

Title	Author	Publish Date	Summary
The Truth about the Truth	Anderson, Walter Truett	1995	The roots of postmodernism, what it does to cultural symbols and differences, and how it affects psychology, religion and science.
Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions	Ariely, Dan	2008	Irrational behavior is a part of human nature, but as MIT professor Ariely has discovered in 20 years of researching behavioral economics, people tend to behave irrationally in a predictable fashion. Drawing on psychology and economics, behavioral economics can show us why cautious people make poor decisions about sex when aroused, why patients get greater relief from a more expensive drug over its cheaper counterpart and why honest people may steal office supplies or communal food, but not money. According to Ariely, our understanding of economics, now based on the assumption of a rational subject, should, in fact, be based on our systematic, unsurprising irrationality. Ariely argues that greater understanding of previously ignored or misunderstood forces (emotions, relativity and social norms) that influence our economic behavior brings a variety of opportunities for reexamining individual motivation and consumer choice, as well as economic and educational policy.

Propaganda

Bernays, Edward

1928/2004

"The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country."-Edward Bernays, Propaganda

A seminal and controversial figure in the history of political thought and public relations, Edward Bernays (1891-1995), pioneered the scientific technique of shaping and manipulating public opinion, which he famously dubbed "engineering of consent." During World War I, he was an integral part of the U.S. Committee on Public Information (CPI), a powerful propaganda apparatus that was mobilized to package, advertise and sell the war to the American people as one that would "Make the World Safe for Democracy." The CPI would become the blueprint in which marketing strategies for future wars would be based upon.

Bernays applied the techniques he had learned in the CPI and, incorporating some of the ideas of Walter Lipmann, became an outspoken proponent of propaganda as a tool for democratic and corporate manipulation of the population. His 1928 bombshell Propaganda lays out his eerily prescient vision for using propaganda to regiment the collective mind in a variety of areas, including

Virus of the Mind: The New Science of the Meme	Brodie, Richard	2009	<p>If you've ever wondered how and why people become robotically enslaved by advertising, religion, sexual fantasy, and cults, wonder no more. It's all because of "mind viruses," or "memes," and those who understand how to plant them into other's minds. This is the first truly accessible book about memes and how they make the world go 'round.</p> <p>Of course, like all good memes, the ideas in Brodie's book are double-edged swords. They can vaccinate against the effects of cognitive viruses, but could also be used by those seeking power to gain it even more effectively. If you don't want to be left behind in the coevolutionary arms race between infection and protection, read about memes</p>
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On Being Certain: Believing You are Right, Even When You're Not	Burton, Robert A. M.D.	2008	<p>Neurologist Robert Burton challenges the notions of how we think about what we know. He shows that the feeling of certainty we have when we know something comes from sources beyond our control and knowledge. In fact, certainty is a mental sensation, rather than evidence of fact. Because this feeling of knowing seems like confirmation of knowledge, we tend to think of it as a product of reason. But an increasing body of evidence suggests that feeling such as certainty stem from primitive areas of the brain and are independent of active, conscious reflection and reasoning.</p>
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The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory	Chalmers, David J.	1996	In the science of the mind, much progress has been made. Work in cognitive science and neuroscience is leading us to a better understanding of human behavior and the processes that drive it. Consciousness, however, is as perplexing as it every was. We have good reason to believe that consciousness arises from physical systems such as brains, but we have little idea how it arises, or why it exists at all.
Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda	Chomsky		"Propaganda," says Noam Chomsky, "is to a democracy what the bludgeon is to a totalitarian state"--in other words, the means by which leaders keep the masses in line. In this slim pamphlet, he looks at American propaganda efforts, from the warmongering of Woodrow Wilson to the creation of popular support for the 1991 military intervention in Kuwait, and reveals how falsification of history, suppression of information, and the promotion of vapid, empty concepts have become standard operating procedure for the leaders of the United States--both Democrats and Republicans--in their efforts to prevent citizens from raising awkward questions about U.S. policy
Propaganda Techniques	Conserva, Henry T	2003	Propaganda Techniques illustrates the many ways politicians, advertising writers and countless promoters try to control our thoughts. He defines eighty-nine propaganda techniques under the headings of Faulty Logic, Diversion and Evasion, Appealing to the Emotions, Using Falsehoods and Tricks, Playing on Human Behavioral Tendencies, Mental Capacities and Processes, Speaking or Writing Styles and Reason or Common Sense. The book is intended to assist those trying to develop critical thinking skills.

Why Americans Hate Politics Dionne Jr., E. J.

