

## SOURCES

are also placed within literary, cultural, and historical contexts in the general and thematic articles. Entries are arranged alphabetically and range in length from a single paragraph to forty pages. Each is accompanied by at least one further reading suggestion, and some include black-and-white photographs. An eight-page bibliography and a general index are provided in the third volume, while an alphabetical list of entries and a guide to related topics are provided in the front of volume 1. Additional lists of authors by chronology and ethnic or national heritage would have been helpful, but are not included in this work.

*The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Latino Literature* provides much more cultural and historical information than its title implies. Articles cover a broad range of topics, entities, and events. For example, “Aesthetic Concepts of Latino Literature,” which concentrates on contemporary Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban Americans, includes a discussion of not only literature but other art forms as well. Many other essays dealing with historical events and topics, including those on immigration, U.S. legislation, and various ethnic movements, enrich the reader’s understanding of the historical and cultural circumstances that have shaped the writing and lives of U.S. Latinos.

Two reference works devoted to Latino writers that have appeared in the last five years include *Notable Latino Writers* (Salem, 2006) and *Latino and Latina Writers* (Scribner, 2004). *Notable Latino Writers* provides entries on both Latino and Latin American authors and topics. Its author entries are of similar length and breadth to those in *The Greenwood Encyclopedia*, but the latter title provides essays on those Latino authors who are only listed, but not given an essay, in *Notable Latino Writers*. *The Greenwood Encyclopedia* also offers more in-depth coverage of historical and cultural events and topics that have influenced Latino authors. *Latino and Latina Writers* offers more in-depth literary criticism and selective bibliographies for the approximately sixty individual authors included in the two-volume set; however, the coverage of additional authors as well as the many scholarly topical essays provided in *The Greenwood Encyclopedia* make this set a worthwhile additional purchase for those libraries that already own *Latino and Latina Writers*.

School libraries and smaller public libraries may rely on *Notable Latino Writers*, while all academic and larger public libraries should purchase both *Latino and Latina Writers* and *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Latino Literature*.—Eileen Oliver, Librarian, San Antonio College Library, San Antonio, Texas

---

***The Legislative Branch of Federal Government: People, Process, and Politics.*** By Gary P. Gersham. About Federal Government. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-Clio, 2008. 450p. alkaline \$95 (ISBN 978-1-85109-712-8).

Although the federal government is seemingly ubiquitous, many people have only an elementary understanding of how the legislature functions, how it interacts with the other branches of the government, or the extent to which it has evolved over the years. This timely new offering from

ABC-CLIO’s About Federal Government series will provide legal, public administration, political science, and history students as well as interested readers with a unique and in-depth examination of the daily operations of the legislative branch of the U.S. government within the context of its historical evolution.

Written by Gary P. Gersham, assistant professor of history and legal studies at Nova Southeastern University, the book provides a historical overview and focuses on the structure and process of the federal legislature, its functions and powers, politics, interaction with other branches of the federal government, and the people who serve. Gersham’s command of the subject is noteworthy and his narrative engaging. Key features include a glossary of concepts and people, bibliographies at the end of chapters, a comprehensive annotated bibliography, primary documents (including significant legal cases), and a generous supply of high-quality illustrations and photographs. Taken together with its companion volume in the series, *The Judicial Branch of the Federal Government: People, Process, and Politics* (ABC-CLIO, 2007), the two works offer to students a distinctive historical treatment and guide to the inner workings of the federal government from its inception to the present.

There are several interesting textbooks devoted to American government but few comprehensive reference encyclopedias. Two notable and classic works will serve as valuable companion volumes to *The Legislative Branch of Federal Government*. *Congress A to Z*, 5th ed. (CQ Pr., 2008), is an easy-to-use encyclopedic treatment of Congress consisting of more than 250 entries explaining nearly every key feature of the national legislature. Levy, Karst, and Winkler’s *Encyclopedia of the American Constitution* (MacMillan, 2000) furnishes a comprehensive guide to constitutional law in the United States. Written by an impressive list of constitutional scholars, judges, lawyers, and historians, it would be a fine addition to nearly any history collection.

Gersham’s book will fill an important gap in the reference literature and it will serve as a welcome addition to American historiography. Well written, thorough, and without rival in its coverage and scope, this will undoubtedly become the premier reference encyclopedia on the subject. As such, it is highly recommended for all undergraduate and large public libraries—Vincent P. Tinerella, Public Services Librarian, Arkansas Tech University, Russellville

---

***The Old West: History and Heritage.*** Ed. by Edward Countrymen. New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2008. 11 vols. alkaline \$359.95 (ISBN 978-0-7614-7829-4).

Published to bring alive the American West to its readers, this multivolume encyclopedia chronicles the years from 1787, when the Northwest Ordinance defined how the western wilderness would be absorbed into the United States, to 1912, the year New Mexico and Arizona joined the Union. These 11 volumes contain 193 articles on about 1,200 pages by recognized scholars that explore the history of the West and its enduring social and cultural effect on the rest of the nation.