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Reaganland: America’s Right Turn, 1976-1980

In late 1976, Reagan was dismissed as a man without a political future—defeated in his nomination bid against a sitting president and too old to make another run. His comeback was fueled by an extraordinary confluence: fundamentalists and former segregationists reinventing themselves as militant crusaders against gay rights and feminism and business executives uniting against regulation in an era of economic decline. Reagan ran on the campaign slogan “Make America Great Again” and prevailed. This is the story of how that happened, tracing conservatives’ cutthroat strategies to gain power and explaining why they endure four decades later. $40, hardcover.

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The Carlos Museum Bookshop: Sale! 10% off Books about Politics until 9/30
**Winner of the National Book Award!**

Some Americans insist that we’re living in a post-racial society. But racist thought is not just alive and well in America, it is more sophisticated and more insidious than ever. And as award-winning historian Ibram X. Kendi argues, racist ideas have a long and lingering history, one in which nearly every great American thinker is complicit.

In this deeply researched and fast-moving narrative, Kendi chronicles the entire story of anti-Black racist ideas and their staggering power over the course of American history. He uses the life stories of five major American intellectuals to drive this history: Puritan minister Cotton Mather, Thomas Jefferson, abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, W.E.B. Du Bois, and legendary activist Angela Davis. $19.99, paperback.

**Winner of the Pulitzer Prize!**

Jericho Brown, Emory’s director of the Creative Writing Program, details the normalization of evil and its history at the intersection of the past and the personal. Brown’s poetic concerns are both broad and intimate, and at their very core a distillation of the incredibly human: What is safety? Who is this nation? Where does freedom truly lie? Brown makes mythical pastorals to question the terrors to which we’ve become accustomed and to celebrate how we survive. Poems of fatherhood, legacy, blackness, queerness, worship, and trauma are propelled into stunning clarity by Brown’s mastery, and his invention of the duplex—a combination of the sonnet, the ghazal, and the blues—is testament to his formal skill. $17, paperback.

**Just published!**

Race is not a biological reality, and it thrives on our not knowing this. Racist pseudoscience has become so commonplace that it can be hard to spot. But its toxic effects on society are plain to see: feeding nationalism, fueling hatred, endangering lives, and corroding our discourse on everything from sports to intelligence. Paradoxically, these misconceptions are multiplying even as scientists make unprecedented discoveries in human genetics, findings that, when accurately understood, are powerful evidence against racism. *Scientific American* said this book “equips readers with the tools to discredit the prejudices of both racists and well-intentioned people.” Hardcover, $27.99.
During his first administration, Richard Nixon appointed four conservative justices in just three years, dismantling the Supreme Court’s previous liberal majority and setting it on a rightward course that continues today. Before this drastic upheaval, the court, led by Chief Justice Earl Warren, had been a powerful force for equality and inclusion, integrating schools across the South, establishing Miranda protections, and safeguarding the right to vote. As the nation now faces a possible third Trump appointment to the high court, journalist and Harvard Law graduate Adam Cohen shows how the Court over the last 50 years has been systematically dismantling ideals of equality, democracy, and justice for all. $30, hardcover.

Applebaum explains there is a deep and inherent appeal to authoritarianism, strongmen, and, especially, to one-party rule; that is, to political systems that benefit true believers, or loyal soldiers, or simply the friends and distant cousins of the leader, to the exclusion of everyone else. Drawing on reporting in Spain, Switzerland, Poland, Hungary, and Brazil; using historical examples including Stalinist central Europe and Nazi Germany; and investigating the lure of conspiracy theory, nostalgia for a golden past, and political polarization, Anne Applebaum brilliantly illuminates the seduction of totalitarian thinking. $25, hardcover.

