

Political Style



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This text demonstrates how matters of style - diction, manners, sensibility, decor and charisma - influence politics. In critical studies of classic texts, the author identifies four dominant political styles. The realist style, as found in Machiavelli's "The Prince", creates a world of sheer power, constant calculation and emotional control; this style is the common sense of modern political science. The courtly style, depicted in Kapuscinski's "The Emperor", is characterized by high decorousness, hierarchies and fixation on the body of the sovereign; this style infuses mass media coverage of the American presidency. The republican style, reflected in Cicero's letters to Atticus, promotes the art of oratory, consensus and civility; it informs our ideal of democratic conversation. The bureaucratic style, as captured in Kafka's "The Castle", emphasizes institutional procedures, official character and the priority of writing; this style structures everyday life. Hariman looks at effective political artistry in figures from

antiquity to modern politicians such as Vaclav Havel, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton. He discusses the crises to which each style is susceptible, as well as the social and moral consequences of each style's success.

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