

# AMERICAN POLITICS

*Changing Expectations*

FOURTH EDITION



RONALD E. PYN



# American Politics

## *Changing Expectations*

Fourth Edition

●  
Ronald E. Pynn

*University of North Dakota*

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A Times Mirror Company

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 92-81872

ISBN 0-697-12893-8

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Printed in the United States of America by Wm. C. Brown Communications, Inc.,  
2460 Kerper Boulevard, Dubuque, IA 52001

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3

# Preface

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Work on the original edition of this book began about the time that most students reading this fourth edition were born. In that time the country has celebrated the bicentennial of its Declaration of Independence, the bicentennial of the signing of the Constitution, and 200 years under the Bill of Rights—a remarkable achievement of continuous government under the same set of basic principles, made all the more remarkable by the disintegration of governments in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. This book was written to highlight the theme of changing expectations in politics, but even I could not fathom the depth of change in the world since that first edition appeared.

When the book was first written the nation was struggling with the effects of the Vietnam War, Watergate, and scandals in Congress; communism was a major concern. The Vietnam War had divided the nation and taken the lives of 54,000 of its sons and daughters. An anticommunist president, Ronald Reagan, was elected, pledging to restore faith in the nation and to build up its war machine. Then, in the span of one decade, the iron curtain fell, the republics in the Soviet Union declared independence, and communism was dead. Yet the elimination of America's twentieth-century nemesis did not secure the nation's place globally. By 1990 Japan and a reunified Germany were challenging America economically, and the republics of the old USSR were pleading for economic assistance. These events underscore a new dimension to changing expectations: a postmodern America where other nations and international events direct our politics as much as do the people and principles of this nation.

American politics continues to change. In the past ten years we have come to feel the weight of the nation's twin deficits—the budget deficit and the trade deficit. Government policies have sought to move power away from Washington as Presidents Reagan and Bush believe free market mechanisms and private initiative to be better solutions to the nation's problems. Public opinion finds new issues that divide the nation as changing demographics forge new political alliances. Recent appointments to the Supreme Court raise the likelihood that several Constitutional doctrines will change. And Congress and the president strive to adjust to this postmodern world, laboring to create public policy that will fit the new reality.

## THE TEXT: AN OVERVIEW

The theme of *American Politics: Changing Expectations* is as alive today as it ever was. I continue to examine American politics from the perspective of change. This edition makes clear that change involves a postmodern America where international

events and nations help share our political environment. But change also is examined as it affects our domestic politics and institutions. Like any good textbook, the book attempts to provide the basic information and understanding of how the American political system operates.

Since this book is intended for an introductory course in American government, it provides basic information on the institutions and principles operating in the political system. The first five chapters deal with principles shaping our politics. Chapter 1 introduces students to the American political economy. Chapters 2 and 3 describe the Constitution and the federal system, and Chapters 4 and 5 deal with individual liberties and equality. The middle chapters examine political behavior by the American citizens. Chapter 6 describes the current state of public opinion and Chapter 7 treats the mass media. Chapter 8 looks at interest group influence and Chapter 9 analyzes the decline of political parties. Chapter 10 examines the changing nature of the American voter. The final portion of the book surveys the institutions of government. Chapters 11, 12, 13, and 14 discuss the presidency, bureaucracy, Congress, and the judiciary, respectively.

### SPECIAL FEATURES AND STUDY AIDS

Throughout the years of using this text, instructors have reported it to be very teachable and students say it is most readable. I have sought to maintain that quality and to improve on the text as a learning aid.

As a means to learning American government, a student study guide has been incorporated into the text. This study guide is based on the learning principles set forth by Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy of learning found in his *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1956). In brief, Bloom's learning taxonomy is a set of integrated principles that move students through knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, in that order. To assist students with the learning taxonomy, each chapter includes:

- Learning Objectives that identify the most important concepts to which students are to pay attention
- Guided Reviews interspersed throughout the chapter to check comprehension as the student reads the material
- A Self-Test at chapter's end to help the student evaluate his or her understanding of the chapter material
- Analytical Thinking inserts that take a major concept in the chapter and lead students through thinking analytically about the subject

These special features will help students become more careful and critical consumers of text material. They also will permit students to check their progress as they proceed through the text.

