



Preface

The need persists for widespread mastery of the political system John Quincy Adams once described as “the most complicated on the face of the globe.” Adams was writing about two hundred years ago, and things certainly haven’t gotten less complicated since then. In the early 2000s, we experienced a number of political complications, including three close and contentious presidential elections that geographically and ideologically divided our nation into “red” and “blue” states. We suffered a devastating terrorist attack on our own soil, plunging the nation into an open-ended and contentious “War on Terror.” We went to war with Iraq for the second time in a dozen years. We saw the national economy reach great heights and disturbing lows, causing unemployment and recession in the private sector and a return of enormous deficit spending in the public sector. How do we make sense of all of these ups and downs of economics, ideology, and politics? We think the best approach is to take seriously our understanding of the political system in which all of these events take place. To that end, we offer today’s students a comprehensive, readable, and balanced study of the context, structure, and process of American politics.

Economics, Ideology, and Politics

A distinguishing feature of this book is the explicit recognition that economics and ideology significantly influence American politics. No student or instructor in a course on American government is immune to the ideological and economic forces that help shape the perennial pursuit of power in a democracy. Nor is any class or instructor untouched by recurring problems ranging from budget deficits and health care to unemployment and the underclass. Economics and ideology, in one way or another, intersect nearly all of them.

This text highlights, in several ways, the importance of economics and ideology in the context of American government. The chapter on public policy and economics explores the relationship between politics and economics, as does a series of “Politics and Economics” boxes (described later) throughout the rest of the book. Students see how economic decisions have political consequences and how political decisions affect the economy. This is essential information in a day when economic topics frequently dominate electoral campaigns, television news, and conversation at the dinner table. However, the text assumes no prior knowledge of economics, and references to economic policy are free of confusing jargon.

Understanding differences among political beliefs is likewise essential at a time when the labels “liberal” and “conservative,” “left” and “right” are hurled about. Such terms can be baffling, particularly because their meanings have not been consistent. Consequently, the text underscores the importance of political ideology—the ideas people have about what government should or should not do and what kind of government they should have. This emphasis is reflected in a series of “Politics and Ideas” boxes (described below) that appear throughout the text. The chapter on political ideologies is nearly unique among shorter volumes on American government because it draws a road map that guides students through intellectual debates, past and present, in American politics. Additionally, the chapter that deals with civil liberties and civil rights probes ideological distinctions among Americans concerning fundamental freedoms. Such an encompassing survey of the spectrum of political ideas encourages students both to comprehend and to tolerate points of view other than their own, enabling them to gain further insight into political differences that exist nationwide.

New to the Eighth Edition

American politics is a constantly changing montage of people and events, of facts and opinions. In order to keep up with our changing environment, and to make sure students have the most up-to-date information available, each new edition of *Introduction to American Government* undergoes a vigorous process of fact-checking and updating. In this edition, for example, readers will find revised weblinks and readings for further study; more critical thinking questions; and discussions of the latest events in American government—such as the 2014 elections, immigration reform, conflict with ISIS, racial tensions, and important Supreme Court decisions on same-sex marriage and on the First Amendment. In addition, each chapter contains important new material.

Pedagogical Features

This textbook is not a “theme” or point-of-view book. Aside from emphasizing the importance of politics and political involvement, the book embraces no single ideological perspective; it does not attempt to make readers Democrats or Republicans, liberals or conservatives. To ensure a single voice in this presentation, one author has served as general editor.

The goals are knowledge of, and critical thinking about, American politics and government. Accordingly, we have designed the book to encourage students to engage the material. Passive reading is not enough. Understanding so important and complex a subject necessitates active intellectual involvement.

To aid in learning, this textbook incorporates several serviceable pedagogical features.

Chapter Objectives

Each chapter begins with a brief overview of topics to be covered or a relevant story. Reading the information provided in the chapter objectives cues your critical thinking and analytical thought processes before you dig into the chapter itself.

e-Resources

Beyond the pages of this textbook lies a wealth of information about the American government concepts described here. Each chapter identifies online resources specific to the subject matter being presented. These resources offer you an opportunity to further explore topics from the text for an even more comprehensive experience.

Figures and Tables

Tables, graphs, and maps appear throughout the text to display both quantitative and conceptual data. Some illustrations present new data, while others summarize information covered in the body of the chapter.

Special Boxed Features

“Politics and Ideas”

These boxes appearing throughout the text explore ideological topics in depth. They demonstrate how ideological divisions generate different political consequences. The text includes the following Politics and Ideas boxes:

- Whose Constitution Is It?
- Race and (In)Justice: Ferguson, Missouri
- Millennials and Political Ideology
- Textbooks and Children’s Ideas About American Politics
- Media Monopolies?
- Pluralism and Elitism
- Midterm Elections: Reflection and Change
- Two Ideologues Leave the House
- A “New Kind of War”—The Ongoing War on Terrorism

- A Six-Year Term for Presidents?
- Immigration Reform: Laws and Executive Orders
- The Road to a New Cabinet Department
- Political Ideologies and the Welfare State
- Contrasting Approaches to Foreign Policy: Idealism, Realism, and Isolationism

“Politics and Economics”

These boxes appearing throughout the text highlight special economics topics, illustrating the relationship between economics and politics. The text includes the following Politics and Economics boxes:

