

The LANAHAN READINGS in the

American Polity

Third Edition



Edited by Ann G. Serow
Everett C. Ladd

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in the
American Polity

THIRD 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. During the previous 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 second edition of *The LANAHAN READINGS* was assigned in nearly four 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 third 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 beginning of the twenty-first 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 LANAHAH 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 third edition of *The LANAHAH READINGS in The American Polity*, we have replaced about a quarter of the selections. Among the many new readings:

Robert Putnam, in *Bowling Alone*, looks at our “social capital” and the decline of civic association.

Barbara Sinclair makes intelligible for students the byzantine budget process in Congress in her *Unorthodox Lawmaking*.

David Gergen isolates the ingredients needed for presidential success in his *Eyewitness to Power*.

Robert Reich, in *Locked in the Cabinet*, opens the cabinet door just enough to let students see what a department head has to deal with.

David Yalof takes us through the travails of becoming a Supreme Court justice in his *Pursuit of Justices*.

Appellate Judge Richard Posner offers some thoughts on security versus civil liberties.

Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward retrace voting patterns once again in their *Why Americans Still Don't Vote*.

The political staff at the *Washington Post* gives an analysis of the controversial result of the 2000 presidential election.

Katharine Graham relays the excitement and constraints of investigating one of the biggest media stories in American politics—Watergate.

Benjamin Barber in *Jihad vs. McWorld* and Samuel Huntington in *The Clash of Civilizations* consider America's post-Cold War changed world.

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.

This third edition arrives with two changes in organization. First, because so many instructors assign readings on civil liberties and civil rights earlier in their courses, second edition Part Fourteen, "Civil Liberties and Civil Rights," has been moved up for the new third edition to the Part Nine position to follow the readings on the judiciary. Second, the sections on the political economy and public welfare (formerly Parts 15 and 16) are now combined into one section, Part Fifteen, "Political Economy and Public Welfare."

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 well 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.

AGS

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