

PORTRAITS

**OF AMERICAN
POLITICS**

A READER

**SECOND
EDITION**



BRUCE ALLEN MURPHY

■ **PORTRAITS OF AMERICAN POLITICS**

A Reader Second Edition

BRUCE ALLEN MURPHY

Pennsylvania State University

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■ PREFACE

Until now I had thought that the most enjoyable thing to write was a preface for a book that had already been completed. Now I realize that an even more enjoyable thing to write is the preface for a book that is going into a new edition.

As a student (and I must confess also an addict) of everything written about American politics, I view this book as a labor of love. As a biographer with a political focus, I have a great love for biographical narrative and a belief that it is a window on the art of politics. Biographers take a subject that at first seems tedious or difficult and make it accessible and interesting. What better way to approach the material for an introductory American government course—perhaps the only exposure to American politics students will have in their undergraduate careers?

This book fills a need I first recognized when selecting readings for my basic American government course. I was always searching for something to use in addition to the basic textbook that would capture the fascinating essence of American politics. I knew that students' curiosity was sparked by accounts of how government and the actors within it really operate, yet it was difficult to find these materials. Sometimes I assigned several paperbacks on various people and events in politics, with the justifiable complaints from increasingly cost-conscious students. Or, I would assign a reader of either classic political science pieces (which were difficult for many of my students to understand) or of short, current-events-oriented news articles (which were easy to understand but quickly became outdated).

It was in a late-night discussion with two Penn State students that I arrived at the solution to my problem. The two students insisted that I add Anthony

Lewis's *Gideon's Trumpet* to my class reading list. Like their classmates, these students wanted to read about real people and real events rather than about theories and maxims. They argued that Lewis's account of a poor man's fight for the right to counsel could teach more about the how the Supreme Court makes a decision than could volumes of legal theory. It occurred to me that my two students were correct. For many students, thinking about politics theoretically is not nearly as interesting or immediate as thinking about the people and events in politics. By looking at those people—their influences, achievements, and even scandals—students can be drawn into an understanding of more abstract concepts about institutions and processes.

The construction of this reader, then, reflects both sides of my professional work. Over the years I have collected a variety of compelling biographical accounts of American politics in action, many written by some of the finest authors of our time, which I have used in my classes to supplement the core materials. Some of these pieces are portraits of individuals; others look at individuals in the context of institutions and events. All capture the rich human drama that is American politics.

The articles are drawn from some of the best political biographies and narratives; and from accessible journals such as *American Heritage*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *The Atlantic*. For example, Curt Gentry portrays the legendary director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, in his battle with civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. William Greider presents former budget director David Stockman and explains why many of Ronald Reagan's economic plans were doomed from the start. And David Savage explores how the United States Supreme Court has dealt with the vexatious issue of abortion in recent years.

Some selections focus on turning points in our political history and show how the people involved in these historic events have shaped the context of events today. For instance, Charles Mee explains the politics of the fight to ratify the Constitution. Taylor Branch provides a riveting account of the efforts of the Freedom Riders to desegregate public transportation in the South in the 1960s. And Ethan Bronner as well as Timothy Phelps and Helen Winternitz show why Robert Bork's and Clarence Thomas's nominations to the Supreme Court may have changed the judicial confirmation process. Each chapter continues to contain at least one historically oriented piece to provide students with background and a longterm view for comparison.

Special Features

A number of pedagogical features introduced in the first edition continue to allow each piece to stand on its own, and users of the book have found these to be particularly helpful:

- Each reading has a thorough introduction that places it in historical and political context.
- A concluding epilogue to each reading brings the situation up to date.
- Annotations throughout the readings explain unfamiliar events, terms, or people.
- Unique to this reader is the list at the beginning of each selection that identifies and explains the prominent people in the reading.

Notes to the Second Edition

The new selections, more than 40 percent of the total readings, reflect the suggestions of professors who have used the first edition in their classes and a comprehensive survey of other professors. My goal was to pinpoint the types of topics and issues most useful in class—to generate student interest, discussion, class participation, and knowledge. Here are some of the major features of the new readings:

- A new separate chapter on policy addresses some of the most difficult and debated questions of our day—the budget, AIDS and health care, the role of the military.
- Many of the new pieces focus on contemporary rather than historical events and people.
- The many overlapping issues between chapters are explored so readers can understand how the selections, and indeed the functions of government, interrelate.

I hope these changes keep the book interesting and valuable as a class resource.

Suggestions from users have also encouraged me to add several pedagogical supports to the new edition:

- An annotated Table of Contents provides a brief preview of each reading.
- A new Topic Correlation Chart helps the reader see and explore the interconnections between various topics.
- Overviews have been written for each chapter to encourage discussion of the readings and to tie them to the main topics of an American government course.

Instructor's Resource Manual

The *Instructor's Resource Manual with Test Items* that accompanies this book contains the following for each reading: a summary of the selection, multiple choice and essay questions, suggestions for classroom use, research topics, and further readings and videos.

Acknowledgments

I am very grateful to each of the reviewers of the first edition of this volume, and the manuscript in progress of the second edition, for their valuable opinions and suggestions. They include:

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I'd also like to thank the many users of the first edition for their comments and helpful suggestions. All of you have contributed to the second edition, and I continue to welcome your comments for future editions.

