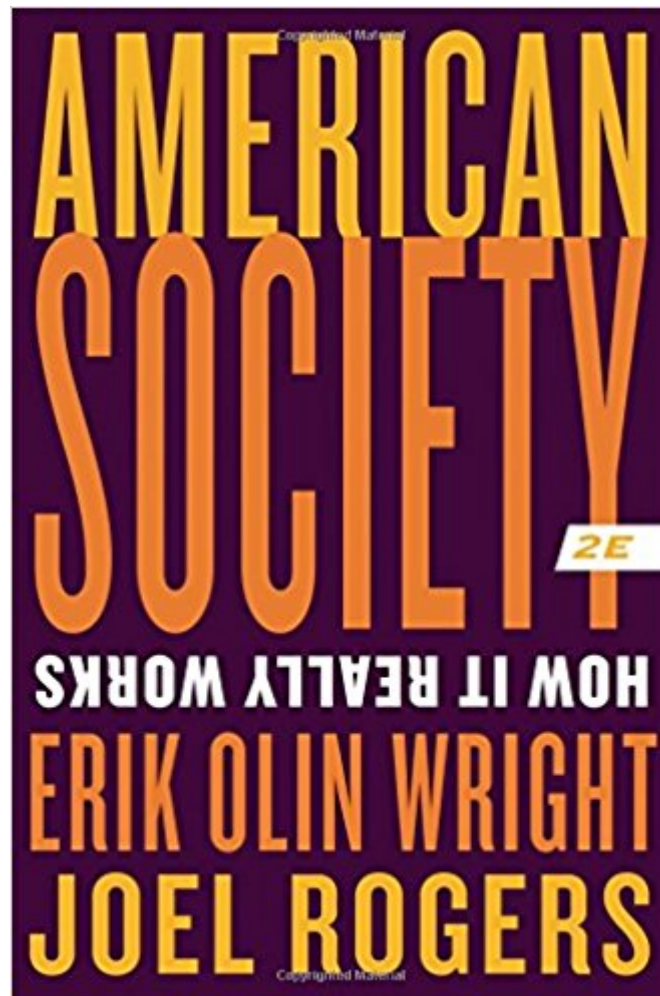




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American Society: How It Really Works (Second Edition)



Synopsis

The definitive critical introduction to American society. In *American Society: How It Really Works*, Erik Olin Wright and Joel Rogers ask several key questions: What kind of society is America? How does it really work and why is it the way it is? In what ways does it need changing, and how can those changes be brought about? To answer these questions, Wright and Rogers identify five core social values that most Americans affirm in one way or another: freedom, prosperity, efficiency, fairness, and democracy. The authors then challenge readers to question to what degree contemporary American society actually lives up to these values and suggest how we might make progress in solving some of the social problems that confront America today.

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Customer Reviews

“American Society: How It Really Works is sociology at its best, theoretically grounded, empirically based, and tightly argued. Wright and Rogers provide a unique introduction to the sociological perspective by focusing on four core American social values—efficiency, freedom, fairness, and democracy—and show the ways that American society does not measure up to its potential, give sociological reasons why this is the case, and use the sociological imagination to suggest possible futures for a more just and equitable society. The perfect book not only to introduce students to sociological analysis, but to engage them in the major issues of our time.” — Rhonda F. Levine, Colgate University

“There can be no better introduction to American society than one written by these two brilliant commentators.” — Michael Burawoy, University of California, Berkeley

“I used Wright and Rogers’s *American Society* for

an introductory sociology course. The text provided an accessible entrance into the fundamentals of sociological analysis, from economic principles and social inequality to mass consumption to participatory democracy. The work is clearly theoretically informed, but the most impressive contribution lies in the wealth of empirical studies, statistics, tables, and figures provided throughout the text. My students were particularly drawn to the empirical evidence and the consistent reference to contemporary debates about social issues, such as health care and campaign financing. The authors' suggestions for ways to reduce social inequality ignited class discussions about the limits and potential of social change at the personal and structural level. I would recommend this text for any introductory sociology course focused on alternative understandings of social inequality in American society.

— Robyn Autry, Wesleyan University

“Imagine a book about American social dynamics written by a pair of public intellectuals who are also eminent academics, aimed at beginners. Imagine a book that gives equal weight to facts and ideas, treating each with lucidity and grace. This is that book.”

— David Smith, University of Kansas

Erik Olin Wright is arguably the most prominent scholar analyzing the social impact of class in the United States, and his research has mainly involved large-scale quantitative investigations of various themes connected to social inequality. Wright is the author of many books, including *Class Counts*, *Interrogating Inequality*, and *Classes*. He has also organized what he calls the “Real Utopias Project,” which explores a wide range of radical proposals for transforming the core institutions of contemporary society (and is also a series of books for Verso). In addition, he founded the A.E. Havens Center at the University of Wisconsin, whose mission is to foster dialogue between activists and academics and to encourage critical perspectives on contemporary social issues.

Joel Rogers, a MacArthur Foundation “genius” prize-winner and identified by *Newsweek* as one of the 100 living Americans most likely to shape U.S. politics and culture in the twenty-first century, is professor of law, political science, public affairs, and sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The common thread in his academic work is democracy: how to define and measure it, what makes it work, how to make it work better. Rogers spends a lot of time outside the university advising people in politics, government, business, and social movements. He runs the Center on Wisconsin Strategy, which promotes “high road” (i.e., equitable, sustainable, democratic) economic development and governance, and has produced a stream of influential innovations in worker training; business and labor strategy; and local, state, and national policy.

good

I had to purchase this for my intro to sociology class. Although I wasn't excited about having to take the class overall, I was pleasantly surprised by how enjoyable this book was to read! It's filled with incredibly interesting statistics and U.S. history that you don't need to be a sociologist to understand and appreciate. Everything was very up to date as well, which is important since politics and society is so dynamic. Usually I'm chomping at the bit to sell back my textbooks, but I liked this one so much I decided to keep it!

Great book. Definitely recommend that all young adults read this book so that they have a better understanding of how things work in america.

Everyone should read this book, it covers all the important aspects of our society. I used it for my sociology class at the University of Oregon. It arrived quickly and was in good condition, and I returned it when I was done with no problems.

thankyou

riveting book... insightful author!

Written from a completely left point of view, and I personally prefer textbooks that take the middle ground and present both sides of an argument, letting the reader choose what he believes.

This book is written from the left. Each chapter explains the left side, lays out an argument for the right, and then tells you why the right side is incorrect. Very one sided.

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