

# Preface

## *The Political Imagination: An Introduction to American Government, 2e*

Drawing on the framework of political theory and political sociology, *The Political Imagination* places power at the center of American politics. Inspired by a rich tradition of scholarship that explains politics and political outcomes as contestations of power, our textbook brings the challenges and successes of the political process to life. When the status of democracy is in flux in the United States and worldwide, understanding the sources, expressions, and theories of power is crucial to help students acquire knowledge and skills to make sense of these times and see themselves as politically active agents in the society in which their lives unfold.

An educated, engaged, activist public is the lifeblood of any democratic society. *The Political Imagination* was not solely written to inform students about the workings of American government. This textbook, with hope and optimism, critically engages students in ways they may find relevant. Student feedback to *The Political Imagination* has been excellent. Whether students are enrolled in a required Introduction to American Government course or taking a free elective, the authors hope *The Political Imagination* is a compelling, accessible, different type of textbook that empowers its reader.

This book offers a range of features and tools to help students develop and test their understanding of core concepts and topics.

- ***An accessible and relevant text that offers a unique narrative***—A natural and relaxed writing style promotes a sense of a conversation between the authors and student.
- ***Comprehensive coverage of current topics and scholarly research***—The text has been thoroughly updated to reflect recent research, theories, and scholarship from across the discipline.
- ***Flexible format and organization***—The text provides the core theoretical foundations of American politics while offering instructors the flexibility to incorporate a variety of outside course materials.
- ***Extensive use of real-world examples***—Each chapter contains a wide variety of real-world examples that illustrate text concepts.
- ***Student-friendly pedagogy and features***—Chapter outlines, learning objectives, key terms and on-page marginal key term definitions, photos, graphs, tables, figures, chapter reviews, discussion questions, end-of-chapter key term lists, and Useful Links for Further Research.
- ***Complete Instructor's Support Package***—The support package includes the Instructor's Resource Manual, Test Item File, and PowerPoint Lecture Slides.

## Online and in Print

### Student Options: Print and Online Versions

This second edition of *The Political Imagination* is available in multiple versions: online, in PDF, and in print as either a paperback or loose-leaf text. The content of each version is identical.

The most affordable version is the online book, with upgrade options that include the online version bundled with a print version. What's nice about the print version is that it offers you the freedom of being unplugged—away from your computer. The people at Academic Media Solutions recognize that it's difficult to read from a screen at length and that most of us read much faster from a piece of paper. The print options are particularly useful when you have extended print passages to read.

The online edition allows you to take full advantage of embedded digital features, including search and notes. Use the search feature to locate and jump to discussions anywhere in the book. Use the notes feature to add personal comments or annotations. You can move out of the book to follow web links. You can navigate within and between chapters using a clickable table of contents. These features allow you to work at your own pace and in your own style as you read and surf your way through the material. (See “Harnessing the Online Version” for more tips on working with the online version.)

## Harnessing the Online Version

The online version of *The Political Imagination*, 2e, offers the following features to facilitate learning and make using the book an easy, enjoyable experience:

- **Easy-to-navigate/clickable table of contents**—You can surf through the book quickly by clicking on chapter headings or first- or second-level section headings, and the Table of Contents can be accessed from anywhere in the book.
- **Key terms search**—Type in a term, and a search engine will return every instance of that term in the book; then jump directly to the selection of your choice with one click.
- **Notes and highlighting**—The online version includes study apps such as notes and highlighting. Each of these apps can be found in the tools icon embedded in the Academic Media Solutions/Textbook Media's online eBook reading platform (<http://www.academicmediasolutions.com>).
- **Upgrades**—The online version includes the ability to purchase additional study apps and functionality that enhance the learning experience.

## Instructor Supplements

In addition to its student-friendly features and pedagogy, the variety of student formats available, and the uniquely affordable pricing options that are designed to provide students with flexibility that fits any budget and/or learning style, *The Political Imagination*, 2e, comes with the following teaching and learning aids:

- **Test Item File**—An extensive set of multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions for every chapter for creating original quizzes and exams.
- **Instructor's Manual**—An enhanced version of the book offering assistance in preparing lectures, identifying learning objectives, developing essay exams and assignments, and constructing course syllabi.
- **PowerPoint Presentations**—Key points in each chapter are illustrated in a set of PowerPoint files designed to assist with instruction.

## Student Supplements and Upgrades (Additional Purchase Required)

- **Lecture Guide**—This printable lecture guide is designed for student use and is available as an in-class resource or study tool. Note: Instructors can request the PowerPoint version of these slides to use as developed or to customize.

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We would like to dedicate this book to Carolina, Chandra, our teachers (the good ones), our students, and anyone who has dreamed of making this world a better place for all and acted on that dream. We hope that the publication of this book will encourage others to embrace the political imagination.