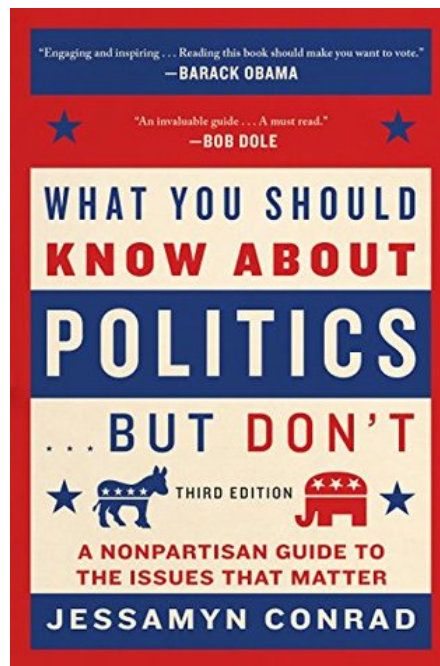




What You Should Know About Politics . . . But Don't: A Nonpartisan Guide to the Issues That Matter

Jessamyn Conrad , Naomi Wolf (Introduction)

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“Engaging and inspiring . . . Reading this book should make you want to vote.” —Barack Obama

In a world of sound bites, deliberate misinformation, and a political scene that is colored by the blue versus red partisan divide. How does the average educated American find a reliable source that's free of political spin? *What You Should Know About Politics . . . But Don't* breaks it all down, issue by issue, explaining who stands for what, and why—whether it's the economy, income inequality, Obamacare, foreign policy, education, immigration, or climate change. If you're a Democrat, a Republican, or somewhere in between, it's the perfect book to brush up on a single topic or read through to get a deeper understanding of the often mucky world of American politics.

This is an essential volume for understanding the background to the 2016 presidential election. But it is also a book that transcends the season. It's truly for anyone who wants to know more about the issues, which are perennial issues that will continue to affect our everyday lives.

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Chinook says

This did exactly what it said it would do - gave a bipartisan introduction to the basic issues that exist in the political climate (before Trump - I'm sure the next edition will have some interesting changes). It would be an ideal book for every American voter to read as a campaign began. It's too bad that most probably wouldn't be open to doing so - after all, half didn't even vote.

Bert says

This is the 3rd edition of Conrad's outstanding review of current issues. Previous editions came out in 2008 & 2012 so we may have to wait until 2020 for the next one. What with the rapid pace of events, I'd like to see one every year or two. And because of her highly readable, informative, organized approach, I believe I'll read anything else she writes.

Morgan says

370 pages of mostly surface level stuff - but it covered 13 major topics, and I learned a lot.

Susan Emmet says

Excellent primer for overview of important topics crucial to any sort of understanding of political will and intent for voters.

Naomi Wolf offers an introduction to this edition that ties it to the recent ascendancy of Trump and Company.

I like the way Conrad sets up chapters similarly: bullets, background, a bit of history, bolded key words, presentation of dis/similar points of view.

I like the readability of this book.

I like its coverage: elections, the economy, foreign policy, the military, health care, energy, the environment, civil liberties, culture wars, socioeconomic policy, homeland security, education and trade.

I like the sensible approach of the book, as well as its (overall) non-partisan considerations.

Lots to be reminded of; lots to learn.

Luis A. says

I picked up this book, along with The Everything American Government Book, out of desperation. I had spent most of my life saying that I didn't care about politics or the news except in the greater context and curation provided in history books. Then one day I woke up to realize that we're living history and are here

to take action or, at the very least, witness the ride. However, whenever I read a news article, I understood no more than 30%. I was missing the blueprint of how government and politics work (or are supposed to work) and the background of most current affairs.

I could've kept reading newspapers and magazines and hope to, by sheer repetition, construct the desired mental maps. But there's gotta be a book that short cuts this, I thought, and amazon.com took me to What You Should Know About Politics... But Don't. The title said it all for me. And the subtitle added more validity to it: A Nonpartisan Guide To The Issues That Matter.

Jessamyn Conrad does a very nice job identifying and describing some of the most important political and cultural topics of this decade. For each topic, Conrad provides background information about the issue at hand and the players that surround it, sometimes going back several decades. This background was essential in helping me weave a narrative (in my mind) and be better equipped to formulate a position.

The book touches on 13 topics in a little less than 400 pages. With approximately 30 pages per topic, the book is not at risk of being boring, especially because the topics are independent of each other.

As for the subtitle, Conrad limits her narrative to providing the main viewpoints around each topic, and the arguments presented by opposing parties. She doesn't adjudicate the upper hand (ethical or logical) to any particular position. So, in my opinion, it checks the nonpartisan box.

The one thing missing perhaps is a complete update of the 13 topics, and perhaps the addition of new ones... things changed on January 20, 2017! This is the third edition, published in 2016, when Obama was still president.

In sum, if you're looking to build or strengthen your blueprint of current American politics, read this book... and buy the fourth edition when it comes out.

♥ Kierra ♥ says

With the 2016 election, I wanted to be more informed about politics. This book helped me to learn about key issues, the history of said issues, and current status of issues. The winning factor in the books title was nonpartisan and it was true to the word. I did not feel the author trying to sway me on an issue. The facts were given and footnotes provided. I think this is a great book for anyone looking to learn more about politics.

Mills College Library says

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