From the beet fields of North Dakota to the campgrounds of California to Amazon’s CamperForce program in Texas, employers have discovered a new, low-cost labor pool, made up largely of transient older adults. These invisible casualties of the Great Recession have taken to the road by the tens of thousands in RVs and modified vans, forming a growing community of nomads. This book tells a revelatory tale of the dark underbelly of the American economy, one which foreshadows the precarious future that may await many more of us. At the same time, it celebrates the exceptional resilience and creativity of these Americans who have given up ordinary rootedness to survive, but have not given up hope. $16.95, paperback.

On May 4, 1970, the Ohio National Guard gunned down unarmed college students protesting the Vietnam War at Kent State University. A few days prior, 10-year-old Derf Backderf saw those same Guardsmen patrolling his nearby hometown, sent in by the governor to crush a trucker strike. Now an acclaimed cartoonist and graphic novelist, Backderf conducted extensive interviews and research to explore the lives of these four young people and the events of those four days in May. Fifty years later, it is a troubling story about the bitter price of dissent, as relevant today as it was in 1970. $24.99, hardcover.
How did America’s Founders envision the presidency? What should a constitutional democracy look like, and how can it be fixed when it appears to be broken? The Founders feared that their experiment in mass self-government could produce a demagogue: a charismatic ruler who would gain and hold on to power by manipulating the public rather than by advancing the public good. President Trump, who has played to the mob and attacked institutions from the judiciary to the press, appears to embody these ideas. Legal scholar Posner offers a blueprint for how America can protect the features of a democracy that help it thrive and restore national greatness for one and all. $28.99, hardcover.

Throughout history, humanity has borne witness to the political and moral challenges that arise when people place national identity above allegiance to geo-political states or international communities. This title in the bestselling pocket-sized Very Short Introduction series from Oxford University Press discusses the concept of nations and nationalism from social, philosophical, geological, theological, and anthropological perspectives. It examines nationalist conflicts past and present, including recent struggles in the Balkans and the Middle East. Above all, this fascinating and comprehensive work clearly shows how feelings of nationalism are an inescapable part of being human. $11.95, paperback.

First published in 1962, this wonderfully provocative book introduced the notion of “pseudo-events”—events such as press conferences and presidential debates, which are manufactured solely in order to be reported—and the contemporary definition of celebrity as “a person who is known for his well-knownness.” Since then, Daniel J. Boorstin’s prophetic vision of an America inundated by its own illusions has become an essential resource for any reader who wants to distinguish the manifold deceptions of our culture from its few enduring truths. $17, paperback.

A veritable Das Kapital of the 20th century! An essential text, and the main theoretical work of the French Situationists. Few works of political and cultural theory have been as enduringly provocative. From its publication amid the social upheavals of the 1960’s up to the present, the volatile theses of this book have decisively transformed debates on the shape of modernity, capitalism, “distraction politics,” and everyday life in the 21st century. This is the original translation by Fredy Perlman, kept in print continuously for the last 35 years, keeping the flame alive when no one else cared. $10, paperback.
A bestseller from Princeton University Press for 15 years and never more timely than now. Princeton philosophy professor Harry Frankfurt proceeds by exploring how “bullshit” in any form of discourse, and the related concept of humbug, are distinct from lying. He argues that bullshitters misrepresent themselves to their audience not as liars do, that is, by deliberately making false claims about what is true. In fact, bullshit need not be untrue at all. Rather, bullshitters seek to convey a certain impression of themselves without being concerned about whether anything at all is true. A true survival manual in this election year and a pocket-sized bargain at $9.99, hardcover.

Over the course of his career, George Orwell wrote about many things, but no matter what he wrote, the goal was to get at the fundamental truths of the world. He had no place for dissemblers, liars, con men, or frauds, and he made his feelings well-known. In Orwell on Truth, excerpts from across Orwell’s career show how his writing and worldview developed over the decades, profoundly shaped by his experiences in the Spanish Civil War, World War II, and the rise of totalitarian states. In a world that seems increasingly like one of Orwell’s dystopias, a willingness to speak truth to power is more important than ever. With Orwell on Truth, readers get a collection of both powerful quotes and the context for them. $13.99, paperback.