In addition to this special student study guide, the text contains a number of other important elements to assist the student in learning American government. These include:

- A running glossary of key terms, placed in the margin for easy access
- A summary of the main points covered in the chapter
- An annotated bibliography
- Ample figures, tables, photographs, and cartoons to illustrate and clarify concepts, events, and issues

The end of the book contains

- A glossary of all key terms contained in the text
- Annotated versions of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, the two major documents of American politics

In addition to the book and its study guide, I have produced an Instructor's Manual and test bank. The Instructor's Manual includes discussion questions, quiz items, and sources for further reading. The test bank contains a computerized test bank of multiple choice questions, matching sets, fill-in-the-blank questions, short answer questions, and essay questions.

The test questions found in the printed Test Item File are also available on TestPak 3.0 with enhanced QuizPak and GradePak. Using this complete classroom management system, instructors can prepare hard copy or computerized tests and quizzes and utilize the gradebook package to compute and graph individual student records and total class records. As another option, a professor may use the convenient call-in/mail-in/FAX service to generate tests. More information is available from the instructor's Brown & Benchmark sales representative.

## WITH THANKS

More than anyone else I owe a debt of thanks to my students whose inquisitiveness gave rise to this text. It was through my efforts to interpret American government to my students that this book originated.

I am indebted to numerous individuals at Brown & Benchmark who believed in this project and who worked to bring the book to print. Their suggestions and their competence remind an author that publishing is truly a joint endeavor.

Several reviewers read portions or all of the manuscript. Their comments were helpful in strengthening this fourth edition. I wish to acknowledge the assistance of

Garrett Sheldon, *Clinch Valley of the University of Virginia*  
Lawrence Hough, *Eastern Carolina University*  
Robert Keele, *University of the South*  
Steve Hattig, *University of St. Thomas*  
Matthew Kerbel, *Villanova University*  
Robert Merrifield, *San Jacinto College South*  
Don Kettl, *University of Wisconsin-Madison*  
Mary Stuckey, *University of Mississippi*  
Bill Arp, *Louisiana State*  
Richard Kim, *Stephen F. Austin University*  
Thomas Mans, *Creighton University*  
H. Edward Fleming, *Florida Community College @ Jacksonville*  
Dario Albert Rozas, *Milwaukee Area Technical College*

Finally, my wife Scharlene, and my children, Suzanne, Stephen, and Karen, still demand to see their names in print. The difference now is that Suzanne used the Third Edition for her course in American Government and it appears Stephen could be required to read the Fourth Edition; Karen may be able to hold out for the Fifth Edition. That alone demands a good book, and it certainly requires a great deal of patience, and thanks.

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# The Anguish of Change

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## OUTLINE

Learning Objectives  
 COLUMBUS DAY FREEZE-OUT  
 Changing Expectations: The Recent Past  
*Decades of Turmoil*  
*Postmodern Era*  
 American Political Economy  
*Public and Private Sectors*  
*Managing with a Leaky Bucket*  
*The Federal Budget*  
 Internationalizing the Economy  
*The Twin Debts*

Democracy and the Process of Change  
*The Government of the United States*  
 ANALYTICAL THINKING—DEMOCRACY

Summary  
 Key Terms  
 Self-Test  
 Answers to Guided Reviews  
 Notes  
 Bibliography

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

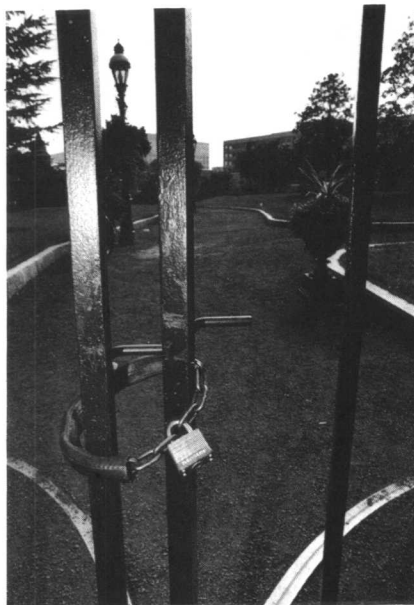
1. Define "the postmodern age" and give examples of foreign and domestic phenomena that signify that era.
2. Describe the three major events of the recent tumultuous period in American political life.
3. Explain how the radical policies of the Reagan administration differed from those of previous administrations.
4. Define "American hegemony" and describe what has happened to it in recent years.
5. Explain the government's role in the American economy.
6. Describe how the federal budget has grown in recent years.
7. Explain the three most important international forces acting on the American economy.
8. Describe the U.S. economy's twin debts.
9. Define and explain what is meant by democracy; identify its procedural components and its substantive values.

## COLUMBUS DAY FREEZE-OUT

It was like a scene from *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, the classic 1951 science fiction movie about a peaceful alien who lands his spaceship in Washington, D.C. and then, when nobody will listen to him, brings the entire world to a sudden halt—freezing everything and everybody in place. Only it wasn't 1951, it was October 7, 1990. And the man doing the freezing was hardly an alien. It was George Bush, president of the United States.

