



Perspectives on American Politics

THIRD EDITION

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Perspectives on American Politics

To Susan J. S. Lasser, with love

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Preface

The third edition of *Perspectives on American Politics* presents a collection of interesting and important readings on matters of fundamental concern to students and professors of American government. Like its predecessors, the third edition is organized in a manner that provides a variety of perspectives on these issues, from classic works in American politics to contemporary accounts and analyses by academics and nonacademics alike. The third edition has been fully updated; over sixty percent of the selections reflect recent developments in American politics. But the third edition is not simply an updated version of previous editions. The selections are now organized around four essential perspectives—Foundations, American Politics Today, The Comparative Context, and View from the Inside. Every chapter now includes a selection providing a comparative or international perspective on American politics.

The Purpose of This Reader

My goal in *Perspectives on American Politics* has been to develop a collection of readings that is clearly organized; that can be easily integrated into an American government course and actually help in teaching the course; and that will hold the students' (and professor's) attention by presenting a wide variety of viewpoints, writing styles, and approaches. Above all, I have endeavored to create a reader that shows students just why I—and all other professors of American government—find this subject so meaningful and important.

The challenge in compiling an American government reader is to maintain structure and coherence without sacrificing the extraordinary eclecticism that marks the enormous body of writings about American government. The solution incorporated here is to begin each chapter with certain key questions in mind and then to present a set of readings designed to provide various perspectives on those questions. This approach allows students to focus in on a relatively narrow range of critical issues, while at the same time giving them a variety of perspectives on those issues. All of the readings, however diverse they might be, revolve around the central chapter questions and thus maintain a clear and cohesive relationship with each other, and with the readings in earlier and later chapters.

Another key goal has been to produce a reader that professors and students alike will find easy to use. The thirteen chapters of this book correspond to the most frequently assigned chapters of most American government textbooks, so they should fit neatly into any standard syllabus. Furthermore, many of the chapter and reading questions can serve as essay assignments, and the selections can be used as a starting point for class discussions of controversial or important issues.

The readings in this book should help students develop critical thinking skills along with providing a deeper and clearer appreciation for the complexities of American politics.

Finally, as in earlier editions, I have avoided excessive editing, especially of important classic works. With minor exceptions, individual numbers of the *Federalist Papers* are presented in full. Where editing of the selections was required, I have focused on preserving large portions of the originals.

The Third Edition

In preparing the third edition, I carefully scrutinized each selection for readability, usefulness, and timeliness. The following changes and new features are worthy of note.

- Four essential perspectives in every chapter. To make the third edition easier to use and to provide a consistent chapter structure, the number of perspectives has been reduced to four: Foundations, American Politics Today, The Comparative Context, and View from the Inside. Reducing the number of perspectives allows for consistency from chapter to chapter, making the reader easier to use for students and professors alike. At the same time, however, these perspectives are diverse enough to give students a wide range of vantage points on American politics. These four perspectives appear in the same order in every chapter.
- Over 60 percent new selections reflect recent developments in American politics. It was obviously necessary to include new selections to cover developments in American politics since the publication of the second edition. These include the Clinton impeachment, the 1996 and 1998 elections, new trends in federalism, a series of Supreme Court decisions on sexual harassment, and the rapidly changing face of the American media. These selections are especially prominent in the chapters on federalism, civil rights, the media, political parties and elections, Congress, and the Presidency.
- New comparative emphasis. As described in detail below, each chapter now includes a reading designed to put American politics into comparative and international perspective. These new readings reflect increasing interest in exposing students to global issues, and also allow students to place developments in the United States in a broader context.

The Perspectives

All of the readings are grouped into four perspectives that are presented in every chapter in the order listed here:

• Foundations. The first perspective presents either a classic work in American politics, an important theoretical reading, or a seminal work in American political science. Examples include selections from the Federalist Papers; important Supreme Court cases, such as Brown v. Board of Education or Marbury v. Madison; and excerpts from works such as John Stuart Mill's On Liberty and E. E. Schattschneider's The Semisovereign People.

- American Politics Today. The second perspective provides a snapshot of the current state of American politics. This section often comprises works by political scientists and others who do not merely describe the current state of affairs, but seek to analyze and understand it. These selections may also include contemporary Supreme Court cases or other works that present new developments in American politics. Examples include a scholarly account of the "new legislative process," by the political scientist Barbara Sinclair; an analysis of the Rehnquist Court; contemporary cases on abortion and sexual harassment; and articles dealing with the Clinton impeachment and, more broadly, the modern presidency.
- The Comparative Context. Each chapter now includes a reading chosen to provide a global or comparative perspective on American politics. Choosing the selections for this category was not easy, particularly since I could not presume that the students would have preexisting knowledge of international affairs or other political systems. In every case my aim was to choose a reading that cast light on key issues in the United States; purists may note that some of the readings deal more with international affairs than comparative politics. Examples include a comparison of American and European federalism; an analysis of the activities of the Japanese lobby in the United States; a comparison of presidential and parliamentary systems; and an argument in favor of proportional representation in American elections.
- View from the Inside. This popular perspective from earlier editions appears now in every chapter. These readings provide an inside view of American politics and government—often, but not always, in the first person. Examples include accounts by former Labor Secretary Robert Reich and former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Colin Powell, a journalist's view of modern campaign politics, and an inside look at the Supreme Court from the perspective of a former clerk.

