



Understanding American Politics, Second Edition

By Stephen Brooks, Douglas L. Koopman, J. Matthew Wilson

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Understanding American Politics provides a unique introduction to the contemporary political landscape of the United States by using as its core organizing feature the idea of "American exceptionalism," a concept that is at least as old as Tocqueville's study of American democracy.

The second edition of *Understanding American Politics* maintains the unique strengths of the first edition while offering improved coverage of political institutions. A single omnibus chapter on institutions has been reorganized and split into three separate chapters on Congress, the presidency, and the courts. A new chapter on public opinion has also been included, and the chapter on religion and politics has been completely rewritten with a deeper appreciation of religion's influential role. The book has been revised throughout, taking into account the dramatic changes that have emerged since the 2010 congressional elections and the 2012 presidential election. The text also pays close attention to what is seen as the irreversible decline in America's global influence.

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Editorial Review

Review

By focusing on what makes the U.S. system unique, the authors have written a truly original American politics text. Theirs is not a formulaic introductory volume, but rather one with a thematic focus that carries throughout the book and keeps students continually engaged. Nicely done! (Mark J. Rozell, George Mason University)

I applaud the authors' emphasis on the role of religion in American politics. From the civil rights movement to the Moral Majority, from those opposed to the Vietnam War to those opposed to legalizing same-sex marriage, religious beliefs have been an important driving force in bringing issues into the government's sphere of responsibility. It is an important and often overlooked dimension of American politics. (Cary R. Covington, University of Iowa)

Understanding American Politics is the most remarkable introduction to American politics I have read. With a genuinely Tocquevillian flare, this text artfully melds a clear-eyed and balanced analysis of the normative, behavioral, and structural forces at work in America's unique brand of political life. (Matthew S. Holland, President, Utah Valley University)

For students not based in the US, this book's 'lightly comparative' approach makes it very accessible. Arguing the case for 'American exceptionalism' gives it a theme around which students can formulate their own views on various dimensions of US politics. (Donley T. Studlar, University of Strathclyde)

About the Author

Stephen Brooks is Professor of Political Science at the University of Windsor and teaches political science at the University of Michigan. He has written several books on American politics including *As Others See Us: The Causes and Consequences of Foreign Perceptions of America* (2006) and *American Exceptionalism in the Age of Obama* (2013).

Douglas L. Koopman is Professor of Political Science at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. His most recent book is *Religion and American Politics: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives* (2010).

J. Matthew Wilson is Associate Professor of Political Science at Southern Methodist University. His research, which has appeared in a range of books and scholarly journals, focuses on public opinion, elections, representation, and religion and politics, both in the United States and abroad.

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