



Writing Southern Politics: Contemporary Interpretations and Future Directions

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Scholars, journalists, writers, and pundits have long regarded the South as the nation's most politically distinctive region. Its culture, history, and social and economic institutions have fostered unique political ideas that intrigue observers and have had profound political consequences for the nation's citizens, politicians, and policymakers. *Writing Southern Politics* is the most comprehensive review of the large body of post–World War II literature on southern politics.

Since the publication of V.O. Key Jr.'s landmark work, *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (1949), scholars have produced an astounding number of books, monographs, professional journal articles, and research papers addressing elements of continuity and change in southern politics. The contributors to this book sort through the literature, identifying major themes, examining areas of scholarly disagreement, and making the key dimensions and contours of the region's politics understandable. Individually, the essays in this volume identify and clarify the key writing and research in selected subfields of southern politics, including religion, race, women, and political parties. Collectively, the essays identify and discuss the major components of and trends in southern politics over the past half century.

The contributors, some of the foremost scholars in the field, have been heavily involved in researching and writing about southern politics during the past three decades and have observed the development of many of the research projects that form the foundation of southern political literature. In many instances, their own writings are included in the body of literature they discuss, bringing unique skills, research, and perspectives to their original essays. In addition to reviewing existing literature, *Writing Southern Politics* also includes suggestions for a future research agenda.

Not all aspects of the region's dramatic fifty-year transformation have been fully explored, and the continuation of this development ensures new avenues to examine. The discussion of past research and writing is an invaluable tool for understanding the trends in southern politics over the past half century. By examining these trends and developing an agenda for future research, the authors provide a roadmap for identifying the changes that will likely shape the region over the next half century.



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