As in *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, Bush's freeze-frame began on Washington's Mall, the grassy stretch of land along which lie some of the most important structures in the United States. Tourists who had trekked to the nation's capital over the Long Columbus Day weekend found a Washington Monument with its lights turned out. The Smithsonian Institution, which houses so much of the nation's history, was locked. In fact, government operations all over the country started to freeze: the Library of Congress, Yellowstone National Park, even the Statue of Liberty.

What was President Bush up to? Like the friendly alien in the movie, Bush was trying to make a point. He was also trying to put some pressure on Congress. It so happens that Columbus Day is right around the end of the government's fiscal year, but Bush and Congress had been unable to agree on an appropriations budget for fiscal year 1991. When Bush vetoed an eleventh-hour proposal for a stopgap budget that would have kept the government running while two of its branches continued to haggle, the government itself, lacking the appropriate legislation to spend money, began to shut down. As the *New York Times* put it, "The Federal Government went out of business today, and it was not



*The Columbus Day Freeze-out. Government shut down for a day due to the lack of funds.*

immediately clear that everyone wanted it back."<sup>1</sup>

The shutdown was the unfortunate culmination of a process that had begun months—if not years—before. Bush had been elected president in 1988 partly on the strength of his now famous line, "Read my lips: No new taxes." By pledging not to raise taxes, Bush was continuing the policies and legacies of Ronald Reagan, who was elected president in 1980 partly on his promise to balance the federal budget while lowering taxes and beefing up the military. Many people didn't think that could be done—and it wasn't done. Even Bush, campaigning against Reagan for the Republican nomination, called Reagan's program "voodoo economics." Instead of balancing the budget, Reagan presided over the largest peacetime deficit spending spree in the history of the world.

The men who founded the American system of representative

democracy over 200 years ago deliberately split the government's powers among three branches: the executive, the legislative, and the judicial branches. The power to tax and spend was given to the legislative branch, Congress, subject to approval by the executive branch, the president. But, during the 1980s, the Democratic Congress and the Republican presidents didn't see eye to eye on how to tax and how to spend. Reagan and Bush sought to avoid raising taxes at just about any cost; Congress, unable to come up with a program that could offset Reagan's immense personal popularity, did little more than watch.

The result? A budget spiraling out of control: From 1982 to 1987, the U.S. government spent \$1.1 trillion more than it raised in taxes. In fact, the federal budget deficit—along with the trade deficit—became the symbol of the intractable problems that now beset this once preeminent economy. On paper, the United States was beginning to look like the world's biggest glutton. As Murray Weidenbaum, Reagan's economic advisor, later wrote, "We are consuming more than we are producing, borrowing more than we are saving, and spending more than we are earning."<sup>2</sup>

President Bush and the Democratic Congress finally agreed on a budget, of course, but it included another huge deficit (though not nearly as huge as some of the gargantuan deficits of the 1980s). No one seemed very happy with this compromise—Bush had to accept some new taxes, although he was careful not to call them that—least of all to the American people. But, at the very least, the federal government whirled back into action. Americans returned to Yellowstone for a look at the country's awe-

inspiring wilderness; they made their way to the Statue of Liberty, the front door to what is in fact still a great land of opportunity; and they

rode all the way to the top of a newly lit Washington Monument, where they could look out over the nation's

capital and ponder these latest challenges to America's continuing experiment with democracy.

Change is nothing new to American politics, but events of the past few years have brought about a new political environment, both at home and abroad. As the United States approaches the twenty-first century, political commentators increasingly refer to this period as the **postmodern age**. Postmodern America no longer controls the world's destiny but must operate within a world environment where other nations also exert significant influence.

The days of isolated nations are gone. Japan, dominated by the United States since World War II, has now become a major economic force throughout the world. The OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) nations exercise an influence on the world economy through oil. And, communism has crumbled after a fifty-year stranglehold. The world witnessed the reunification of East and West Germany, democratic freedom movements in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the rest of Eastern Europe, and democratic freedoms (**glasnost**) and capitalist economic incentives (**perestroika**) within what is now the former Soviet Union.

The political environment has changed at home, too: The **New Deal** era has faded away. These policies and economic programs, implemented by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s to get the country out of the Great Depression, have been replaced by a new set of political ideas. The conservative political movement grew considerably in the last decade. Conservative Republicans—Ronald Reagan and George Bush—won the presidency in all three presidential elections held during the 1980s. Now the election of Bill Clinton in 1992 signals even further change.