1991/2004

The central argument of this book is that liberalism and conservatism have long framed political issues as a series of false choices and that many of the problems in American politics could be traced to the failure of our dominant ideologies. Racked by contradiction and responsive mainly to the needs of their various constituencies, liberalism and conservatism prevented the nation from settling the questions that most troubled it. At its best, the purpose of democratic politics is to solve problems and resolve disputes. But, since the 1960s, the key to winning elections has been to reopen the same divisive issues over and over again. No new light is shed. Rather, old resentments and angers are stirred up in an effort to get voters to cast yet one more ballot of angry protest. Political consultants are especially ingenious in finding creative ways of tapping into popular anger.

Who Rules America

Domhoff, G. William

2006

The owners and top-level managers in large income-producing properties are far and away the dominant figures in the U.S. Their corporations, banks, and agribusinesses dominate the federal government in Washington while their real estate, construction and land development companies dominate most local governments. Do corporations have far too much power in the United States? Does the federal government ignore the interests of everyday people? How is it possible to have such extreme corporate domination in a democratic country.

Breaking the News: How the Media Undermine American Democracy

Fallows, James

1996

Why do Americans mistrust the news media? Americans believe that the news media have become too arrogant, cynical, scandal-minded, and destructive. Year by year, a smaller proportion of Americans goes to the trouble of reading newspapers or watching news broadcasts on TV. It may be because today's shows reduce participating journalists to so many shouting heads. Or because, increasingly, the profession treats issues as complex as health-care reform and foreign policy as exercises in political gamesmanship. Or because muckrakers have given way to "buckrakers" who command huge fees lecturing to the very interest groups they are supposed to cover.

What's the Matter with Kansas: How Conservatives Won the Heart of America

Frank, Thomas

2004

Why do so many Americans vote against their economic and social interests? Thomas Frank examines his home state Kansas, and reveals how conservatism, formerly a marker of class privilege, became the creed of millions of ordinary Americans.

The Next 100 Years: A
Forecast for the 21st
Century

Friedman, George

2009

George Friedman is the chief intelligence officer and founder of Strategic Forecasting, Inc (Stratfor) a private intelligence agency whose clients include foreign government agencies and Fortune 500 companies. Gathering information from its global network of operatives and analysts (drawing the nickname "the Shadow CIA"), Stratfor produces thoughtful and genuinely engrossing analysis of international events daily, from possible outcomes of the latest Pakistan/India tensions to the hierarchy of Mexican drug cartels to challenges to Obama's nascent administration. In *The Next 100 Years*, Friedman undertakes the impossible (or improbable) challenge of forecasting world events through the 21st century. Starting with the premises that "conventional political analysis suffers from a profound failure of imagination" and "common sense will be wrong," Friedman maps what he sees as the likeliest developments of the future, some intuitive, some surprising: more (but less catastrophic) wars; Russia's re-emergence as an aggressive hegemonic power; China's diminished influence in international affairs due to traditional social and economic imbalances; and the dawn of an American "Golden Age" in the second half of the century. Friedman is well aware that much of what he

Human: The Science Behind What Makes Us Unique	Gazzaniga, Michael S.	2008	<p>The author's main premise is that human brains are not only proportionately larger than those of other primates but have a number of distinct structures, which he explores along with evolutionary explanations for their existence. For instance, a direct outgrowth of the size and structure of the human brain, along with their origins in the complexity of human social groups, was the development of language, self-awareness and ethics. (Gazzaniga offers some surprising comments on the evolution of religion and its relation to morals.) Throughout, Gazzaniga addresses the nature of consciousness, and by comparing the intellectual capabilities of a host of animals (chimps, dogs, birds and rats, among others) with those of human babies, children and adults, he shows what we all share as well as what humans alone possess.</p>
Alpha Dogs: The Americans Who Turned Political Spin into a Global Business	Harding, James	2009	<p>The rise and fall of the Sawyer Miller Group, a political consultancy firm, makes for a whirlwind look at international electioneering in this thoroughly engrossing book. The firm grew out of a partnership among the political neophytes who essentially invented the American-style of campaigning and served as backroom strategists in every presidential contest from Nixon to George W. Bush. Editor at <i>TheTimes</i> in London, Harding draws on over 200 interviews to reconstruct the behind-the-scenes history of the Sawyer Miller Group's meteoric rise to power and influence, offering an intimate look at the firm's involvement in global politics—its hand in steering Corazon Aquino to power in the Philippines, its clients' successful campaigns in South America and its machinations in Chile and Israel.</p>

