

Gregory M. Scott. *Political Science: Foundations for a Fifth Millennium*. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997), pp 425.
\$ 48.00 ISBN 0132075725

It is rare when introductory texts for political science are not structured around the themes of institutions and processes. For the seasoned political scientists such works seldom stimulate our way of thinking or teaching about the fundamental concepts in our discipline. Gregory Scott informs his readers that there can be an alternative approach organized around the progress and accomplishments in the field. Institutions, ideologies, and methodologies are still discussed, but Scott offers a unique, and at times challenging perspective which will enlighten students and scholars alike. Nevertheless, there are instances, though few in number, where this reader would like to have seen Scott go further in his quest to have students think creatively and imaginatively about political science.

After the first chapter prepares students for their first foray into politics, the author devotes time to a detailed summary of the history of political science. Beginning with primitive peoples' early self-awareness and their conceptions of good and evil, this retrospective moves from the ancient Hebrew and Greek eras of two millennia ago to what Scott calls the current, "era of eclecticism." The journey not only provides a glimpse of where political science has been, but also where it might be headed in the future. Scott's discussion of our era, whose beginning he traces to around 1970, is especially important because of his defense of the discipline. Many non-political scientists, and some political scientists for that matter, have lamented the lack of general theory and methodology and cohesiveness in the field. All too often, this absence of general theory

is assumed to be a weakness. Much to his credit, Scott disputes that claim, insisting instead that this is an era of creative potential which finds us borrowing a variety of ideas from every branch of knowledge, thereby providing political scientists with challenging and exciting opportunities.

The next three chapters deal with what can be characterized as essential elements in political science: major issues, ideologies, and institutions and processes. Issues such as equality, authority, and justice are treated in a thorough and thought-provoking manner. The important theorists and their ideas are compared with one another. It should be noted though, that while this book is intended to be an introduction to the field, the discussion of the major ideas is generally at a level which may be a bit beyond the capabilities of some first-year political science students. For example, the examination of Erik Erikson's stages of development complicates what could be an easier discussion of community and individuality, especially given the target audience. While the political issues section requires careful reading, the chapters on ideologies and institutions and processes are clear and well done. Especially insightful is the author's use of the comparative method to explore the political institutions and processes of the United States and Israel and North and South Korea.

It is the section on how to study politics where Scott seems to fall short in his mission to encourage students to think imaginatively about political science. Rather than pushing the frontiers of the discipline, his discussion of approaches and methodologies reinforces the notion that quantitative research is more desirable. The author does briefly discuss some qualitative methods, but his chapter is titled simply, "*Quantitative Methodology*," and that body of research is described as more value-free, objective, and fact-based. This emphasis, coupled with his use of Gabriel Almond's dichotomy between "soft" (i.e., descriptive) and "hard" (i.e., quantitative) methodologies, may lead those who are new to political science to conclude that qualitative methods are somehow weaker. If political science is in an era of eclecticism, characterized by theoretical and methodological borrowing, it seems illogical to gloss over or ignore the effect that in-depth and open-ended interviews, discourse analysis, q methodology, participant observations, and historical analysis, among others, have had on the discipline. Moreover, what better way of encouraging students to think thoughtfully and creatively than by introducing them to alternative methodologies.

Despite a slip in the "approaches" section, Scott rebounds with an excellent overview of the subfields and new developments in political science. To compliment a general summary for each subfield, the author also includes a recently published article which provides an opportunity for critical analysis and discussion. By way of conclusion, Scott turns to the innovative and engaging studies being done throughout the discipline today. Drawing upon recent APSA panels, the author highlights different activities and debates taking place within sectional divisions of the field (e.g., urban politics, comparative politics of developing countries, presidency research, political economy, etc.). Attempting to show both the breadth and depth of the discipline, Scott proves his assertion that we are indeed living in an era of eclecticism.

This is a clever approach for acquainting students with the field of political science, and aside from some lapses in the methodological material, it is a useful alternative to the standard introductory text. Scott's effort to inspire the next generation of political scientists to think creatively is an important collective responsibility, and this work, for its part, largely succeeds in that endeavor.

Thomas C. Davis
Cameron University

