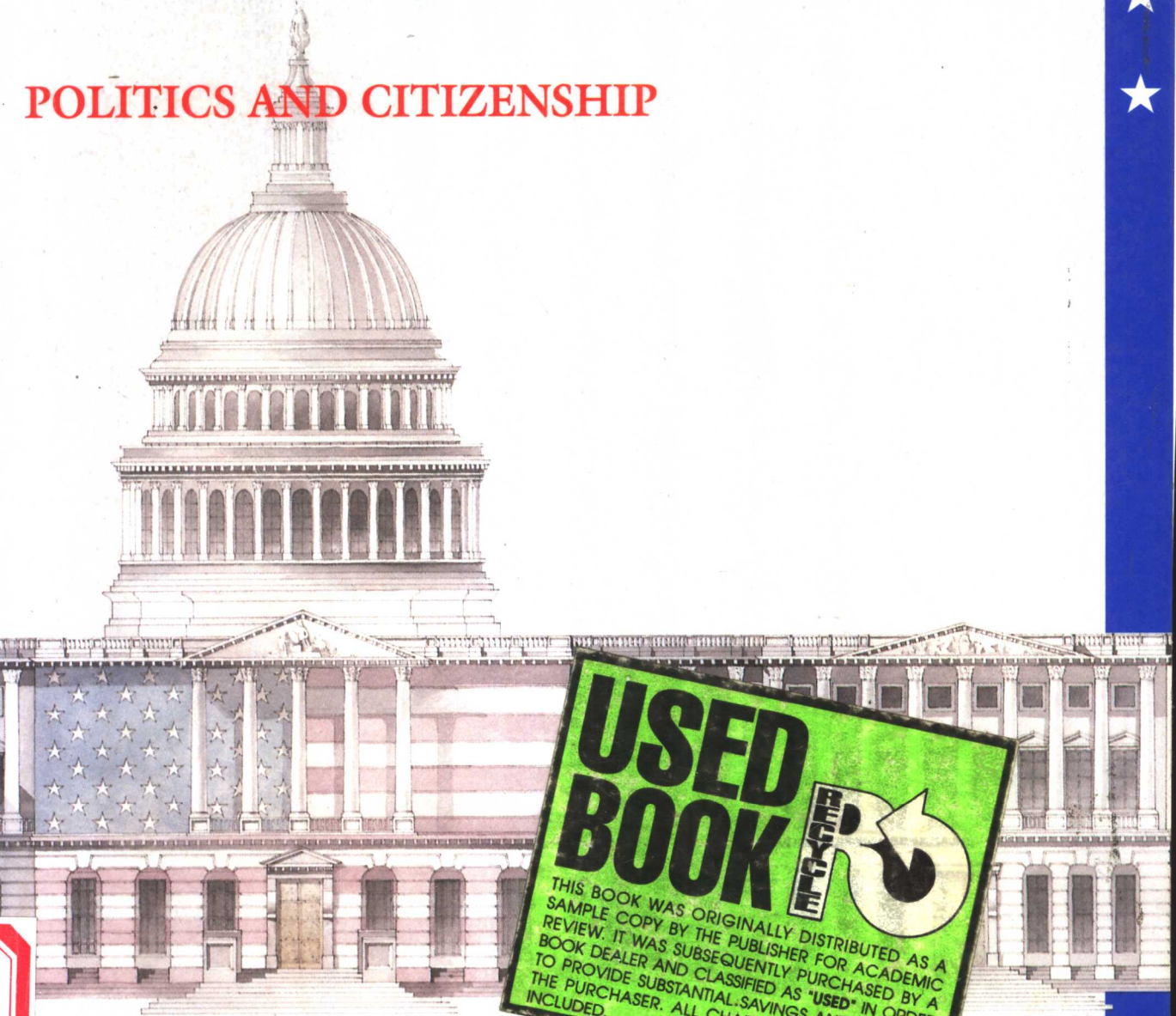


AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

POLITICS AND CITIZENSHIP



JEROLD L. WALTMAN

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Jerold L. Waltman

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P R E F A C E

THOSE OF US who teach the introductory course in American politics face a dilemma our colleagues who offer courses only on European, Asian, African, or Latin American politics routinely escape: most of the students taking the course are citizens of the nation under study, not only analysts of it. To be sure, evaluative issues have to be faced when teaching foreign political systems, but they are decidedly less immediate. To an extent, we, myself included, have often either adopted the model of comparative politics, teaching American politics "as is," or established some normative schemata and shown how our political system falls short of it. This dose of realism is not wrong, in my view, but incomplete. In trying to be analytically sophisticated, we have moved very far away from one of the reasons the course was developed in the first place, and, lest we forget, why political science developed as a discipline.