Bill Clinton speaks of a "new covenant" that seeks to combine the conservative values of responsibility and self-help with the liberal Democratic tradition of public assistance for disadvantaged people. His vision is of a redefined liberalism, one which empowers people "to take control of their own lives, then hold them accountable for doing so."

#### postmodern age

The present age where America no longer dominates the world economically or militarily; other nations have economic or military influence equal to America.

#### glasnost

The spirit of openness and democratic freedom operating within the former Soviet Union and former communist countries.

#### perestroika

The introduction of capitalist economic incentives within the former Soviet Union.

#### New Deal

President Franklin D. Roosevelt's plan for economic recovery in the 1930s that included government spending and regulation of the economy.

### Guided Review

1. In recent decades, the United States has entered a new period called \_\_\_\_\_, a time when many nations exert influence and enjoy prosperity.
2. The rise of conservative Republicans in the 1980s contributed to the passing away of \_\_\_\_\_ politics, which grew out of Franklin Roosevelt's reaction to the Great Depression.

*Learning Objective 1*

## CHANGING EXPECTATIONS: THE RECENT PAST

### Decades of Turmoil

The tumultuous 1960s and 1970s precipitated the demise of post-World War II politics. As Theodore H. White observed in *The Making of the President, 1972*, "The postwar world was dead and awaited burial." Three events highlight the transition to today's political environment.

### Great Society

President Lyndon Johnson's program designed to end poverty and racial injustice through governmental social engineering.

**Great Society** President Lyndon Johnson, elected by a landslide in 1964, took the nation on a bold course of social engineering: He announced a war on poverty and ushered the first major civil rights legislation in nearly 100 years through Congress. Medicare was added to the social security system, and Food Stamps were provided for the unemployed and the disadvantaged. Housing and urban mass transit were marked for revitalization. As President Johnson described in a 1964 speech, the **Great Society** "rests on abundance and liberty for all. It demands an end to poverty and racial injustice—to which we are totally committed."

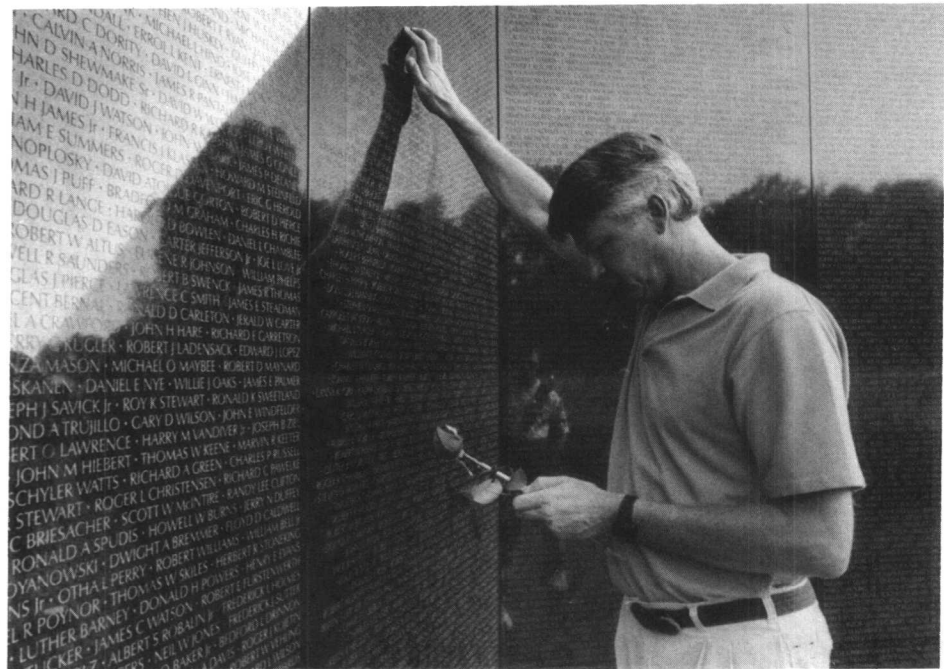
Whether it was the Vietnam War or poor planning, the Great Society failed to meet expectations. Programs were badly designed—funded by federal grants-in-aid to states and local governments. Specific projects often lacked coordination with other programs. Getting the legislation passed seemed more important than administering the programs properly. More critically, the Great Society raised the hope of millions of Americans—with pledges of racial justice, jobs for the unemployed, medical care for the elderly, housing for slum dwellers, and the eradication of poverty—and then left those promises unfulfilled. The Great Society represented a departure from Roosevelt's New Deal, which had created public works programs and provided economic regulations to end the Great Depression—relatively easily achievable goals. The Great Society asked people to think and act differently than they had in the past, demanding social change and requiring governmental social engineering to implement it.