Why I Hate the Democrats	Howe, Randy	2004	The Democratic Party is savaged. The author is an Independent who lives with his conservative wife and liberal daughter.
Why I Hate the Republicans	Howe, Randy	2004	The Republican party is dissected.
UnSpun: Finding facts in a world of disinformation	Jackson, Brooks & Jamieson, Kathleen Hall		Americans are bombarded daily with mixed messages, half-truths, misleading statements, and out-and-out fabrications masquerading as facts. The news media--once the vaunted watchdogs of our republic--are often too timid or distracted to identify these deceptions. UnSpun is the secret decoder ring for the twenty-first-century world of disinformation, revealing the secrets of separating facts from disinformation, such as the warning signs of spin, hype, and bogus news, common tricks used to deceive us, and how to find trustworthy and objective sources of information.
Conservative Comebacks to Liberal Lies	Jackson, Gregg	2007	Gives conservatives, right-leaning independents, and disaffected Democrats the truth they need to counter common liberal claims. Issue by issue, the book offers clear and concise conservative responses and comebacks.
No Place for Amateurs: How Political Consultants are Reshaping American Democracy	Johnson, Dennis W.	2007	Despite the growth of citizen activism sparked by mobile technology, social networking, and online communication, professional consultants are still the ones who call the shots in U.S. elections. This edition highlights the new technologies of micro-targeting and online communication, the new realities of fundraising, and the latest examples of modern election techniques.

Don't Believe Everything You Think: The 6 Basic Mistakes We Make in Thinking	Kida, Thomas	2006	How can we tell the difference between what is true and false? The answer is science and critical thinking. The 6 basic mistakes which he explains in depth are: We prefer stories to statistics; we seek to confirm, not to question, our ideas; we rarely appreciate the role of chance and coincidence in shaping events; we sometimes misperceive the world around us; we tend to oversimplify our thinking; we have faulty memories.
Spin Cycle: How the White House and the Media Manipulate the News	Kurtz, Howard	1998	Kurtz reveals White House political operations under Bill Clinton as it packages and shapes the news by manipulating, misleading, and in some cases, intimidating the press. Some of the nation's top journalists buy into these efforts and, often, put their own spin on the news.
Thinking Points: Communicating Progressive American Values and Vision	Lakoff, George	2006	Lakoff is a professor of linguistics and cognitive science. Lakoff asserts that America faces the threat of domination by a radical, authoritarian right wing despite the fact that American values are inherently progressive.
Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think	Lakoff, George	1996, 2002	In Moral Politics, the first full-scale application of cognitive and linguistic science to politics, George Lakoff analyzes the unconscious world-views of liberals and conservatives, explaining why they are at odds over so many seemingly unrelated issues--like taxes, abortion, regulation, and social programs. He argues that the differences arise from radically different conceptions of morality and ideal family life.
Don't Think of an Elephant	Lakoff, George	2004	The author explains how conservatives think, and how to counter their arguments. He outlines progressive values that progressives are often unable to articulate and breaks down the ways conservatives have framed the issues.

The Political Mind: Why You
Can't Understand 21st
Century American Politics
with an 18th-Century Brain

2008

harnesses cognitive science to rally progressive politicians and voters by positing that conservatives have framed the debate on vital issues more effectively than liberals. According to his research, conservatives comprehend that most brain functioning is grounded not in logical reasoning but in emotionalism—as a result, huge portions of the citizenry accept the Republican framing of the war in Iraq and supporting the troops rather than liberal appeals and phrasing of the occupation in Iraq and squandering tax money. George W. Bush won the presidency by concocting a redemption narrative, persuading tens of millions of voters that his past moral and business shortcomings should be viewed as a prelude to pulling himself up, rather than as disqualifying behavior. While sections of the book employ technical scientific terminology, the author masterfully makes his research comprehensible to nonspecialists. His conclusion—that if citizens and policy-makers better understand brain functioning, hope exists to ameliorate global warming and other societal disasters in the making—will be of vital importance and interest to all readers

Public Opinion	Lippmann, Walter	1922/2009	Way back in 1922, Walter Lippmann analyzed the nature of public opinion with many valuable insights that still hold true today. Lippmann dealt in an interdisciplinary method that is extremely rare, if not structurally impossible, in today's academic environment. His basic treatise is in the realm of political science but ably brings in supporting theories and knowledge from psychology, sociology, communications, history, and logic. Lippmann talks about how there is no real public opinion, how most people have a very limited view of the government, and how the government synthesizes complex views into either-or issues (i.e. "pro-life" vs.. "pro-choice"). The journalists, who should help the American people understand the issue, end up doing little at all.
The Biology of Belief	Lipton, Bruce H. PhD	2008	Dr. Lipton (Hay House) looks at the interaction of your mind and body and asserts that genes and DNA do not control our biology. demonstrates how the new science of Epigenetics is revolutionizing our understanding of the link between mind and matter and the profound effects it has on our personal lives and the collective life of our species.

