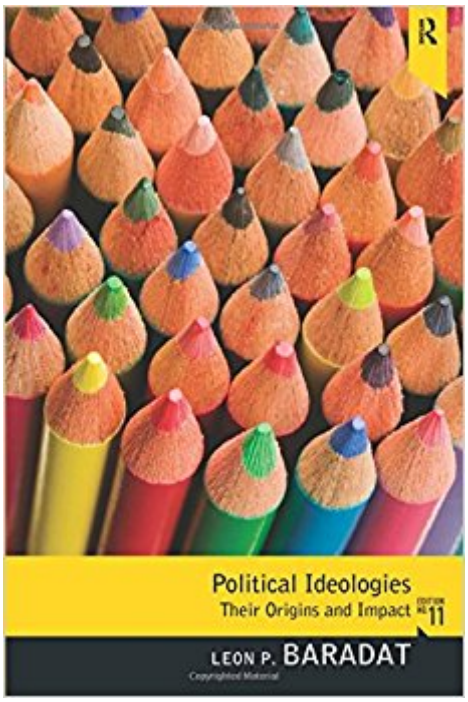
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Political Ideologies



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Synopsis

Brief and accessible, Political Ideologies follows the evolution of political thought over 300 years. Organized chronologically, this text examines each major ideology within a political, historical, economic, and social context. Leon Baradat's skillful prose ensures that students obtain a clear understanding of how ideas are influencing the political realities of our time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A captivating and authoritative book, Political Ideologieswill intrigue students about fundamental political ideas, both answering their questions and inciting further ones. Baradat is interested both in the reigning ideals of modern times and in how these are involved in the non-ideal realities of the world, giving us searching and even-handed examinations of the major political attitudes and thought systems of our time. Glenn Tinder, University of Massachusetts at Boston

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Note that this review is for the 11th edition (2011). I have not looked at any of the previous editions and, therefore, cannot comment on them. However, judging from what the preface says about what is new to this edition, much of what I have to say here will likely apply to other editions as well.I started reading this book with high hopes. I was looking for a text that provided a good overview of

the various ideological positions that people hold, both in the United States and around the world, discussing the basic tenets and goals of each ideology, its history and major figures, its preferred methods for achieving its political objectives (e.g. top-down reform, grassroots activism, violent revolution, terrorism, separatism), its political organization (e.g. into parties, interest groups, movements, etc.), and what distinguishes it from other political viewpoints. As a bonus, I would really have liked some discussion of why people hold different ideological views: why some people are drawn to socialism, others to liberalism, others to fascism, etc. But a good overview of the world's many ideologies would have sufficed, even without an exploration of the motivations that drive people into one ideological camp or another. Although I haven't (thus far) taught any courses specifically on ideology, I do discuss ideology in some of my other political science courses; and, so, I was looking for a text I could recommend to my students, and that I could draw on when preparing lectures on the subject. I was hoping that this would be the text I was looking for. Unfortunately, it isn't.Like I said, I started reading this book with high hopes. As I thumbed through it before I began reading, it looked as if it would be just what I was wanting. It had chapters on the spectrum of political attitudes, on nationalism, on liberalism (including a discussion of conservatism), on anarchism, on socialism, on fascism and Nazism, on ideologies in the developing world (including Islamism), and even a chapter on feminism and environmentalism. And there is some good information to be found in these chapters. The author does a pretty good job of briefly summarizing the history of each of these ideologies, identifying the most important foundational figures in each, and describing the political and economic views represented by each ideology. But, unfortunately, I found that the book failed to live up to my high hopes for a number of different reasons.Without going into too much detail, let me briefly list what I believe to be the major shortcomings of this book (in no particular order):* It's a bit too superficial in its coverage of the various ideologies. While it does provide some good, basic information, it only scratches the surface. Wikipedia goes into more depth about some of the topics covered in this book. This level of detail may be suitable for high school students; but not for university undergrads.* The text covers only the major global ideologies and their most prominent variants. It does not even attempt to discuss the multitude of minor variants and offshoots of each of these ideologies.* The author doesn't stick to the subject. There are lengthy digressions about topics that are only tangentially related to ideology, such as the structural differences between the American and the British systems of government, the problem of population growth in the developing world, and recent political changes in China and Cuba (which appear to be motivated by pragmatic concerns rather than by ideology, per se).* The author tries too hard to keep up with current events. If this were a textbook

