# Andrican Government

FIFTH EDITION

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# UNDERSTANDING AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

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# UNDERSTANDING AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

opular esteem for American political institutions appears to be at a new low. The public alternates between curiosity about, and revulsion toward, politics and politicians. Yet beneath the scandals. and the attempts of elected officials to gain political advantage or minimize political disadvantage from these scandals, the role of government in our lives remains crucial. The fifth edition of our text, Understanding American Government, tries, as did the previous editions, to demonstrate to students why government is important, and to interest students in learning about the exciting, important, and controversial issues in American public life. We believe an introductory course succeeds if most students develop an understanding of major ideas, an interest in learning more about American government, and an ability to begin to understand and evaluate the news they hear about American political issues. Although a firm grounding in the essential "nuts and bolts" of American government is crucial, other approaches are helpful in motivating students' interest in government.

We offer the essential "nuts and bolts" of American government, but we also want the student to understand why (and sometimes how) these important features have evolved, their impact on government and individuals, and why they are controversial (if they are) and worth learning. For example, we prefer students to leave the course remembering why campaign finance laws were created and why they have the impact they do than to memorize specific dollar limitations on giving for different types of candidates from different types of organizations. The latter will change or will soon be forgotten, but understanding the "whys" will help the student understand the campaign finance issue long after the course is over.

We have also tried to interest students by describing and discussing the impact of various features of government. For example, students who do not understand why learning about voter registration laws is important may "see the light" when they understand the link between such laws and low voter turnout. Therefore, a particular emphasis throughout the book is on the *impact* of government: how individual features of government affect its responsiveness to different groups (in Lasswell's terms, "Who gets what and why?"). We realize that nothing in American politics is simple; rarely does one feature of government produce, by itself, a clear

outcome. Nevertheless, we think that students will be more willing to learn about government if they see some relationships between how government operates and the impact it has on them as citizens of America.

#### CHANGES IN THE FIFTH EDITION

We have revised substantially this edition. We have added two new features to reflect the current political climate. The first, Into the 21st Century, describes changes we are seeing in American politics as we end this century and speculates on developments as we enter the next. Most of these changes are linked to technology, which is reshaping many political practices and institutions and posing new public policy issues. These features include such diverse topics as teledemocracy (Chapter 4), the increasing use of technology in lobbying (Chapter 5), the permanent political campaign (Chapter 7), privacy in the information age (Chapter 14), and regulating cyberporn (Chapter 14).

A second feature attempts to confront students' overwhelming cynicism about government by providing examples of What Government Does Right. In an age when government bashing is the accepted norm, and in a book in which we are critical of many practices of government institutions and politicians, we thought it useful to give students some examples of successful governmental activities. After all, our government is entering its third century, and it would not be doing so unless at least some of its activities were successful. Examples include effective disaster relief (Chapter 3), the impact of the Voting Rights Act on the expansion of suffrage (Chapter 7), and the work ethic of justices (Chapter 13).

Writing the fifth edition gave us an opportunity to rethink several parts of the book as well as to update throughout. Chapter 1 has been thoroughly reorganized and revised, with a new focus on the American people and American culture. In Chapter 5, we have reorganized some of the material on interest group typologies, and in Chapter 6, Political Parties, we have a new discussion of party weaknesses and strengths and the contemporary party system. In Chapter 8, our treatment of the media explores why the media focus on scandal, and the changes brought about by the

emergence of around-the-clock news channels. Both Chapters 7 and 11, on campaign finance and the presidency, cover the political impact of the emergence of the Lewinsky scandal from the Whitewater and Jones investigations. Although the book was written before the outcome of the impeachment efforts is known, students will have an understanding of the events leading up to these efforts. More generally, the chapter on the presidency has been substantially revised and reorganized, and includes a new section on the political role of First Ladies.

As always, we have updated the judiciary, civil liberties, and civil rights chapters to incorporate new Supreme Court decisions. Chapter 15, Civil Rights, includes a new treatment of the women's movement, a new section on sexual harassment and another on discrimination against men, a new discussion on the contemporary status of African Americans, and a revised treatment of affirmative action.

We are delighted to have the opportunity to write a fifth edition and to improve the text further in ways suggested by our students and readers. We have been extremely pleased by the reaction of instructors and students to our first four editions.

