

This brief summary does not do justice to the essays or the teaching strategies. The content of the essays might contain little that is new for those who keep abreast of recent scholarship, but the extensive bibliographic material and detailed teaching strategies should provide innovative material for lectures and discussions. Considering the breadth of an American history survey, not all topics could be included in this volume: Economic, military, and political histories play less of a role here than social, cultural, and diplomatic history, and those who stress American colonial history might be disappointed at the emphasis on nineteenth and twentieth-century history. Yet this criticism should not detract from the book. *America on the World Stage: A Global Approach to U.S. History* should be required reading for all of us who teach American history survey courses at the secondary and college level.

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**Peter F. Nardulli, ed. *Domestic Perspectives on Contemporary Democracy*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008. Pp. 192. Paper, \$23.00; ISBN 978-0-252-07521-6.**

This collection of original essays concerning democracy and the challenges it faces throughout the world is the result of events beginning with the establishment of an endowed center, The Cline Center for Democracy, at the Urbana-Champaign campus of the University of Illinois. The intentional focus is on "the big picture" for democracy in the world in view of increasing diversity and "Information Age innovations." The essays originally presented at a conference in 2004 generated discussion among attending scholars representing "a variety of subdisciplines." Revisions based upon scholarly input resulted in the final collection presented here. The collection is invaluable as a tool to evaluate democracies at their various stages in the world today, to offer learned considerations and options for improving or stabilizing existing democracies and to offer best chance scenarios for establishment of lasting democracy in transition countries such as Iraq. (It is worth noting that "the companion volume, *International Perspectives on Contemporary Democracy*, deals with ... the prospects for a fourth wave of democratization and the challenges that globalization poses for democratic governance.")

This text is for serious scholars of democracy and those involved in policymaking for governing authorities. It would be better used in upper-level courses as a text. However, it is a wonderful source for an instructor of lower-level courses. Various chapters could be assigned for students to write essays on or an instructor could enrich his own knowledge and capacity to expand discussion by reading this.

The focus is on government, politics, and the future. While historical examples are frequently examined, the main emphasis is not historical. The research presented and discussed is extensive. Essays cover challenges to democracy presented by demography, technology, transition in divided societies, citizenship and identity in

diverse societies, technological advances and individual liberties, and the Internet. Chapter 5 regarding electoral engineering and institutional design as a tool in particular addresses an underserved topic that could prove to be a key to stability in fragile democracies.

While each of the essays reflects a writing style unique to that author, as a whole the essays are very direct, extremely well organized, and lacking legalese. Paul Sniderman's discussion in "Democracy, Diversity and Leadership" leans more toward the science aspect of a political science treatment of the topic.

There is no comprehensive conclusion to this text other than the proposition that democracy worldwide is facing dramatic challenges and changes due to increased diversity, technology, and communication. Each essayist presents his own conclusion which often is more in the form of a query. In "Engineering Consent," W. Lance Bennett wonders "Will the growing disillusionment with politics and the media force a regime change toward more transparent, citizen-to-citizen communication networks as organizational foundations for issue and electoral politics?" And, "The speed, reach, and ever-lowering costs of these stealth technologies represent attractive alternatives for political consultants and their clients, but they also threaten to limit the broad public exchange of ideas as individuals become 'a democracy of one.'" "The public life of democracy may wither as communication becomes an endless appeal to *The Daily Me*, as Negroponte (1995) called the self-defined information service of the future."

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