Winner of the 1964 Pulitzer Prize in Nonfiction and even more relevant today in a climate of anti-science, denialism, and mass-consumption propaganda, this is classic book throws light on many features of the American character. Its concern is not merely to portray the scorners of intellect in American life, but to say something about what the intellectual is, and can be, as a force in a democratic society. $18, paperback.

Only four countries around the world do not currently define themselves as democracies. However, many more do not fulfill the four basic requirements of democracy: free and fair elections, active participation of citizens in politics, protection of human rights, and the rule of law. Recently, far-right and populist politicians have been on the rise throughout the West. Is populism the new face of democracy? Is democracy simply the will of the people? Can any existing government claim to be truly democratic? This captivating, articulate volume in the Big Idea series explores the state of democracy today and whether it remains a viable form of government. $18.95, paperback.

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Classic conspiracy theory insists that things are not what they seem and gathers evidence—especially facts ominously withheld by official sources—to tease out secret machinations. The new conspiracism is different. There is no demand for evidence, no dots revealed to form a pattern, and no close examination of shadowy plotters. Dispensing with the burden of explanation, the new conspiracism imposes its own reality through repetition (exemplified by the Trump catchphrase “a lot of people are saying”) and bare assertion (“Rigged!”). The new conspiracism targets democratic foundations, making it more difficult to argue, persuade, negotiate, compromise, and even to disagree. $14.95 paperback.

World-renowned Shakespeare scholar Stephen Greenblatt explores the playwright’s insight into bad (and often mad) rulers. Examining the psyche, and psychoses, of the likes of Richard III, Macbeth, Lear, and Coriolanus, Greenblatt illuminates the ways in which William Shakespeare delved into the lust for absolute power and the disasters visited upon the societies over which these characters rule. Tyrant shows that Shakespeare’s work remains vitally relevant today, not least in its probing of the unquenchable, narcissistic appetites of demagogues and the self-destructive willingness of collaborators who indulge their appetites. $13.95, paperback.

This fascinating history of the hoax as a peculiarly American phenomenon examines what motivates hucksters and makes the rest of us so gullible. Disturbingly, the author (the former poetry curator in Emory’s Rose Library) finds that fakery is woven from stereotype and suspicion, race being the most insidious American hoax of all. From pretend Native Americans Grey Owl and Nasdijj to the deadly imposture of Clark Rockefeller and the made-up memoirs of James Frey, this book examines the ways that forgers, plagiarists, and fakers sell us lies about themselves and about the world. $18, paperback.

In the run-up to the 2016 election, Masha Gessen stood out from other journalists for her ability to convey the ominous significance of Donald Trump’s speech and behavior, unprecedented in a national candidate. Thanks to the special perspective of her Soviet childhood and two decades covering the resurgence of totalitarianism in Russia, Gessen has a sixth sense for signs of autocracy. Gessen not only highlights the corrosion of the media, the judiciary, and the cultural norms we hoped would save us but also tells us the story of how a short few years have changed us, from a people who saw ourselves as a nation of immigrants to a populace haggling over a border wall, heirs to a degraded sense of truth, meaning, and possibility. $26, hardcover.
How to Be a Bad Emperor: An Ancient Guide to Truly Terrible Leaders

Just published! This is a crisp new translation of Suetonius’s briskly paced, darkly comic biographies of problematic Roman emperors. The stories of these ancient anti-role models show how power inflames leaders’ worst tendencies, causing almost incalculable damage. Complete with the original Latin on facing pages, this is a perceptive account of leadership gone monstrously awry: Caesar using his aunt’s funeral to brag about his descent from gods and kings and hiding his bald head with a comb-over and a laurel crown; Tiberius neglecting public affairs in favor of wine, tortures, and executions; and Caligula flaunting his skill at cruel put-downs. $16.95, hardcover.

