



Analyzing American Democracy: Politics and Political Science

Jon R. Bond, Kevin B. Smith

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How can political science help you understand the world you live in? Modern approaches to the study of politics analyze *why* Congress, the president, the courts, and other political actors do what they do. Learning to think critically about power, institutions, and rules helps citizens engage constructively in politics and the wider world around them and helps us systematically identify false claims, biases, and misconceptions.

Analyzing American Democracy teaches students to think analytically by presenting current political science theories and research in answering the engaging, big questions facing American politics today. It serves as both an introduction to American politics and to the discipline of political science by reflecting the theoretical developments and empirical inquiry conducted by researchers. Every chapter highlights the most current research and discusses related public policy. It demonstrates for students how to think critically and analytically, bringing theoretical insight to contemporary American politics.

More than just a comprehensive overview and description of how American politics works, Jon Bond and Kevin Smith demonstrate how politics can be studied systematically. Throughout the text, they introduce students to the insights gleaned from rational choice, behavioral, and biological approaches to politics. Understanding these three social scientific models and their applications helps students get the most out of their American government course and out of this text--they learn a way of thinking that they can use to make sense of future challenges facing the American polity.

A number of features help aid comprehension and critical thinking:

- Key Questions at the start of every chapter frame the learning objectives and concepts
- "Thinking Analytically" boxes demonstrate how political scientists answer pressing questions about the American polity and model critical thinking
- "Applying the Frameworks" boxes show why theory is so important in making systematic sense of the political world
- "New Directions" boxes will highlight cutting edge research in political science to highlight some of the big contemporary questions the book addresses
- Tables, Figures, Charts, and Maps throughout present the empirical details of American politics, helping students gain quantitative literacy
- Top Ten Takeaway Points at the end of every chapter recap the most important points covered but also help students discern the general principles that make sense of the numerous factual details
- Key Terms are bolded in the text, defined in the margins, recapped at the end of the chapter, and compiled in a glossary, all to help insure that students can effortlessly master the vocabulary of American politics and political science in order to move on to the more important concepts.

NEW TO THE SECOND EDITION

Updated coverage throughout includes

- Affordable Care Act in the context of federalism

- Death penalty debates
- Affirmative action
- Racism, homophobia, and hate crimes in the wake of Ferguson
- Weakening of the Voting Rights Act
- Gay marriage history and new developments
- Tea Party and traditional party interface
- Campaign finance upheaval
- The changing Congressional landscape and increasing political polarization
- Updated tables, figures, and photos present the empirical details of American politics, helping students gain quantitative literacy
- Landmark court cases, now highlighted and linked to key concepts
- Refreshed feature boxes reinforce the book's dedication to helping students understand the scientific approach to politics, incorporating intriguing new topics including genetics and public opinion, the biology of political participation, and evolution and the bureaucracy

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