on contemporary political issues, timeliness would be of the essence. But it’s not. It’s a textbook on ideologies - a subject that calls for a certain measure of perspective. In order to understand what a particular political movement stands for, you have to give it time to develop; and you have to step back and look at it from some distance. If you’re too close to something, your view of it becomes distorted: relatively minor features loom large in your field of view, while major features can blend into the background. While I can sympathize with the author’s desire to discuss, for example, the ideology behind the Tea Party movement, it’s simply too early to judge what it’s all about, apart from an expression of frustration at the direction the country has taken over the past few years. It would have been better not to mention the Tea Party at all than to try to encapsulate its essence in just a few sentences scattered throughout the text. Likewise, it would have been better not to mention the "Great Recession" at all than to simply bring it up in passing just to note that it’s too early to tell what its long-term ideological impact will be. I got the distinct impression that the author included these (and other) passing references to current events just to give him an excuse to put out a new edition of his textbook.* There is very little discussion of Islamism. Although Islamism may not be in the same league with major global ideologies such as liberalism and socialism, it is an important ideology, nonetheless, and deserves more coverage than the (approximately) three pages it gets in this text.* The author adopts the overly-simplistic, one-dimensional political spectrum, which places radicals and liberals on the "left" and conservatives and reactionaries on the "right", based solely on their attitudes toward change. While I would expect any text on ideology to discuss this traditional view of the political spectrum, I would hope that it would be challenged as inadequate, and that alternative political typologies would be explored. This text simply embraces the traditional view and doesn’t bother to explore any alternatives.* The text is riddled with glaring spelling, grammatical, and stylistic errors. This might be excusable in a first edition; but these errors should have been caught and corrected by the 11th edition.* The author is just too opinionated for a textbook -- especially a textbook whose purpose is to discuss how political views can differ. He doesn’t shy away from using value-laden terms when describing various ideologies and individuals (at one point even referring to a couple of popular pundits as "gasbags"); and he frequently asserts things as fact that are still the subject of intense political debate. While I suspect that I would agree with many of the author’s political views, I feel that an educator’s job is to teach, not to preach, and that a textbook ought to inform rather than opine. By asserting one’s own political viewpoints in the classroom, a teacher (or textbook writer) risks alienating students who disagree with those viewpoints; and, once you’ve alienated a student, he or she will stubbornly reject everything you have to say from that point on. If you want to teach, you need to stick to the facts, and leave the op

ed for your blog.These aren’t the only complaints I have with this textbook; but my other complaints are relatively minor compared to these. I don’t want to leave the impression that this book is worthless. Like I said above, there is some good information here. Some students might benefit from it, especially if all they wanted was a very simple, cursory overview of the major ideologies of the world. But it’s simply not what I was hoping it would be when I bought it; and I would not use it if I were teaching a course on ideology, or recommend it to any of my colleagues or students.-----EDITED (FALL 2012) TO ADD: If you’re looking for another ideology textbook to use instead of this one by Baradat, I would have to recommend Andrew Heywood’s "Political Ideologies: An Introduction" 5th edition (2012), which I’ve also reviewed for . It’s not perfect; but it’s the best ideology textbook I’ve come across thus far.

I thought this text was good. I was worried, at first, that a textbook like this (and the class to match it) would be very biased, as anything political seems to be. I think the author did his best to keep it neutral. It’s a very informative book, and very easy to read. The thing I disliked about it, and the reason for 4 stars instead of 5, is that sometimes it feels like it’s not in depth enough. Even if it’s written as an overview of the various ideologies, it could still explore them a little further, and give more information about how these ideologies interact with one another.Even if you’re not in a course, this would be a good choice of books to learn about the political spectrum. It’s also very reasonably priced, for a textbook.

This book was purchased as required reading for a Doctor of Public Administration course. As a public administration major and as someone who works in government, I have read many books on politics and political history. While this book provides a decent overview of political history and economics, it does so with a heavy leftist bias. According to Baradat, all previous Democratic presidents were great, all Republican presidents were terrible. I would have expected more from an accomplished author and college professor. His overt liberal bias makes the reader question the accuracy of the facts presented, and whether or not there is a not so hidden agenda in play.

Great!

Just like the description.

:(

expensive, terrible textbook

The book came in a great condition too bad i dropped the class.

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