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Why We’re Polarized

Journalist and cofounder of Vox, Klein shows how and why American politics polarized around identity in the 20th century and what that polarization did to the way we see the world and each other. He traces the feedback loops between our polarized political identities and our polarized political institutions that are driving our political system towards crisis. Neither a polemic nor a lament, Why We’re Polarized offers a clear understanding of today. $28, hardcover.

Targeted: The Cambridge Analytica Whistleblower’s Inside Story of How Big Data, Trump, and Facebook Broke Democracy

When the author joined a UK-based political consulting firm funded by conservative billionaire and Donald Trump patron Robert Mercer, she was an idealistic young professional working on her fourth degree in human rights law and international relations. Kaiser’s goal was to utilize data for humanitarian purposes, most notably to prevent genocide and human rights abuses. She reveals to the public how Facebook’s lax policies and lack of sufficient national laws allowed voters to be manipulated in both Britain and the United States, where personal data was weaponized to spread fake news and racist messaging during the Brexit vote and the 2016 election. And how the 2020 election could see the same thing happen again. $28.99, hardcover.

This Is Not Propaganda: Adventures in the War Against Reality

Peter Pomerantsev takes us to the front lines of the disinformation age, where he meets Twitter revolutionaries and pop-up populists, “behavioral change” salesmen, Jihadi fanboys, Identitarians, truth cops, and many others. Forty years after his dissident parents were pursued by the KGB, Pomerantsev finds the Kremlin re-emerging as a great propaganda power. His research takes him back to Russia—but the answers he finds there are not what he expected. Blending reportage, family history, and intellectual adventure, This Is Not Propaganda explores how we can reimagine our politics and ourselves when reality seems to be coming apart. $28, hardcover.
Wheeler and Duin, in graphic form, bring to life scenes detailed in the report: from the infamous Trump Tower meeting of 2016 to Trump exclaiming “I’m f*cked” upon finding out he was the subject of investigation. Watch a petulant Commander-in-Chief lob insults at the White House counsel. Witness the “witch hunt” as it happened, cataloged as only the top lawman in the country could! This staggering laundry list of questionable contacts, misleading statements, unreported engagements, and possible coordination—enough to stun any student of the U.S. Constitution—is laid bare with a cold, satirical edge. $15.99, hardcover.

In this powerful memoir, Power offers an urgent response to the question “What can one person do?” and a call for a clearer eye and a more open and civil hand in our politics and daily lives. She traces her distinctly American journey from Irish immigrant to war correspondent to presidential cabinet official and US ambassador to the UN. Along the way, she illuminates the intricacies of politics and geopolitics, reminding us how the United States can lead in the world and why we each have the opportunity to advance the cause of human dignity. $29.99, hardcover.

February 20, 1933: an unremarkable day during a harsh winter. A meeting of 24 German captains of industry and senior Nazi officials commences to extract funds for the accession to power of the National Socialist Party and its chancellor. On March 12, 1938, the annexation of Austria is on the agenda, and newsreels capture a motorized army on the move. But behind Goebbels’s propaganda, a Blitzkrieg unfolds. The true account of the Anschluss all reveals a different picture. It is not strength of character or the determination of a people that wins the day, but rather a combination of intimidation and bluff. $14.99, paperback.

With the end of the Cold War, the victory of liberal democracy seemed final, but authoritarianism returned to Russia as Putin found fascist ideas that could be used to justify rule by the wealthy. It has spread globally, aided by Russian warfare in Ukraine and cyberwar in Europe and the United States. The rise of populism, the British vote against the EU, and the election of Donald Trump were all Russian goals, but their achievement reveals the vulnerability of Western societies. In this forceful work of contemporary history, Snyder goes beyond the headlines to expose the true nature of the threat to democracy and law. $27, hardcover.
After U.S.-Russia relations soured, as Vladimir Putin moved to reassert Russian strength on the global stage, Moscow trained its best hackers and trolls on US political targets and exploited WikiLeaks to disseminate information that could affect the 2016 election. The Russians were wildly successful and the great break-in of 2016 was no “third-rate burglary.” It was far more sophisticated and sinister, a brazen act of political espionage designed to interfere with American democracy. This story of high-tech spying and multiple political feuds is told against the backdrop of Trump’s strange relationship with Putin and the curious ties between members of his inner circle, including Paul Manafort and Michael Flynn, and Russia. $30, hardcover.