Kluge: The Haphazard Construction of the Human Mind	Marcus, Gary	2008	Are we "noble in reason"? Perfect, in God's image? Far from it, says the New York University psychologist Gary Marcus. He argues that the mind is not an elegantly designed organ, but rather a "kluge," a clumsy, cobbled together contraption. He unveils a fundamentally new way of looking at the human mind--think duct tape, not supercomputer--that sheds light on some of the most mysterious aspects of human nature. He examines why people often vote against their own interests, why money can't buy happiness, and why leaders often stick to bad decisions.
The Birth of the Mind: How a Tiny Number of Genes Creates The Complexities of Human Thought	Marcus, Gary	2004	In The Birth of the Mind, NYU psychology professor Gary Marcus brings together current research on how our genetic code assembles that most mysterious physiological structure, the brain.

<p>The Future of Media: Resistance and Reform in the 21st Century</p>	<p>McChesney, Robert W., Newman, Russell & Scott, Ben; foreword by Bill Moyers</p>	<p>2005</p>	<p>The continued consolidation of media outlets, increasing governmental secrecy under the guise of national security, and the unprecedented connection between the government and a quasi-official ideological press have formed the perfect storm of threats to American press freedom, according to the contributors of this engrossing collection. The book was inspired by the first National Conference for Media Reform in November 2003, which was itself inspired by the Federal Communication Commission attempt to loosen rules on broadcast ownership, threatening further media consolidation. Contributors, primarily policy experts, lament restrictions on coverage of corporations owned by media outlets, the focus on sensationalism instead of government actions, unquestioned media support for the war in Iraq, clandestine government subsidies to "commentators" pushing government policies, and other troubling trends that don't bode well for the role of a free press in a strong democracy. Contributors include FCC Commissioner Michael Copps, journalist Bill Moyers, and Newspaper Guild president Linda Foley. Readers concerned about the freedom of the press will appreciate this thoughtful look at possible reforms.</p>
<p>Coloring the News: How Political Correctness Has Corrupted American Journalism</p>	<p>McGowan, William</p>	<p>2002</p>	<p>At a time when Americans need honest, uncensored information about the changing national identity, a media fixation on "diversity" has colored this subject in politically correct hues. Rather than encourage open and robust discussion of complex issues involving race, gay rights, feminism, affirmative action and immigration, the diversity crusade in American journalism imposes a narrow orthodoxy on these topics and restricts debate.</p>

The Naked Ape: A Zoologist's Study of the Human Animal	Morris, Desmond	1967/1999	"A startling view of man, stripped of the facade we try so hard to hide behind." In view of man's awesome creativity and resourcefulness, we may be inclined to regard him as descended from the angels, yet, in his brilliant study, Desmond Morris reminds us that man is relative to the apes--is in fact, the greatest primate of all. With knowledge gleaned from primate ethnology, zoologist Morris examines sex, child-rearing, exploratory habits, fighting, feeding, and much more to establish our surprising bonds to the animal kingdom and add substance to the discussion that has provoked controversy and debate the world over.
The Permanent Campaign and Its Future	Orstein, Norman & Mann, Thomas	2000	The permanent campaign has become a prominent feature of American politics since the 1970's. Candidates for the presidency and Congress now are in a perpetual campaign mode. Political consultants and pollsters occupy prominent staff positions. Fund-raising trumps all else in the struggle for the attention and energy of politicians and their aides. Interest groups launch sophisticated advertising campaigns to shape important public policy debates. The line between campaigning and governing has all but disappeared.
The Hidden Persuaders	Packard, Vance	1957/1980	What makes us buy, believe--and even vote--the way we do? How our thoughts and feelings are manipulated by business, media and politicians. This book exposes the world of "motivation research, the psychological technique that advertisers use to probe our minds in order to control our actions of consumers and voters.

