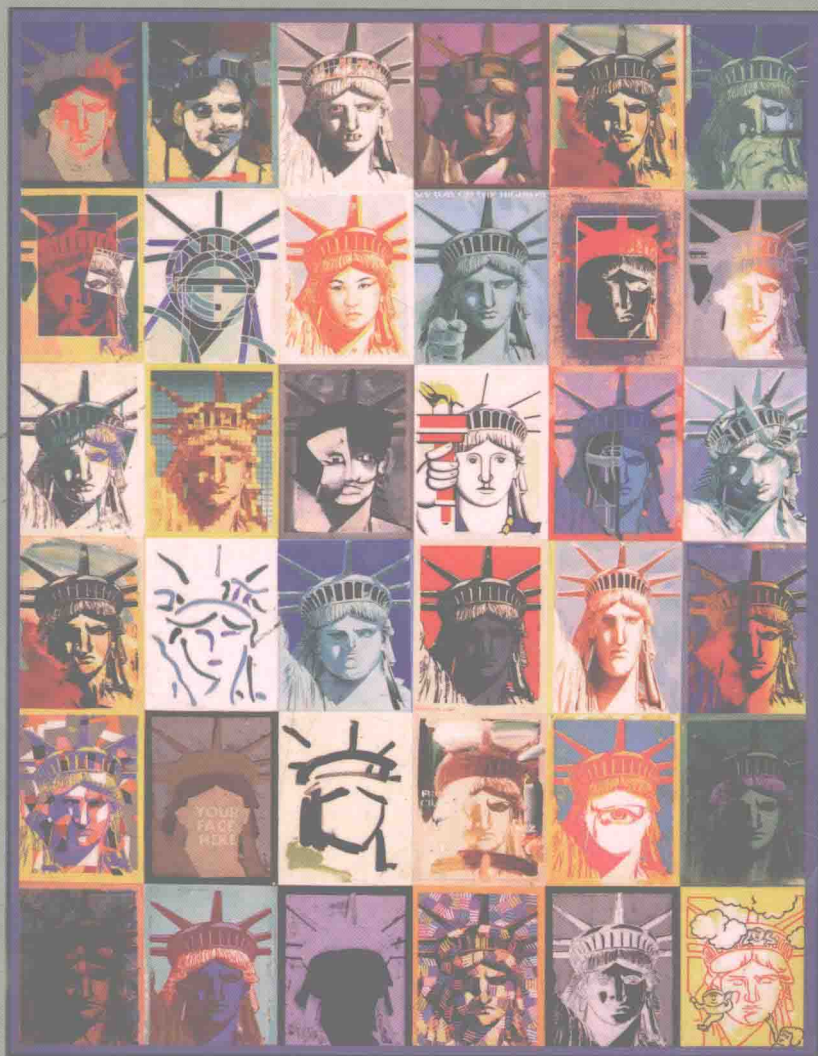


The LANAHAN READINGS in the American Polity

Second Edition



Edited by
Ann G. Serow
Everett C. Ladd

THE LANAHAH READINGS

in the

American Polity

SECOND EDITION



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To Our Students

P R E F A C E

The first edition of *The LANAHAN READINGS in The American Polity* began a happy new collaboration of the editors with LANAHAN PUBLISHERS, INC., and Donald W. Fusting, who founded this new publishing company in 1995. For over a decade, we had worked closely and confidently with Don on two earlier versions of this book, *The American Polity Reader*, and we were pleased that the association would continue—in fact, quite pleased as it turned out: *The LANAHAN READINGS* was assigned in over two hundred schools.

Launching another new edition of an established volume is still a big step. What matters to students using the volume, however, is what's between the covers. Here, readers of the new second edition will find in large measure both fundamental continuity in basic design and big changes in specific readings.

There's good reason for continuity. This book is designed to help undergraduates who are taking the basic American government course better understand their country's political system by providing essential readings on American ideas, constitutional system, core political institutions, public opinion, political competition, and policy debates. All of these readings have in fact shown exceptional continuity over time because they reflect the views and values of a society that is strikingly similar now at the end of the twentieth century to what it was when the United States was founded in the late eighteenth century.