Once more, I would like to thank Bob Holste and Phil Gutis, the two students who initially suggested that I use these kinds of readings and who now are making their own contributions to American politics. There is no way I can adequately acknowledge the highly professional staff at Houghton Mifflin, who help to make this volume a joy to produce. Margaret Seawell, sponsoring editor, has been a fountain of wisdom in helping to guide the direction of the new edition. Susan Yanchus, development editor, worked with unflagging enthusiasm in helping prepare the new selections. Finally, Christina Horn, project editor, continues our association from the first edition and has once more been remarkable in her ability to pull all of the selections together. I would also like to thank my colleagues at Penn State's Institute for the Arts and Humanistic Studies and its current and former directors, George Mauner and Stanley Wein-

traub, for providing an oasis of fellowship and support for my work. No book of mine can be published without also thanking my wife Carol Lynn Wright, who makes life worth living, and my children Emily and Geoffrey, who continue to inspire me with their love and unbounded enthusiasm.

This book is dedicated to Jim Milholland, still the best-read man I know, and his wife, Pam.

B.A.M.

TOPIC CORRELATION CHART

Although the chapters in this book of readings have been organized to mesh with the coverage of most American government textbooks, many subjects receive attention in more than one chapter. The following chart permits students and instructors to locate relevant readings for eighteen subjects, ranging (in alphabetical order) from the bureaucracy to the Supreme Court and judiciary.

Bureaucracy	Covered in: Chapter 5; 2.2 (Laboratories of Democracy); 2.3 (Freedom Riders); 3.3 (No-Hands Presidency); 8.2 ("Speech! Speech!"); 10.1 (Education of Stockman); 10.2 (Priorities and Policymaking); 10.3 (War on Poverty)
Bush Presidency	Covered in: 3.4 (In-Box President); 5.1 (Face of Science); 7.2 (Remaking of Bush); 8.4 (Capitol Games); 10.3 (War on Poverty); 10.4 (Bush's War)
Campaigns and Elections	Covered in: 7.2 (Remaking of Bush); 7.3 (Clinton's Long March); 7.4 (Voting in Passive Voice); 8.1 (Selling of President); 8.3 (What It Takes)
Civil Liberties/ Civil Rights	Covered in: 2.3 (Freedom Riders); 6.3 (Arrival of Superchief); 6.4 (Turning Right); 9.1 (Sense of Urgency); 9.3 (Battle for Justice)
Congress	Covered in: Chapter 4; 3.1 (Birth of Modern Presidency); 5.2 (Power Game); 8.4 (Capitol Games); 9.2 (Politics Is Local); 9.3 (Battle for Justice); 10.1 (Education of Stockman)
The Constitution	Covered in: 1.2 (Behind Closed Doors); 1.3 (Ratification); 2.3 (Freedom Riders); 6.4 (Turning Right); 9.3 (Battle for Justice)

Defense Policy/ Military	Covered in: 3.2 ("Playing God"); 5.2 (Power Game); 5.4 (Ollie and Uncle Bill); 10.4 (Bush's War)
Domestic Policy	Covered in: Chapter 9; 2.2 (Laboratories of Democracy); 2.3 (Freedom Riders); 3.3 (No-Hands Presidency); 5.3 (We Must Mark Him); 6.3 (Arrival of Superchief); 6.4 (Turning Right); 10.1 (The Education of David Stockman); 10.2 (Priorities and Policymaking); 10.3 (War on Poverty)
The Founding	Covered in: Chapter 1; 2.1 (Nation of States); 6.2 (Missing Commissions)
Interest Groups	Covered in: Chapter 9; 2.3 (Freedom Riders); 5.3 (We Must Mark Him); 6.4 (Turning Right); 8.4 (Capitol Games); 10.2 (Priorities and Policymaking)
Leadership	Covered in: Chapter 3; 1.1 (Independence 1776); 2.3 (Freedom Riders); 4.1 ("Worst Fight of My Life"); 4.2 (Carter Years); 7.2 (Remaking of Bush); 7.3 (Clinton's Long March); 9.3 (Battle for Justice); 10.2 (Priorities and Policymaking); 10.3 (War on Poverty); 10.4 (Bush's War)
Mass Media	Covered in: 7.1 (Faded Glory); 7.4 (Voting in Passive Voice); 8.1 (Selling of President); 8.3 (What It Takes); 8.4 (Capitol Games); 9.3 (Battle for Justice); 10.1 (Education of Stockman); 10.2 (Priorities and Policymaking)
Policymaking Process	Covered in: 2.2 (Laboratories of Democracy); 3.3 (No-Hands Presidency); 3.4 (In-Box President); 4.2 (Carter Years); 5.1 (Face of Science); 5.2 (Power Game); 6.4 (Turning Right); 9.1 (Sense of Urgency); 9.2 (Politics Is Local); 10.1 (Education of Stockman); 10.2 (Priorities and Policymaking); 10.3 (War on Poverty)
Political Parties	Covered in: 3.5 (Inside Job); 7.1 (Faded Glory); 8.1 (Selling of President); 8.2 ("Speech! Speech!"); 9.3 (Battle for Justice); 10.1 (Education of Stockman)
Presidency	Covered in: Chapter 3; 2.3 (Freedom Riders); 4.2 (Carter Years); 5.4 (Ollie and Uncle Bill); 7.2 (Remaking of Bush); 7.3 (Clinton's Long March); 8.1 (Selling of President); 8.2 ("Speech! Speech!"); 9.3 (Battle for Justice); 10.1 (Education of Stockman); 10.3 (War on Poverty); 10.4 (Bush's War)

Public Opinion	Covered in: Chapter 8; 2.3 (Freedom Riders); 6.4 (Turning Right); 7.4 (Voting in Passive Voice); 9.2 (Politics Is Local); 9.3 (Battle for Justice); 10.1 (Education of Stockman); 10.3 (War on Poverty); 10.4 (Bush's War)
Reagan Presidency	Covered in: 3.3 (No-Hands Presidency); 5.4 (Ollie and Uncle Bill); 8.2 ("Speech! Speech!"); 9.2 (Politics Is Local); 9.3 (Battle for Justice); 10.1 (Education of Stockman); 10.2 (Priorities and Policymaking)
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