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# American Federalism: A Concise Introduction

*By Larry N. Gerston*



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## American Federalism: A Concise Introduction By Larry N. Gerston

Understanding federalism - the form of political organization that unites separate polities within an overarching political system so that all maintain their political integrity - is central to the study of democratic government in the United States. Yet, many political scientists treat federalism as a set of abstract principles or a maze of budgetary transfers with little connection to real political life. This concise and engaging book boils the discussion down to its essence: federalism is about power, specifically the tug for power among and within the various levels of government. Author Larry N. Gerston examines the historical and philosophical underpinnings of federalism; the various "change events" that have been involved in defining America's unique set of federal principles over time; and the vertical, horizontal, and international dimensions of federalism in the United States today. The result is a book examining the ways in which institutional political power is both diffused and concentrated in the United States.



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"[This text] introduces the reader to a complex set of concepts using plain language and appropriate examples, making the subject understandable without insulting the reader. The book will appeal to the student of American government or anyone who wants to understand how these relationships work in the real day-to-day world of government and politics." - Michael G. Fischer, Director, We the People: Project Citizen Center for Civic Education"

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