



On Thinking Institutionally (On Politics)

By Hugh Heclo

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The twenty-first-century mind deeply distrusts the authority of institutions. It has taken several centuries for advocates of critical thinking to convince western culture that to be rational, liberated, authentic, and modern means to be anti-institutional. In this mold-breaking book, Hugh Heclo moves beyond the abstract academic realm of thinking about institutions to the more personal significance and larger social meaning of what it is to think institutionally. His account ranges from Michael Jordan's respect for the game of basketball to Greek philosophy, from twenty-first-century corporate and political scandals to Christian theology and the concept of office and professionalism. Think what you will about one institution or another, but after Heclo, no reader will be left in doubt about why it matters to think institutionally.

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On Thinking Institutionally (On Politics) By Hugh Heclo Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #667719 in Books
- Published on: 2011-09-30
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 5.00" h x .60" w x 7.90" l, .50 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 246 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"On Thinking Institutionally is in the best tradition of Tocqueville-an updated critique of the individualism that has been America's strength and its weakness."---Gertrude Himmelfarb Distinguished Professor Emeritus, CUNY

"This is a book for anyone dealing seriously with the human predicament, or seeking passion and renewal for the rest of the journey with institutions."--James R. Wilburn Dean, Pepperdine University School of Public Policy

"Heclo reminds us that institutions provide an opportunity to bring practical necessities and moral requirements together to serve the common good."--William A. Galston Brookings Institution

"Hugh Heclo has written an eloquent defense of the enduring importance of authoritative institutions to human life, public and private."--Jean Bethke Elshtain University of Chicago

"This is truly a gem of a book: elegantly composed, artfully compressed, intellectually sparkling, and enduringly valuable. There is no American who would not benefit from reading it."--Wilfred M. McClay University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

"On Thinking Institutionally is a modern classic-a brief and lucid argument about how and why institutions matter and how one ought to think about them."--Marc Landy Boston College

'Wise' is not a word usually applied to social science, but On Thinking Institutionally merits it."--James Turner Cavanaugh Professor of Humanities, University of Notre Dame

"A wonderfully engaging book about one of the most important yet least addressed topics in politics and leadership-how we revive a sense of responsibility for the institutions and organizations we work in and depend upon. As usual, Hugh Heclo is masterful in identifying what's almost never identified and pointing out directions for solutions where almost no one has treaded. I expect this book to become a standard text and 'must read' for students and scholars interested in the future health of our democracy."--Robert B. Reich, Professor of Public Policy, University of California at Berkeley

"On Thinking Institutionally is intelligent, deeply felt, and engagingly written."--The Weekly Standard

"Heclo's analysis of U.S. culture is powerful and prophetic EL Few have done a better job than Heclo of demonstrating why we have become skeptical about institutions."--The Christian Century

About the Author

Hugh Heclo is Clarence J. Robinson Professor of Public Affairs at George Mason University, a former Professor of Government at Harvard University, and prior to that a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution and White House staffer in Washington, D.C. His latest book, *Christianity and Democracy in America*, will be published by Harvard University Press in the spring of 2007.

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