



Why We Hate Politics (Polity Short Introductions)

Colin Hay

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Politics was once a term with an array of broadly positive connotations, associated with public scrutiny, deliberation and accountability. Yet today it is an increasingly dirty word, typically synonymous with duplicity, corruption, inefficiency and undue interference in matters both public and private. How has this come to pass? Why do we hate politics and politicians so much? How pervasive is the contemporary condition of political disaffection? And what is politics anyway?

In this lively and original work, Colin Hay provides a series of innovative and provocative answers to these questions. He begins by tracing the origins and development of the current climate of political disenchantment across a broad range of established democracies. Far from revealing a rising tide of apathy, however, he shows that a significant proportion of those who have withdrawn from formal politics are engaged in other modes of political activity.

He goes on to develop and defend a broad and inclusive conception of politics and the political that is far less formal, less state-centric and less narrowly governmental than in most conventional accounts. By demonstrating how our expectations of politics and the political realities we witness are shaped decisively by the assumptions about human nature that we project onto political actors, Hay provides a powerful and highly distinctive account of contemporary political disenchantment. *Why We Hate Politics* will be essential reading for all those troubled by the contemporary political condition of the established democracies.

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