### Vietnam War

American intervention into Southeast Asia to prevent a communist takeover of South Vietnam; by 1964 America was involved in full scale combat that eventually proved controversial and unsuccessful.

**Vietnam War** The second transitional event of the 1960s and 1970s was the **Vietnam War**. What began in the 1950s and early 1960s as technical assistance to the South Vietnamese government became, under President Johnson, full-scale combat by U.S. forces. Vietnam eventually became an unwanted, socially devastating war for the United States. The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union was already fading, and the claim that communism in Asia must be contained now seemed less convincing. Many Americans saw the Vietnam War as a civil war between North and South Vietnam, not a conflict in which America's national interest was at stake.

The war was extremely divisive. Many college students and other Americans demonstrated against it, and American opinion became polarized between "doves" and "hawks." The bombing of Cambodia touched off a wave of violent social protest. At



*The Vietnam War illustrated the depth of turmoil experienced by the nation in our recent past.*



Kent State University in Ohio, four students were killed in 1970 by National Guardsmen who were attempting to quell a protest demonstration. The Democratic party split over the war during the 1972 presidential election, some supporting the anti-war candidacy of George McGovern, others supporting the pro-war candidacy of Henry Jackson.

The war in Vietnam sapped the resources of the Great Society, leaving hopes and promises unfulfilled. The handling of the war created a credibility gap between government and its citizens. Support for government and for the war ebbed. It was a presidential war: Congress was ignored, even lied to. Critics claimed that presidential power had been misused—Congress never formally declared war—and that the personality and prestige of the president had become more important than national policy.

**Watergate** The **Watergate affair** involved the illegal break-in of the Democratic National Committee Headquarters (located in Washington D.C.'s Watergate building) by men working for President Richard Nixon's 1972 reelection campaign. Dubbed a "third-rate burglary" by the White House, the intent of the break-in was to find evidence of illegal contributions received by the Democrats from Castro and Cubans. The Watergate break-in was only one part of a whole campaign of illegal activities in support of Nixon's reelection: political "dirty tricks," bribery of public officials, illegal use of the FBI and CIA, spying on private citizens by the White House, and Nixon's efforts to both cover up these illegal activities and obstruct legal investigations into the activities.

The Watergate affair eventually touched America to the roots of its constitutional and democratic processes. As the revelations implicated the White House and finally the president himself, questions were raised about the unprecedented growth of presidential power. The "dirty tricks," the illegal campaign contributions, and the abandonment of standard party politics raised questions regarding the future of political parties.

The American people's confidence in their public officials and in their political system was at an all-time low on August 9, 1974, when Richard Nixon resigned from the presidency. The president himself had participated in the cover-up and had conspired to obstruct justice. The office of the presidency had been disgraced.

The Watergate affair severely tested the political system. When Gerald Ford became president after Nixon's resignation, pledging to "put Watergate behind us," the American people heaved a sigh of relief. The nation seemed safe, though the costs had been high and the presidency was in disrepute. Americans had grown cynical toward their government. Political parties were crumbling, and the electoral process was facing the challenge of reform in the wake of "dirty tricks" and rising costs. For two years the nation had been in the grip of Watergate; now its political leaders sought to govern again. Gerald Ford pardoned Richard Nixon for his part in Watergate. Jimmy Carter was elected president in 1976, pledging to restore faith in government and to get on with the business of governing the nation.

### Postmodern Era

The elections of Ronald Reagan and George Bush signaled a change in our political process—a growing conservative mood. The result of the failed programs of the Great Society, the Vietnam War, and Watergate was the American public's dissatisfaction with government and its programs. Reagan seized on this issue, promising to "get government off the backs of the people." Bush followed that pledge in his 1989 inaugural address by saying, "The old solution, the old way, was to think public money alone could end these problems, but we have learned that is not so."

**The Reagan Years** The changes proposed by Ronald Reagan were clearly expressed in his budget proposals to Congress: reduced federal spending and taxation, increased defense spending, and a greater reliance on the private sector to stimulate the economy.

The heart of the Reagan revolution was a reduced role for the federal government. Reagan believed the national government must limit how much it spends on programs. He called for great reductions in federal aid to education, programs for the

### Watergate affair

The 1972 illegal break-ins at the Democratic National Committee headquarters and the subsequent cover-up and conspiracy to obstruct justice, leading to the resignation of President Nixon.