Critical Thinking: Tools for Taking Charge of Your Professional and Personal Life	Paul, Richard W. & Elder, Linda	2002	The world gets more complex every day. Thinking more effectively gives you greater control over your life. It enables you to solve problems more effectively, make better decisions, recognize pathological thinking and avoid being manipulated.
Spin This: All the Ways We Don't Tell the Truth	Press, Bill	2002	Press, a Crossfire cohost, provides an amusing look at "spin," the basic commodity of professions from politics to journalism to marketing. After offering a loose definition of spin that distinguishes it from outright lying, Press expounds on the infinite varieties. There is the happy-face spin, which makes bad news sound good; the Boy Scout spin, which is pious denial; the twilight-zone spin, which projects the exact opposite of the truth; and, of course, the time-honored statistics spin, which twists and often fabricates numbers. Press cites plenty of examples, including the it-depends-on-the-definition spin offered by President Clinton's evasive definition of sex when the Monica Lewinsky scandal broke. Historical examples include the claim that the Civil War was fought to end slavery and talk of "collateral damage" during the Vietnam War to avoid talk of casualties. Press includes nominations to the spin hall of fame offered by well-known writers and political figures.
The Transformation of American Politics: The New Washington and The Rise of Think Tanks	Ricci, David M.	1993	Washington think tanks such as the Brookings Institution, the American Enterprise Institute, and the Heritage Foundation have become so numerous and so influential in recent years that they now constitute virtually a new branch of the political system.

What Orwell Didn't Know:
Propaganda and the New
Face of American Politics

Szanto, Andras

2007

Three years before he published 1984, Orwell wrote *Politics and the English Language*, an attack on the use of political speech "in defense of the indefensible." That essay (reprinted in full) serves as the point of departure for these 20 articles on modern methods of American propaganda, which editor and freelance journalist Szántó calls "subtle, insidious, sugarcoated, focus-grouped, and market-tested." Contributors are consistently thought-provoking, but happily diverse in background and concern: Farnaz Fassihi, senior Middle East correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal*, takes on war reporting; USC journalism professor Martin Kaplan explains why he refers to television news as "the Infotainment Freak Show"; and cognitive scientist George Lakoff discusses the psychological principles manipulated to goose the efficacy of political messages. An epilogue from moneyed progressive George Soros (whose Open Society Institute co-sponsored the publication) expresses hope that this book will "inoculate the public against false arguments"; timed to coincide with the 2008 presidential election, Szántó's collection should indeed resonate with Americans increasingly put out by the obfuscating tactics of many political campaigns (and careers).

Hardwired Behavior: What Neuroscience Reveals about Morality Tancredi, Laurence

Society's assumptions about free will and individual responsibility must be drastically revised in the light of scientific discoveries about the brain, argues this fascinating study. Drawing on a wealth of recent developments in neurobiology, genetics and brain imaging, Tancredi, a professor of psychiatry and a lawyer, examines new findings about the neurological structures and processes that underlie reasoning, emotions and decision-making. He applies these discoveries to such traditional moral concerns as violence, sexual infidelity, lying, gluttony and sloth, and even financial fraud and gambling. The striking results of this research, he notes, indicate that hormones, drugs, genetic abnormalities, injuries and traumatic experiences all have profound effects on brain structure and functioning, and hence on moral choices; indeed, some experiments imply that our actions are initiated by the unconscious brain before we are consciously aware of them, raising the possibility that our sense of moral agency is a retrospective "illusion."

Mistakes were made: but not by me Tavris, Carol & Aronson, Elliot

2007

Social psychologists take a look at how the brain is wired for self-justification. When we make mistakes, we must calm the cognitive dissonance that jars our feelings of self-worth. And so we create fictions that absolve us of responsibility, restoring our belief that we are smart, moral, and right--a belief that often keeps us on a course that is dumb, immoral and wrong.

Blind Spots: Why Smart People Do Dumb Things	VanHecke, Madeleine L. PhD	2007	We all have blind spots that are built into the ways that we naturally think. Our mental blind spots can account for much of what people ordinarily label as "stupidity." The author identifies ten blind spots. 1. Not stopping to think. 2. Not knowing what you don't know. 3. Not noticing. 4. Not seeing yourself. 5. My-Side Bias. 6. Thinking Inside the Box. 7. Jumping to Conclusions. 8. Fuzzy Evidence. 9. Missing Hidden Causes and 10. Missing the Big Picture.
Dumbing Down: Essays on the Strip-mining of American Culture	Washburn, Katharine & Thornton, John		The central premise of the book is the extinction of the intellectual cultural class in favor of the mass culture and the declining level of discourse in America.
The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation	Western, Drew	2008	Through a bravura tour of American political leaders and their appeals to the electorate, Drew Westen shows that Americans don't vote with their heads but with their hearts--and that Democratic politicians had better wise up in their approach. <i>The Political Brain</i> is a serious and groundbreaking investigation into the role of emotion in deciding the outcome of elections. It looks at data across several presidential elections from the 1950s through 2000, examines the evidence for the role of emotion in driving voting behavior, and provides a "clinical" view of a number of campaign ads, debate lines, and personal profiles of the candidates who have sought to win our hearts.