



# First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea

By Paul Woodruff

Download now

Read Online 

## First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea By Paul Woodruff

Americans have an unwavering faith in democracy and are ever eager to import it to nations around the world. But how democratic is our own "democracy"? If you can vote, if the majority rules, if you have elected representatives--does this automatically mean that you have a democracy? In this eye-opening look at an ideal that we all take for granted, classical scholar Paul Woodruff offers some surprising answers to these questions.

Drawing on classical literature, philosophy, and history--with many intriguing passages from Sophocles, Aesop, and Plato, among others--Woodruff immerses us in the world of ancient Athens to uncover how the democratic impulse first came to life. The heart of the book isolates seven conditions that are the *sine qua non* of democracy: freedom from tyranny, harmony, the rule of law, natural equality, citizen wisdom, reasoning without knowledge, and general education. He concludes that a true democracy must be willing to invite everyone to join in government. It must respect the rule of law so strongly that even the government is not above the law. True democracy must be mature enough to accept changes that come from the people. And it must be willing to pay the price of education for thoughtful citizenship. If we learn anything from the story of Athens, Woodruff concludes, it should be this--never lose sight of the ideals of democracy. This compact, eloquent book illuminates these ideals and lights the way as we struggle to keep democracy alive at home and around the world.

 [Download First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Ide ...pdf](#)

# First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea

By Paul Woodruff

## First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea By Paul Woodruff

Americans have an unwavering faith in democracy and are ever eager to import it to nations around the world. But how democratic is our own "democracy"? If you can vote, if the majority rules, if you have elected representatives--does this automatically mean that you have a democracy? In this eye-opening look at an ideal that we all take for granted, classical scholar Paul Woodruff offers some surprising answers to these questions.

Drawing on classical literature, philosophy, and history--with many intriguing passages from Sophocles, Aesop, and Plato, among others--Woodruff immerses us in the world of ancient Athens to uncover how the democratic impulse first came to life. The heart of the book isolates seven conditions that are the *sine qua non* of democracy: freedom from tyranny, harmony, the rule of law, natural equality, citizen wisdom, reasoning without knowledge, and general education. He concludes that a true democracy must be willing to invite everyone to join in government. It must respect the rule of law so strongly that even the government is not above the law. True democracy must be mature enough to accept changes that come from the people. And it must be willing to pay the price of education for thoughtful citizenship. If we learn anything from the story of Athens, Woodruff concludes, it should be this--never lose sight of the ideals of democracy. This compact, eloquent book illuminates these ideals and lights the way as we struggle to keep democracy alive at home and around the world.

## First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea By Paul Woodruff Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #970917 in Books
- Published on: 2006-03-16
- Released on: 2006-03-16
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 5.00" h x .80" w x 7.00" l, .64 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 304 pages

 [Download First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Ide ...pdf](#)

## Download and Read Free Online First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea By Paul Woodruff

---

### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

For those who think they live in a democracy, Woodruff, a professor of philosophy at the University of Texas, Austin, argues that the ideal of "government by and for the people" was in some ways more closely attained over 2,000 years ago in Athens. Exploring that model of first democracy in depth, Woodruff plainly states its defects (e.g., the exclusion of women and slaves) and outlines its checkered history, while noting its striking features. Athenian democracy was not majority rule, with a disregard for the minority, nor did Athens have elected representatives who were beholden to special interests. Lotteries rather than elections were used to appoint magistrates and council members; juries were very large (and thus hard to bribe). The assembly was composed of the first 6,000 men to arrive on the hill. A tendency toward generality (when discussing concepts like "the rule of law" and "natural equality") coupled with a lack of vivid descriptions of Greek society sometimes makes the book soporific. But the closing critique of the present-day American system and proposals for its democratization are bracing. Woodruff admires the democratic ideal "because it takes human imperfections into account better than any other ideal of government." This book will make even jaded readers want to see more of that ideal in action.

Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

### Review

"Paul Woodruff takes us to where democracy began--as a beautiful idea--and brings us all the way to the present moment of peril and the challenge we face to fulfil the dream."--Bill Moyers

"Paul Woodruff writes with eloquence and plain truth across 2500 years of history, from Athens to America, in pursuit of the most powerful, most beautiful, and most elusive idea ever devised by Man: the idea of democracy."--William Broyles Jr., author of *Brothers in Arms: A Journey from War to Peace*, and screenwriter of *Cast Away* and *Apollo 13*

"This book is a masterpiece. It's a heartfelt story of the birth, life and death of real democracy in ancient Athens and, by implication, its country cousin in America. Woodruff distills the essence of authentic democracy and conveys that to us through a compelling narration. He subtly compares how modern American democracy has collapsed, as did Athens, because of imperial overreach and betrayal of democratic ideals by ambitious elites. He correctly concludes, with a fervent hope, that America's future salvation lies in finding a way to be true to Athens at its best." --Ted Becker, Alumni Professor of Political Science, Auburn University

"This elegant essay from a distinguished classicist raises fundamental questions relevant to our contemporary political life through the prism of the Athenian democracy. The reader may disagree with Woodruff's policy prescriptions--I do, myself--but one must admire the insights and erudition of the analysis. It is a beautiful book."--Philip C. Bobbitt, author of *The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace, and the Course of History*

About the Author

**Paul Woodruff** is Darrel K. Royal Professor in Ethics and American Society and Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Department of Philosophy, The University of Texas at Austin. He is the author of the popular book *Reverence: Renewing a Forgotten Virtue*.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Eric Fincher:**

The book *First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea* can give more knowledge and information about everything you want. Why then must we leave the great thing like a book *First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea*? A number of you have a different opinion about guide. But one aim this book can give many information for us. It is absolutely suitable. Right now, try to closer with your book. Knowledge or facts that you take for that, it is possible to give for each other; you could share all of these. Book *First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea* has simple shape however you know: it has great and massive function for you. You can search the enormous world by start and read a reserve. So it is very wonderful.

#### **Rose Knowlton:**

Book is to be different for every grade. Book for children until adult are different content. As we know that book is very important for people. The book *First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea* seemed to be making you to know about other expertise and of course you can take more information. It is quite advantages for you. The guide *First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea* is not only giving you far more new information but also for being your friend when you experience bored. You can spend your current spend time to read your publication. Try to make relationship while using book *First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea*. You never really feel lose out for everything in the event you read some books.

#### **William Tietjen:**

The event that you get from *First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea* will be the more deep you excavating the information that hide within the words the more you get thinking about reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to understand but *First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea* giving you joy feeling of reading. The article author conveys their point in specific way that can be understood by means of anyone who read that because the author of this reserve is well-known enough. This specific book also makes your own vocabulary increase well. It is therefore easy to understand then can go along, both in printed or e-book style are available. We suggest you for having this kind of *First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea* instantly.

#### **Harry Anderson:**

In this time globalization it is important to someone to receive information. The information will make a professional understand the condition of the world. The healthiness of the world makes the information much

easier to share. You can find a lot of references to get information example: internet, classifieds, book, and soon. You will observe that now, a lot of publisher in which print many kinds of book. The book that recommended for your requirements is First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea this publication consist a lot of the information with the condition of this world now. That book was represented so why is the world has grown up. The words styles that writer make usage of to explain it is easy to understand. Often the writer made some research when he makes this book. This is why this book ideal all of you.

**Download and Read Online First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea By Paul Woodruff #OXJ8B9QG3F1**

## **Read First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea By Paul Woodruff for online ebook**

First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea By Paul Woodruff Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea By Paul Woodruff books to read online.

## **Online First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea By Paul Woodruff ebook PDF download**

**First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea By Paul Woodruff Doc**

**First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea By Paul Woodruff Mobipocket**

**First Democracy: The Challenge of an Ancient Idea By Paul Woodruff EPub**