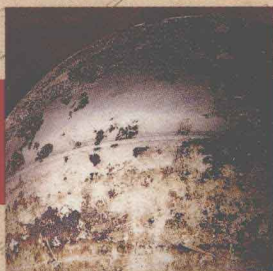


# PAUL LIGHT

## A DELICATE BALANCE



An Essential  
Introduction  
to American  
Government

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[An Essential  
Introduction  
to American  
Government]

PAUL LIGHT

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## PREFACE

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*A Delicate Balance: An Essential Introduction to American Government* began as a simple hunch: a concise introductory American government book that could cover the basics, carry a central theme, and still be easy to read would be appreciated by students and professors alike. Such a book would be inviting in its language, current in its examples, appealing in its design, and slimmer than the usual books in length. This book would reach out to instructors and students who need a comprehensive introduction without the clutter of larger, aircraft-carrier textbooks that try to do too much. On the other hand, this text would offer instructors and students more than a cut down “nuts-and-bolts” approach of the brief texts. If done well, a text built on these premises could help faculty deliver a well evaluated American government course and might very well lead more students to think about majoring in political science.

### HIGHLIGHTS

*A Delicate Balance* is grounded in real politics, yet it remains tightly anchored to the leading scholarship in political science. It has many distinguishing characteristics that make it a new kind of American government book.

- **Design and format.** Published in paperback and with a clean, straightforward design, *A Delicate Balance* has the look and feel of an easy-to-read, mass-market, trade paperback, rather than a bulky, hardcover textbook. Charts, boxes, and photographs are kept to a minimum so that students will not get lost in a maze of chopped up pages that distract them from the flow of the prose. Pedagogy is kept to one place in the chapter and tabbed in color so students can easily and quickly access information they need to study.
- **Consistent voice.** Written by a single author, *A Delicate Balance* carries a consistent voice throughout. The writing style is smooth and comfortable, leading students to stick with each chapter from beginning to end. Points are clearly made and stories well told. Chapter subtitles carry a punch. When taken all together, this text can claim what others cannot: the book is actually fun to read. Having begun his career as a newspaper reporter at the *Minneapolis Tribune*, Paul Light remembers what it takes to get a reader's interest and hold it.
- **A government that is just strong enough.** The book is built on the simple theme that in order for liberty to flourish, political change must be harnessed. In other



words, the Founders intended government to be just strong enough to meet national and international threats without compromising liberty. In today's cynical environment, it is a theme that should help keep the day-to-day frustrations of American government in perspective. The book does not suggest American government can do no wrong, but neither does it assume that it can do no right.

- **Coverage of the essential elements of American government.** Careful measures have been taken to ensure that the essentials of American government are covered in the book. Students will be spurred on by good writing and cohesive, pithy narrative while getting the facts and process they need. In other words, *A Delicate Balance* reads great and is still filling.
- **Stimulating discussion puts issues “In a Different Light.”** The book challenges students to think hard about current controversies through “In a Different Light” discussions in every chapter. By asking students to think about more nontraditional topics like gated communities, assisted suicide, and negative advertising, *A Delicate Balance* gets your students thinking critically about political issues without raising some of the more highly emotional topics such as abortion and gun control.
- **“Just the Facts.”** Unlike other texts' review sections, “Just the Facts” not only summarizes the chapter's basic points, key terms, and discussion issues but it also challenges students to formulate a deeper analysis of the information they have learned. In addition to substantial critical thinking apparatus, each “Just the Facts” section ends with one-line descriptions of the author's endnotes to offer students a bibliography of sources that would be most appropriate for further study. These sources are denoted by a color arrow before the entry. More in-depth than other texts while still being to the point, this section eliminates the expense of the conventional study guide while truly encouraging students to take another look at what they have read.

## INSTRUCTIONAL PACKAGE

*A Delicate Balance* stands by the basic premise that students won't learn what students won't read. So, in addition to this highly readable text, it offers professors an instructional package to make the teaching of this text easier and more effective while continuing to stimulate students' reading of the text.

- **Instructor's Manual.** Written by Janet Martin of Bowdoin College, a veteran instructor of the American government course, this comprehensive *Instructor's Manual* includes chapter outlines, discussion questions, classroom activities, and a series of lectures to accompany each chapter. Experienced professors, adjunct faculty, and graduate assistants will appreciate the teaching suggestions found in this manual.
- **Test Item File.** Written by Sharon and Paul Light, this *Test Item File* offers close to 1,000 multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions. The computerized *Test*

*Item File* is available in three formats (DOS, Macintosh, or Windows) and has full authoring capabilities.

- **Student Survey of Political Attitudes.** Produced by Clyde Wilcox at Georgetown University, this questionnaire allows an instructor to administer, at the outset of the course, a survey of students' attitudes toward political issues. When results are sent to St. Martin's Press, they will be promptly tabulated and compared to national data. The survey will then be returned to the instructor in graph, table, or chart form for use throughout the course.
- **Web site.** *A Delicate Balance* can be found on-line. In addition to the table of contents and other basic information about the text, this Web page offers professors and students a plethora of activities and projects that tie both to the book and to various American government Web sites. Students also have access to **The St. Martin's Political Science Links Page**; one place they can go to access 1,000 sites in all of the major areas of political science. In addition, students can explore the national results of the **St. Martin's Student Survey of Political Attitudes** and compare their political opinions with those of American government students across the United States. Furthermore, the site offers students instant access to the pages of TIME magazine and TIME Internet resources. Finally, there is a bulletin board where professors can share syllabi and classroom experiences with the text.
- **Documents.** This collection of key primary source documents, compiled by Jacqueline Vaughn Switzer (Southern Oregon State College) are available on line. They include primary sources such as *The Articles of Confederation* and excerpts from *The Federalist Papers* as well as landmark Supreme Court decisions and memorable political speeches.

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Ultimately, however, none of these contributions can compare to the energy supplied by my partner in life, Sharon Pamepinto Light. She was involved at every step of the project, from doing the basic research on what needed to be in the book to writing the *Test Item File*, from collating materials on a host of subjects to supplying much of the energy for "The Federal Judiciary" and "Civil Rights and Civil Liberties" chapters. She smoothed many rough edges in the text, and supplied far more than could have been expected by way of patient editing along the way, all the way while never wavering in her faith in me and the book.

Woe be to anyone who would blame any of these supporters for what ails the book, for the errors and misinterpretations are mine and mine alone.

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