These points were brought home to me by a personal experience, an address, and two bits of television. The first occurred one day in my American government class as I was discussing the usual theories about why voting turnout is falling (which followed perhaps not coincidentally a unit on the budget). When I asked the class for their thoughts, one student said, "Perhaps so many instructors like you have done such a good job of showing how futile it all is, how many blockages there are between public preferences and public policy. . . ." I immediately replied that neither I, nor anyone else I knew, tried to spread cynicism, that one has to keep hope alive, etc. But it was inadequate, and both I and they knew it. Were we responsible, at least in part, for the decay of citizenship? Was it wishful thinking to believe we could teach how the system works and assume they would get their political values elsewhere? Were we being taken seriously, but not in the ways we hoped?

Soon thereafter, I read Samuel Huntington's 1988 presidential address to the American Political Science Association, in which he touched on the same theme. His main point was that political science grew from a preference for representative government, and elucidating that preference constitutes part of what we are about. Lastly, I was regularly rewatching tapes of the "Eyes on the Prize" series, in preparation for a class, during the semester in which the remarkable stirrings in Eastern Europe occurred.

Both those profound crusades convinced me anew that what people believe can be changed and that what they believe matters. Since then, the serene courage shown by countless ordinary Russians in foiling a military coup has only deepened that belief.

Convinced that there is both intellectual and pedagogical merit in discussing the nature of free government and what it means to be a citizen of this particular free government, I decided I would take that for the focus of this text. I did not wish, however, to follow the theme so laboriously that it skewed the descriptive material that is at the core of the American politics course. I have used theme texts which were so heavily thematic that the substantive chapters were almost contrived. I opted, instead, to lay out the theme in the initial chapter, to let it resurrect itself only lightly throughout the other chapters, and then to address it directly in a boxed supplement to each chapter.

The two models laid out in the first chapter are admittedly oversimplified caricatures, drawn from several intellectual strands. The individualist model pulls together the ideas of liberal participatory democracy, public choice approaches, and the rights based theories of Ronald Dworkin and Richard Epstein. While these frameworks are, of course, incompatible in some areas, what draws them under one roof here is first their emphasis on the atomized individual and how these individuals, as individuals, relate to



In Frank Capra's classic 1939 motion picture Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, Jimmy Stewart plays a new, idealistic member of Congress who ultimately triumphs over corrupt interests. Even though movies such as this one are often derided for their naiveté, they send messages about the values and ideals of American society.

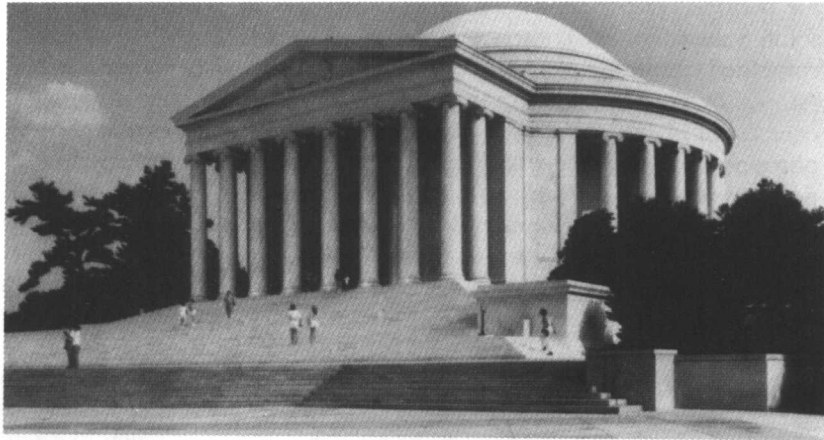
the political order, and second their detachment from any system of absolute values. For the contrasting model, which I label civic democracy, I combined traditional republicanism and elements of Benjamin Barber's "strong democracy." The first could stand alone as a counter model, of course, but I have often found that students have trouble disentangling the portions of it which evolved into later notions of democracy and the portions which are in tension with liberal democracy. Strong democracy, likewise, would provide a useful alternative (as indeed Barber intended), but much of it is based on the same assumptions as the more individualistic theories it seeks to critique, particularly in that it posits no independent status for the public good. I believe these models will be useful to introductory students and are intellectually defensible; the finer points can be left for those who wish to pursue political philosophy in more depth.

I am aware of the dangers and risks in using citizenship as a focus for an introductory course—the usual naive pulp that is offered when that term is used, that it can often lead to a mindless flag-waving at best and jingoism and xenophobia at worst, that there is a danger of imposing our own values on the impressionable young, and so forth. But free government is a preference, and one that every American political scientist I know shares. Merely because something is capable of perversion does not negate its value. I still think we should avoid setting our detailed policy preferences before students; but I think we can talk about free government and citizenship without preaching about the virtues or defects of particular policies. The models of individualist and civic democracy, in fact, are both compatible with a variety of more partisan approaches, such as mainstream liberalism and conservatism. I think we can hold fast to the ideas and ideals of free government and engage in a dialogue with our past and our present, a conversation that is the hallmark of the American political tradition, without having our courses degenerate into narrow partisan diatribes.