#### SPECIAL FEATURES

Student interest and analytic abilities grow when confronted with a clash of views about important issues. To-day there is much discussion about how to stimulate the critical thinking abilities of students. Beginning with the first edition, our text has provided features especially designed to do this by involving students in the controversies—and excitement—of American politics.

YOU ARE THERE. Each chapter opens with a scenario called You Are There. In a page or two the student reads about a real-life political dilemma faced by a public official or a private citizen involved in a controversial issue. Students are asked to put themselves in that individual's shoes, to weigh the pros and cons, and to decide what should be done. The instructor may want to poll the entire class and use the You Are There as a basis for class discussion. In the Epilogue at the end of the chapter, we reveal the actual decision and discuss it in light of the ideas presented in the chapter.

More than one-third of the You Are There features in this edition are new. They focus on such timely topics as the question of whether the president can be sued while in office, the power of the tobacco lobby in fighting government action against them, the awkward dilemma facing Vice President Gore as the scandals surrounding President Clinton unfold, and the domestic political issues facing President Clinton as he planned his 1998 trip to China.

AMERICAN DIVERSITY. In many chapters, American Diversity boxes illustrate the impact of the social diversity of the American population on political life. The boxes help students understand how a diversity of backgrounds and attitudes shapes views of politics and positions on issues.

**INTO THE 21**<sup>ST</sup> **CENTURY.** Found in many chapters, these boxes focus on a key issue or political development related to a political institution or process. They are designed to help students hone their analytic abilities by showing them how developments outside of politics, often in the realm of technology, have important political implications.

WHAT GOVERNMENT DOES RIGHT. These boxes illustrate some of the successes of government. We believe this is a timely feature, given the antigovernment sentiment currently so pervasive. Far from being the ennobling activity as envisioned by the ancients, government now appears to be seen largely as corrupt and ineffective. Given this image, students might wonder why we have government at all. This feature gives students an opportunity to read about some concrete examples of government successes and think about the reasons for the existence of government.

This feature helps students evaluate whether commonly discussed solutions to complex public problems might work, or whether some might be only symbolic or actually might make the problem worse.

BOXES. In each chapter, several boxes highlighting interesting aspects of American politics draw the students into the material. Many illustrate how government and politics really work in a particular situation—how a corporation lobbies for government benefits, how a seemingly powerless group is able to organize for political action, how interest groups solicit money by mail, and how political polls are done—while others highlight features of government that may be of particular interest to students—what standard of risk should government use in regulating acne medication, how ethnicity shapes voting behavior, and the impact of federal programs on students.

Several other features help students organize their study.

**OUTLINE.** Each chapter begins with an outline of its contents.

**KEY TERMS**. Key terms are boldfaced within the text and listed at the end of each chapter and the glossary.

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**FURTHER READING.** A brief, annotated list of further readings contains works that might be useful to a student doing research or looking for further reading.

**ELECTRONIC RESOURCES.** Each chapter lists addresses of particularly interesting or useful sites on the Internet that relate directly to the topics covered in the chapter.

**GLOSSARY.** A glossary at the end of the book defines terms that may be unfamiliar to students.

# THE ORGANIZATION AND CONTENTS OF THE BOOK

While the basic organization of American government books is fairly standard, our text has a unique chapter on money and politics and a half chapter on environmental politics. Other features include a civil rights chapter that integrates a thorough treatment of constitutional issues concerning minorities and women, a discussion of the civil rights and women's rights movements, and contemporary research on the political status of these groups. We include in this chapter the special legal problems of Hispanics and Native Americans.

The organization of the book is straightforward. After material on democracy, the Constitution, and federalism, the book covers linkages, including money and politics, then institutions, and finally policy. Civil liberties and rights are treated after the chapter on the judiciary. But the book is flexible enough that instructors can modify the order of the chapters. Some instructors will prefer to cover institutions before process. Others may prefer to discuss civil liberties and rights when discussing the Constitution.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

The supplementary materials complement the book.

**INFOTRAC COLLEGE EDITION.** An online university library that lets students explore and use full-length articles from more than 700 periodicals for four months. When students log on with their personal ID, they will see immediately how easy it is to search. Students can print out the articles, which date back as far as three years. Includes readings from *U.S. News and World Report*, *National Review*, and *Washington Monthly* magazines.

**INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL.** Prepared by Pamela Imperato, University of North Dakota. Each chapter contains chapter outlines, suggested assignments, recommended Internet sites, and, particularly valuable, an extensive section correlating each chapter's content to the other

components (see below) of the complete ancillary package. This Other Resources section makes full use of the multimedia products available with this text by suggesting relevant InfoTrac articles, transparencies, Power Point slides, clips from the Political Science Video Library, especially CNN American Government Today, and portions of the CD-ROM America at Odds.

**TESTBANK.** Also prepared by Pamela Imperato, University of North Dakota. Contains multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blanks, and long and short essay questions.

**WORLD CLASS TOOLS TESTING.** This is a fully integrated collection of test creation, delivery, and classroom management tools, including all the test questions from the printed test bank. The package comprises World Class Test, Test Online, and World Class Manager software.

**TRANSPARENCY ACETATES PACKAGE.** Includes seventy-five four-color acetates featuring diagrams, charts, tables, and figures from the text and from other sources.

**POWERPOINT PACKAGE.** Includes all the images from the acetate package.

**CD-ROM AMERICA AT ODDS.** This interactive CD-ROM was developed for the Introductory American Government course to engage students and enable them to research issues, discuss ideas, formulate opinions, and interpret data in an interactive format. The America at Odds CD-ROM will engage students in the study of American government through twenty interactive modules covering enduring and multidimensional issues in American politics. These issues are presented in a rich mix of media, including digital video and audio, photos, graphics, text, and Internet technology.

**POLITICAL SCIENCE VIDEO LIBRARY.** Includes CNN videos and Grade Improvement: Taking Charge of Your Learning.

**STUDY GUIDE.** Each chapter contains a prose summary, an outline, key terms, concepts, events, and people, multiple-choice questions, essay topics, and critical thinking exercises. There is one version of the study guide that will accompany both versions of the text.

**COMPUTERIZED STUDY GUIDE.** An interactive study guide that lets students know why they answered incorrectly and guides them to the correct answer.

THINKING GLOBALLY, ACTING LOCALLY. This is a new supplement designed to help students get involved

and become active citizens, authored by John Soares. Topics include tips to writing letters to the editor, volunteering, how to change laws, and registering to vote.

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT INTERNET ACTIVITIES. Prepared by Karen Casto, it contains activities for all major topics in the text. Students are asked to surf the 'net to obtain answers to interesting questions.

THE HANDBOOK OF SELECTED CASES. Includes over thirty Supreme Court cases.

THE HANDBOOK OF SELECTED LEGISLATION. Includes twelve excerpts of legislation passed by the U.S. Congress that has a great impact on American politics.

**READINGS IN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT.** Includes interesting, timely, and thought-provoking articles that relate to material covered in the text. Articles cover dynamic topics ranging from "Passion at Yale" (coed dorms) to "President Clinton's Way with Women."

AN INTRODUCTION TO CRITICAL THINKING AND WRITING IN AMERICAN POLITICS. Introduces students to a number of critical thinking rules and guidelines to writing a successful research paper.

**THE COLLEGE SURVIVAL GUIDE.** Hints and references to aid college students by Bruce M. Rowe.

YOUR RESEARCH: DATA ANALYSIS FOR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT. Prepared by Eric Plutzer, Pennsylvania State University, this consists of graphics-oriented statistics software, a workbook, and data sets (IBM platform).

**WESTLAW.** Free WestLaw hours to qualified adopters.

THE WADSWORTH POLITICAL SCIENCE RESOURCE CENTER. HTTP://POLITICALSCIENCE.WADSWORTH. COM This site includes information on all of Wadsworth/West's political science texts in American Government, Comparative Politics, International Politics, Constitutional Law, and Texas politics. The Resource Center contains information on surfing the Web, links to general political sites, a career center, election updates, and a discussion forum. Each major text has a companion Web site that includes self-quizzes, chapter links to various related Web sites, dis-

cussion topics, and more. The America at Odds section of the site corresponds with the interactive CD-ROM of the same name, which is intended for the introductory American Government course. Visit the Welch home page for quizzes and more.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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We are also grateful to the many other readers of our draft manuscript, as listed on page xix. Without their assistance the book would have been less accurate, less complete, and less lively.

We are also grateful to those instructors who have used the book and relayed their comments and suggestions to us. Our students at the University of Nebraska have also provided invaluable reactions to the previous editions.

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