

BARTON

LIBRARY

Dare to know

Political Fiction

Fiction that features the political milieu.

Also known as the “political novel,” this genre typically employs a narrative that provides insight into political systems, events, theories, and figures. Political fiction often examines or directly criticizes an existing sociopolitical matter, whether reflecting the author’s personal opinion or describing events of great political significance. These stories can be metaphorical, satirical, or allegorical, and they usually carry an underlying message. Political fiction explores the nature of politics and can force the audience to consider their stance on political issues. Authors writing political fiction in a historical setting must delve into and interpret the complex politics of the past. Stendhal’s *The Charterhouse of Parma* (1839), Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852), Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *Notes from Underground* (1864), Charles Dickens’s *Hard Times* (1877), G. K. Chesterton’s *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1904), Joseph Conrad’s *Nostromo* (1904), Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* (1906), E. M. Forster’s *A Passage to India* (1924), Franz Kafka’s *The Trial* (1925), Alois Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932), Lewis Sinclair’s *It Can’t Happen Here* (1935), George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* (1945), Thomas Mann’s *Doctor Faustus* (1947), Alan Paton’s *Cry, The Beloved Country* (1948), Allen Drury’s *Advise and Consent* (1959), and Billy Lee Brammer’s *The Gay Place* (1961) are early examples.

Common Elements

National or international political scenarios

Real stories and true themes that relate to significant events

Commentary on political events

Benefits of Reading

Helps readers to acknowledge the authenticity of differing political views, opinions, and sentiments

Allows readers to see new ways to consider issues

Prompts readers to explore nuances and refine their own beliefs

Enhances readers’ understanding of broader historical and current contexts

Challenges readers to become better, more involved citizens

Modern Literary Examples

City of a Thousand Gates (2021) by Rebecca Sacks

The Counting House (2022) by Gary Sernovitz

From the Fatherland with Love (2005) by Ryu Murakami

House of Cards (1989) by Michael Dobbs

<i>Jennifer Government</i> (2003) by Max Berry
<i>Primary Colors</i> (1996) by Joe Klein
<i>Saving Faith</i> (1999) by David Baldacci

<i>Vineland</i> (1990) by Thomas Pynchon
<i>What a Carve Up!</i> (1994) by Jonathan Coe