In short, I think that what we teach in the American politics course is vitally important, that the approaches taken there percolate outward far beyond the students in our classes. It is an opportune time, given the appearance of embryonic democracies everywhere, to reintegrate serious discussion of democratic citizenship into our courses. Those who sit in our classes are the educated citizenry in whom Jefferson placed so much faith; they will be affected by what we teach, the only question is how.

Organizing an American politics course is largely a matter of taste and intellectual orientation, especially the decision regarding whether the sections on political participation should precede or follow the coverage of institutions. For this reason, I tried to write this text so that each chapter could stand independently of the others. Thus instructors can structure the course any way they choose without losing continuity.

Chapter 13 was written immediately after the 1992 elections. It provides a useful update to several chapters, both in terms of data and generalizations. I endeavored to point out how the 1992 elections confirmed or cast doubt on the propositions offered in the chapters on Congress, the presidency, political parties, and the media.



Tourists visiting the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C. The nation's capital is filled with similar monuments to the country's heroes, ideas, and values.

Ancillaries

American Government: Politics and Citizenship is accompanied by a set of ancillaries the aim of which is to help both teachers and students more fully benefit from using the text. John Lewis of Indiana University at South Bend has prepared a thoughtful and supportive Instructor's Manual with Test Bank. The manual consists of chapter summaries, discussion topics, and additional interesting commentary. The test bank consists of multiple-choice questions as well as essay-style exam questions. Because many instructors who adopt briefer American government texts for their courses do so to be able to supplement the main text with other materials, Professor Lewis has provided a series of suggested course syllabi consisting of unique approaches toward organizing an American government course. Among the suggestions are a course built around The Federalist Papers, current newspapers and periodicals, political biographies, or novels.

A separate item to accompany *American Government: Politics and Citizenship* is an annotated copy of the United States Constitution entitled *A Citizen's Guide To The United States Constitution*, prepared by Professor Louis Morton of Mesa State College of Colorado. The extensive annotations discuss the historical background, ideas and implications of each section, and the amendments to the Constitution. A series of self-testing examinations is found at the end of the annotations. The *Citizen's Guide To The United States Constitution* is free to all adopters and their students upon request.

West's Political Science Video Library contains an array of videos on American government subject matter and is available to qualified adopters. Because the availability of certain videos in the library may change throughout the course of a year, you should contact your West sales representative to find out more about the video program.

Acknowledgments

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the help of many individuals who contributed in some fashion to this book. First, Robert Jucha of West Publishing had faith in the project from its inception, and provided many hours and pages of useful and insightful counsel thereafter. His abilities to see both the big picture and devote attention to detail are unsurpassed. Diane Colwyn, also of West, was unfailingly helpful at many points. Tad Bornhoft guided the manuscript through the production process with as professional and capable a hand as any author could hope for.

My colleagues at the University of Southern Mississippi have cheerfully shared their thoughts about and many years of collective experience in teaching American government—and generously let me raid their bookshelves. A number of reviewers read all or portions of the manuscript. Their work was remarkably professional and a constant source of ideas; but, of course, they share no blame for any defects in the final product. These people included Peter J. Bergerson, Southeast Missouri State University; David E. Camacho, Northern Arizona University; James E. Campbell, Louisiana State University; James O. Catron, North Florida Junior College; Carl M. Dibble, Wayne State University; Patrick Eagan, John Carroll University; Marshall Goodman, University of Cincinnati; Gerard S. Gryski, Auburn University; Allen Hartter, Parkland College; Marjorie Randon Hershey, Indiana University; Samuel B. Hoff, Delaware State College; Robert W. Hoffert, Colorado State University; Lars Hoffman, Lewis & Clark Community College; Leon Hurwitz, Cleveland State University; Anne M. Khademian, University of Wisconsin–Madison; John Klee, Maysville Community College; Robert J. Lettieri, Mount Ida College; Michael Levine, Merced College; John M. Lewis, Indiana University–South Bend; Nancy S. Lind, Illinois State University; Priscilla Machado, United States Naval Academy; Jarol B. Manheim, George Washington University; William P. McLauchlan, Purdue University; John Molloy, Michigan State University; Charles Noble, California State University–Long Beach; Paulette Otis, University of Southern Colorado; William D. Pederson, Louisiana State University–Shreveport; Rene Peritz, Slippery Rock University; Raymond Pomerleau, San Francisco State University; Edward F. Renwick, Loyola University; Theresia Stewart, Elizabethtown Community College; and Louis T. Vietri, University of Maryland–College Park.

I would also like to mention the influence of the history faculty of Louisiana Tech University. During my years there they provided a model of what quality undergraduate teaching should be.

Finally, my family bore many hours of absence and preoccupation. My wife Diane has been not only a continual source of encouragement throughout but an enlightening conversation partner on many of the book's points as well.

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