

The New Citizenship: Unconventional Politics, Activism, and Service

By Craig A. Rimmerman



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We are not born citizens, but must be educated and trained to be citizens. This is the central tenet of The New Citizenship, which builds on the participatory democratic vision of the 1960s. Arguing that civic effort must go beyond merely voting, Craig Rimmerman examines grassroots mobilization, community activism, service learning, and the Internet as potential tools for confronting the breakdown of civility in U.S. politics. At the heart of The New Citizenship are the questions: Why do so many Americans fail to participate in their communities' affairs? What role should the citizenry play in our political system? In addressing these concerns, the text both evaluates the dilemma of participation, civility, and stability at a time when civic indifference is a national problem and outlines its sources, suggesting ways in which Americans can conquer their apathy toward government. Rimmerman also identifies alternative forms of participation (besides voting) seized upon by the citizenry to register discontent with its representative government. Considerable attention is devoted to the attitudes and values of college students as they approach their roles within the larger political system. This second edition considers different vehicles for expressing the new citizenship, including the protests in Seattle over the IMF & World Bank, new organizations such as the 2030 Center, and how groups on both the political left and right are using the internet as a crucial organizing tool. The second edition also explores in greater detail the literature on service learning and its connection to different conceptions of the new citizenship.

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Editorial Review

Review

"A helpful first step in making political science courses relevant to our students once again. It is definitely worth considering for classroom adoption." -- *American Political Science Review*

"For activist students and teachers frustrated with contemporary politics, this is a useful guidebook." -- *Choice*

From the Inside Flap

Why do so many Americans fail to participate in their communities affairs? What role should the citizenry play in our political system? In addressing these concerns, this revised and updated text evaluates the dilemma of participation, civility, and stability at a time when civic indifference is a national problem. In addition to outlining the sources of this indifference, "The New Citizenship" suggests ways in which Americans can conquer their apathy toward government.

In this fourth edition, author and Dilemmas in American Politics series editor Craig A. Rimmerman provides new material on ACORN, the 2008 presidential election, the Obama presidency, and the impact of these recent events for college students and their conceptions of participation and citizenship."

About the Author

Craig A. Rimmerman is professor of political science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. He is the editor of Westview Press's *Dilemmas in American Politics* series. He is also author of *Presidency by Plebiscite: The Reagan-Bush Era in Institutional Perspective*, and co-editor with Kenneth A. Wald and Clyde Wilcox of *The Politics of Gay Rights*.

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