At first glance, this proposition might seem surprising. After all, in some regards the America we now inhabit differs greatly from that of George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson. They traveled either on foot or, quite literally, by horsepower; we travel faster and more comfortably in automobiles and jet planes. They could communicate only face to face or through the written word; we have now gone beyond the telephone to the Internet. The average life expectancy in their day was thirty-three years; in ours, seventy-five—and so on is the process of change across so many of the physical dimensions of life.

But in social and political values, Americans in 1776 and now, in the

twenty-first century, are similar people. That's true because America's founding brought the nation to modernity so abruptly and completely. It was a profound break from the aristocratic past that dominated European life—as indeed life in countries all around the world. The great French social commentator, Alexis de Tocqueville, grasped this fact more fully perhaps than anyone else and wrote what is still the most insightful book on American society, *Democracy in America* (Volume I, 1835 and Volume II, 1839). “The emigrants who colonized America at the beginning of the seventeenth century,” Tocqueville wrote, “in some way separated the principle of democracy from all those other principles against which they contended when living in the heart of the old European societies, and transplanted that principle only on the shores of the New World.” He did not study America, Tocqueville went on, “just to satisfy curiosity, however legitimate; I sought there lessons from which we might profit. . . . I accept that [democratic] revolution as an accomplished fact, or a fact that soon will be accomplished, and I selected of all the peoples experiencing it that nation in which it has come to the fullest and most peaceful completion. . . . I admit that I saw in America more than America; it was the shape of democracy itself which I sought, its inclinations, character, prejudices, and passions.”

Now, over 160 years after Tocqueville wrote, America remains a democratic nation and an intensely individualist society—the latter encompassing much of what he understood when he used the term “democracy.” This broad continuity in social values and social structure goes far to explain the institutional continuities we find in *The LANAHAN READINGS*.

The world of American politics keeps changing, nonetheless. Students need readings on the country's political institutions and its political competition that present the American polity in a fresh, contemporary form. So for the second edition of *The LANAHAN READINGS in The American Polity*, we have replaced about a third of the selections. Among the many new readings:

Seymour Martin Lipset in *American Exceptionalism* describes American individualism as a double-edged sword.

Robert Roberts and Marion Doss discuss scandals, ethics, and the ongoing “public integrity war.”

David Brady and Craig Volden focus in on “supermajorities” to explain congressional gridlock.

Linda Killian looks at what happened to the Republican revolution in *The Freshmen*.

Irwin Gertzog reports on the status of women in Congress.

Maurilio Vigil examines the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

In *Strangers Among Us*, Roberto Suro reveals the grassroots development of an Hispanic activist group.

Steven Epstein discusses the variety of gay and lesbian movements and their goals.

Charles Black interprets the Founders' carefully wrought basis for impeachment.

E. J. Dionne sets the stage for election 2000 by examining the courting of the "Anxious Middle" voters by the Democratic, Republican, and Reform Parties.

Larry Sabato and Glenn Simpson in *Dirty Little Secrets* and Stephen Ansolabehere and Shanto Iyengar in *Going Negative* reveal the negative campaign strategies that will likely show up during election 2000.

Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura offers his own approach to winning elections.

Michael Lewis in *Trail Fever* and Howard Kurtz in *Spin Cycle* offer some insights on politicians and the media.

To guide readers through these and all other selections, a brief description of each article appears in brackets below its listing in the Table of Contents. To help orient students, we continue to provide brief introductions to each article. In doing so, we can offer some political, and occasionally, historical and cultural background to the selections. To help students further, we again continue the process of writing footnotes not to dredge up obscure and unnecessary information, but to make clear those words, phrases, and allusions that students need defined or explained in order to understand the particular reading.

As with the first edition, Ann Serow has written the *Instructor's Guide and Quiz Book*. This ancillary gives instructors an ample amount of questions with which to test their students on each of the readings, and also, some further ideas on how the selections can be used. For example, there are a number of readings that can be set up in a point-counterpoint arrangement for instructors who might want to include this approach in their classroom.

Returning to our opening comments, we have been engaged in this project for over a decade. We believe that the continuity of having the same team, author/editors and publishing editor, has helped keep the goals of the book in focus: This is a book for students of American government and the list of selections was made, and revised, for them.

They, too, have contributed heavily to the reader-making process by their in-class comments. The selections can truly be said to have been class-tested. For this, we again dedicate *The LANAHAN READINGS* to these willing and observant participants, our students.

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