Pedagogy

Like earlier editions, the third edition of *Perspectives on American Politics* includes pedagogical devices designed to make life easier for students and professors alike. These include chapter, category, and reading introductions as well as questions that orient students to the key themes, promote critical thinking, and make essential background information available. The questions can also be used by students for review purposes and by instructors for generating class discussion. Outlines for difficult readings, such as the *Federalist Papers*, provide some help to students approaching these works for the first time. Finally, I have provided a separate Instructor's Resource Manual, which features teaching hints for each chapter and each selection; ideas for assignments and class discussions; additional readings; and Internet links.

Some Technical Notes

I have used several standard conventions throughout the text. The omission of large amounts of material is indicated by centered bullets (• • •); smaller omissions are indicated by ellipses (. . .). In general I have not corrected antique

spellings, nor have I modified older styles of punctuation or capitalization. I have eliminated virtually all footnotes; readers who are interested in source notes and other references should go directly to the originals. Where necessary, I have inserted explanatory or additional matter within brackets. For the sake of clarity, I have frequently shortened selection titles, and in some cases I have modified them substantially.

An Apology, More or Less

No anthology can contain everything. Undoubtedly there will be some who are dismayed or scandalized at the omission or inclusion of a particular article, case, or essay. To some extent the third edition reflects the criticisms, compliments, or suggestions offered by particular readers. All such communications are welcome and appreciated; my e-mail address is william.lasser@hubcap.clemson.edu.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful for the advice and assistance of editors, colleagues, and friends both in the preparation of the original manuscript and in the revisions for the third edition. Above all, I would like to thank Vik Mukhija at Houghton Mifflin, who consistently provided excellent advice, was patient when I (frequently) missed deadlines, and who, in general, kept this project in focus and on track. I am grateful as well to Melissa Mashburn, who helped set the tone and direction for the third edition, and has provided much-appreciated support and guidance on this and other projects. It was also a pleasure to work with the production and marketing staff at Houghton Mifflin Company, particularly Julie Lane, who had overall responsibility for turning my manuscript into a finished book, and Sandra McGuire, senior marketing manager for political science. I am also grateful for the production and manufacturing expertise of Jennifer Meyer Dare and Marie Barnes.

My colleagues at Clemson University—particularly Laura Olson, Marty Slann, and Steve Wainscott—gave much helpful advice, and did not openly object when I forgot to return their books after six or seven months. I also appreciate the suggestions of Robert Vipond of the University of Toronto, particularly on the comparative selections. A number of others read and critiqued various parts of this manuscript or otherwise gave helpful suggestions:

Manley Elliott Banks, Virginia Commonwealth University Stephen Bennett, University of Cincinnati Cary Covington, University of Iowa Jack Citrin, University of California, Berkeley Louis DeSipio, University of Illinois, Urbana Robert Dion, Wabash College R. Shep Melnick, Brandeis University David L. Paletz, Duke University Robert Scigliano, Boston College Mark Silverstein, Boston University

Finally, I thank my children—Max, who has grown up with this book, and Adina Rose, who is just beginning the process. Their very existence is a constant delight. Most of all, I thank my wife, Susan J. S. Lasser, who—after twenty years, two children, and three editions—remains a constant inspiration. As with the earlier editions, this remains, with love and gratitude, her book.

W.L.

Perspectives on American Politics

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"A zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government, and many other points . . . have, in turn, divided mankind into parties, [and] inflamed them with mutual animosity."

1.2 Federalist No. 47 9 Iames Madison

"In the extent and proper structure of the Union . . . we behold a republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government."

1.3 Federalist No. 48 12

James Madison

"Will it be sufficient to mark, with precision, the boundaries of these departments in the constitution of the government, and to trust to parchment barriers against the encroaching spirit of power?"

1.4 Federalist No. 51 14James Madison"Ambition must be made to counteract ambition."

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"The proposed Constitution . . . is, in strictness, neither a national nor a federal Constitution, but a combination of both."

2.3 Federalist No. 45 61

James Madison

"The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and indefinite."

II American Politics Today 65

2.4 The War Between the States . . . and Washington Garry Wills

"On a whole range of . . . issues, the states have been out ahead of Federal programs, reversing a long-term trend. . . . [P]eople with new ideas and a passion for public policy are turning away from Washington and attacking social issues at the state and local levels. This shift raises deep questions about the virtues of direct democracy, the merits of federalism and the possibility of isolating states from the national society."

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