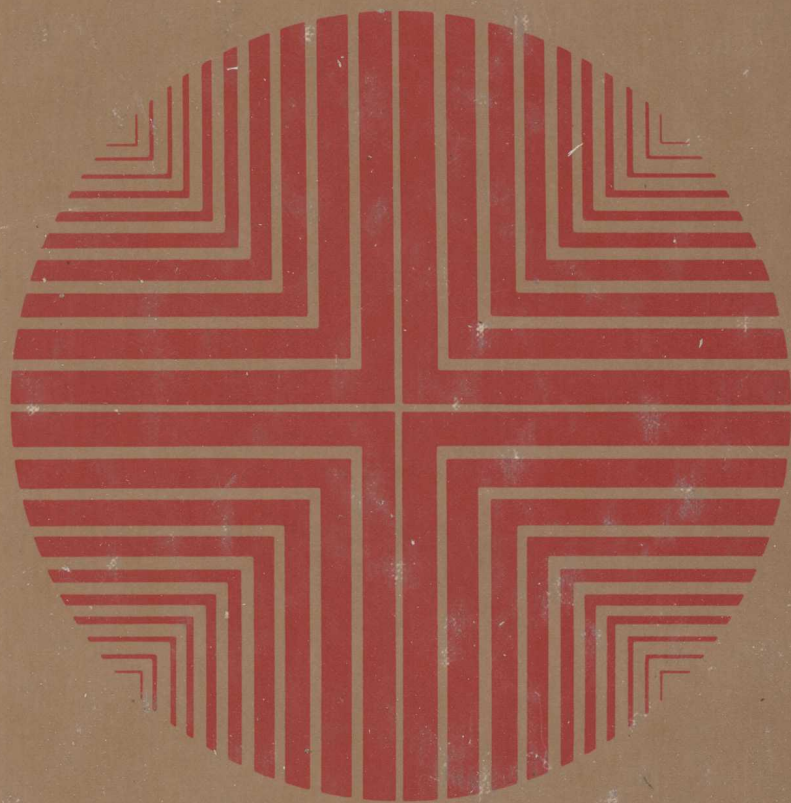


BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT, AND SOCIETY



Douglas F. Greer

Business, Government, and Society



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Preface

This is a text for a first course in business and government. The titles of such courses tend to be very broad, whether they are taught in business schools or economics departments. Titles of books in this field are no less expansive. The obvious reason for this is that the government's impact on business is now enormous in weight, variety, complexity, and effect. As this impact grew with time, textbooks on the topic likewise grew—in weight, complexity, and so on. In reaction to this, some recent textbooks have retreated into brevity and simplicity.

The aim of this book is to be neither too fat nor too thin, neither too simple nor too complex. Nevertheless it is long, and in many places it is complex because government policy toward business *is* voluminous and contorted. In other words, a simple, brief book would by nature misrepresent the truth.

To soften the blow, I have tried to write good introductions and overviews. I have also been repetitious where I thought it could be helpful. Furthermore, I have made a special effort to separate things that should be separated—things like point-to-point communications and broadcast communications. These and other characteristics give the book a flexibility not otherwise attainable. If a simple survey is all that an instructor wants, he or she can get it from Part I in its entirety, plus the introductory chapters of Parts II, IV, and V, plus certain selected key chapters such as 6, 7, 15, 21, and 26. On the other hand, if a more complete tour of state and federal capital buildings is desired, the book is open to the diligent and courageous. Indeed, when combined with appropriate supplementary texts of case readings or government documents, the book could be the foundation for an entire year of study, with separate courses in the sequence on such broad topics as antitrust or economic regulation.

In ideological point of view, the book takes a middle path. It is neither “libertarian” nor “radical,” neither “liberal” nor “conservative.” It tries to give each view its due when it is important to do so. Moreover, the book is neither strictly economic-theoretical nor patently legal-institutional. Notions of economic efficiency are fully developed, but value judgments other than economic efficiency frequently enter the story. That is why “society” is in the title. I seriously doubt that anyone could properly explain or assess government policy without reference to a wide range of value judgments. Finally, I have also taken the middle path between the market and the government. Each is depicted in its ideal form. Each is criticized

for its failures and imperfections. Indeed, the reader should be warned that this middle course fosters many of the book's complexities and details. If markets were always good and governments always bad, or conversely, if governments were always good and markets always bad, this book would have been very simple and spindly.

This book would have been nonexistent were it not for the generous and able help of others. Professors Robert E. Smith of the University of Oregon, Sanford Berg of the University of Florida, and Sidney M. Blumner of California State Polytechnic University—Pomona contributed with careful reading and wise comments. Finally, my wife Wendy, who for some mysterious reason continues to make great sacrifices as my editor and typist, was indispensable to this project.

D. F. G.

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