Professor/journalist Lilla argues that after Reagan’s vision of small government, low tax, self-reliant individualism became the dominant ideology in US politics, American liberalism fell under the spell of identity politics, with disastrous consequences. Driven originally by a sincere desire to protect the most vulnerable Americans, the left unwittingly balkanized the electorate, encouraged self-absorption rather than solidarity, and invested its energies in social movements rather than in party politics. Now, the author suggests, with Republicans led by an unpredictable demagogue uninterested in a coherent ideology, there is an opening for the liberal left to rebuild a sense of common feeling and duty among Americans. $24.99, hardcover.

A timely study of the cults and propaganda surrounding 20th-century (and now 21st-century!) dictators from Hitler and Stalin to Mao Zedong and Kim Il Sung. These men were the founders of modern dictatorships, and they learned from each other and from history to build their regimes and maintain their public images, influencing leaders in the 21st century, including Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping, and Recep Tayyip Erdogan, autocratic rulers now inspiring a generation of anti-democratic politicians. How To Be a Dictator offers a stunning portrait of dictatorship, a guide to the cult of personality, and a map for exposing the lies dictators tell to build and maintain their regimes. Orig. $28 hardcover, sale priced at $7.98.

As this book shows, democracy has always been rife with inner tensions. The ancient Greeks preferred to choose leaders by lottery and regarded elections as inherently corrupt and undemocratic. The French revolutionaries sought to incarnate the popular will, but many of them came to see the people as the enemy. And in the United States, the franchise would be extended to some even as it was taken from others. Amid the wars and revolutions of the 20th century, communists, liberals, and nationalists all sought to claim the ideals of democracy for themselves, even as they manifestly failed to realize them. Originally $18.00 paperback; sale priced at $7.98.
Totalitarianism was the dominant phenomenon of the 20th century. Deeply troubling questions endure regarding the nature of such tyrannical regimes: What enabled human beings to carry out such horrific crimes against their fellow man? Why did human beings suffer rule by ideological lies for so long, and what kept them open to the truth? What are we to make of the relationship between totalitarianism and the foundational principles of democratic modernity? Incisive and profound reflections on totalitarianism from a variety of great thinkers old (Solzhenitsyn, Havel, Arendt, Milosz, Strauss) and new, allow readers to make sense of political evil and how it can attract so many people into its ideological fold. $30, paperback.

Just published! From independent newsletters in the 1950s to talk radio in the 1970s to cable television in the 1980s, pioneers on the left and right developed alternative media outlets that made politics more popular, and ultimately, more partisan. When campaign operatives took up e-mail, blogging, and social media, they only supercharged these trends. At a time when political engagement has never been greater and trust has never been lower, Political Junkies is essential reading, a wide-ranging history of 70 years of change in political media and how it transformed and fractured American politics. $32, hardcover.

Drawing on his 25 years of groundbreaking research on moral psychology, the author shows how moral judgments arise not from reason but from gut feelings. He shows why liberals, conservatives, and libertarians have such different intuitions about right and wrong, and he shows why each side is actually right about many of its central concerns. This subtle yet accessible book gives you the key to understanding the miracle of human cooperation, as well as the curse of our eternal divisions and conflicts. The New York Review of Books calls this “a landmark contribution to humanity’s understanding of itself.” $17, paperback.

Supreme Court journalist and New York Times editorial board member Jesse Wegman draws upon the history of the founding era as well as information gleaned from campaign managers, field directors, and other officials from 21st-century Democratic and Republican presidential campaigns to make a powerful case for abolishing the antiquated and antidemocratic Electoral College. In Let the People Pick the President, he shows how we can at long last make every vote in the United States count and restore belief in our democratic system. $27.99, hardcover.