- Handling a Hurricane: Federalism and Disaster Relief
- Economic Status and Ideology
- Economic Status and Party Identification
- The President and Economic Policy Making
- Regulation and Cost-Benefit Analysis
- The Supreme Court and Economic Policy
- The Ideology of Economic Policy

“Contemporary Controversies”

These boxes are present in several chapters to illustrate how the subject matter covered in the chapter carries over into disputes that divide the nation. The text includes the following Contemporary Controversies boxes:

- America Attacked
- Changing State Constitutions
- How Much Affirmative Action?
- Public Opinion and Terrorism: American Government in the Eyes of the World
- Confidentiality of News Sources and Information
- Can Political News Be Both Entertaining and Informative?
- Turnout, Choice, and Economic Status
- Campaign and Electoral Reform: Comparative Perspective
- An Election Gone Wrong?
- Low Voter Turnout: A Comparative Perspective
- Congress Shows Several Members the Door
- Election 2008: A Presidential Election Breaks New Ground
- The Supreme Court and “Obamacare”
- Corporations and the Economy
- Nuclear Power and the Environment
- The U.S. vs. ISIS: A New Direction in the War on Terror?
- Can Presidents Take the Country to War on Their Own Authority?

Study Questions

Study questions conclude each of the special boxed features to encourage critical thinking and further inquiry.

End-of-Chapter Material

Each chapter concludes with a chapter review, a list of key terms, readings for further study, and a pop quiz.

- The chapter review contains, in numbered form, the main points presented in the chapter.
- Key terms, in boldface, are defined in the margins at the point at which they are introduced in the chapter.
- Readings for further study are widely available primary and secondary sources that students may consult in pursuing topics in the chapter.
- The pop quiz offers an opportunity to do a quick check of your knowledge retention. Similar to questions you might find on a test, these quiz questions can help you see if you are on the right track or if there are elements of a chapter's content you need to review further.

Instructor Supplements

A complete teaching package is available for instructors who adopt this book. This package includes an **online lab**, **instructor's manual**, **test bank**, **course management software**, and **PowerPoint™ slides**.

BVTLab	An online lab is available for this textbook at www.BVTLab.com , as described in the <i>BVTLab</i> section below.
Homework Grading System	Whether or not a class is being taught in the lab, instructors can take advantage of the <i>BVTLab</i> Homework Grading System for all class assignments.
Instructor's Manual	A comprehensive manual provides chapter overviews, key terms and definitions, learning objectives, lecture suggestions, discussion questions, and in-class activities.
Test Bank	An extensive test bank is available to instructors in both hard copy and electronic form. Each chapter has 70 to 100 multiple choice questions, as well as 5 to 10 essay questions. Each question is referenced to the appropriate section of the text to make test creation quick and easy.
Course Management Software	BVT's course management software, Respondus, allows for the creation of tests and quizzes that can be downloaded directly into a wide variety of course management environments such as Blackboard, Web CT, Desire2Learn, ANGEL, E-Learning, eCollege, Canvas, Moodle, and others.
PowerPoint Slides	A set of PowerPoint slides includes about 40 to 50 slides per chapter, including a chapter overview, learning objectives, slides covering all key topics, key figures and charts, as well as summary and conclusion slides.

Student Resources

Student resources are available for this textbook at www.BVTLab.com. These resources are geared toward students needing additional assistance, as well as those seeking complete mastery of the content. The following resources are available:

Practice Quiz Questions	Students can work through hundreds of practice questions online. Questions are multiple choice or true/false format and are graded instantly for immediate feedback.
Flashcards	For each chapter, we offer a set of flashcards that reinforces the key terms and concepts from the textbook.
Chapter Summaries	A convenient and concise chapter summary is available as a study aid for each chapter.
Study Guide	A thorough and practical student study guide includes chapter overviews, key terms, learning objectives, multiple choice and true/false practice questions, as well as discussion questions. The study guide is available in both printed and online (printable) form.
PowerPoint Slides	All instructor PowerPoints are available for convenient lecture preparation and for students to view online for a study recap.

BVTLab and Student Study Center

BVTLab includes an online classroom with grade book and chat room, a homework grading system, extensive test banks for quizzes and exams, and a host of student study resources.

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| Course Setup | BVTLab has an easy-to-use, intuitive interface that allows instructors to quickly set up their courses and grade books and to replicate them from section to section and semester to semester. |
| Grade Book | Using an assigned passcode, students register themselves into the grade book; all homework, quizzes, and tests are automatically graded and recorded. |
| Chat Room | Instructors can post discussion threads to a class forum and then monitor and moderate student replies. |
| Student Study Center | All student resources for this textbook are available in BVTLab's Student Study Center. |
| eBook | A downloadable eBook is available for both large-screen and small-screen devices. It includes searching, annotating, and highlighting features. A web-based eBook is also available within the lab for easy reference during online classes, homework, and study sessions. |

Customization

BVT's Custom Publishing Division can help you modify this book's content to satisfy your specific instructional needs. The following are examples of customization:

- Rearrangement of chapters to follow the order of your syllabus
- Deletion of chapters not covered in your course
- Addition of paragraphs sections or chapters you or your colleagues have written for this course
- Editing of the existing content, down to the word level
- Customization of the accompanying student resources and online lab
- Addition of handouts, lecture notes, syllabus, etc.
- Incorporation of student worksheets into the textbook

All of these customizations will be professionally typeset to produce a seamless textbook of the highest quality, with an updated table of contents and index to reflect the customized content.