

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
Department of Politics

Politics 541
The American Political System

Spring 2005
R. Douglas Arnold

This seminar is designed to introduce students to the scholarly study of American politics. The aim is to serve students with a variety of needs, including those who intend to specialize in American politics and those who want to acquire a basic understanding of American politics without further specialization. Although the seminar is intended to survey the field of American politics, it is not comprehensive. No one-semester course could possibly include all approaches or all subfields in American politics. The first half of the course focuses more on mass political behavior; the second half is oriented more toward institutions.

******* Please Note: Seminar participants are *******
******* asked to read one short book before *******
******* the first seminar on February 3. *******

A. Weekly Schedule

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|------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. The Constitution | February 3 |
| 2. Public Opinion | February 10 |
| 3. Mass Media | February 17 |
| 4. Race and Politics | February 24 |
| 5. Elections | March 3 |
| 6. Parties in the Electorate | March 10 |
| 7. Parties in Government | March 24 |
| 8. Political Institutions | March 31 |
| 9. Congress | April 7 |
| 10. Bureaucracy | April 14 |
| 11. Macro Politics | April 21 |
| 12. Political Accountability | April 28 |
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B. Course Requirements

1. **Reading.** The course operates as a seminar. The amount of required reading is reasonable (averaging 250 pages per week). Each student is expected to do the assigned reading before each seminar and come to class prepared for discussion.
2. **Discussion.** The main event each week is a structured discussion of the week's reading, focusing on the value of a scholar's theory, the appropriateness of the methods used, the adequacy of the evidence offered, and the contributions of each work to an understanding of American politics.
3. **Alternative Writing Requirements.** Students can choose to take the seminar as either a reading course or a research seminar.
 - a. **Reading Course.** Students who choose the first option write *five* short papers that focus on the week's readings and one medium-length paper (maximum ten pages) that focuses on some theme that cuts across two or more weeks of reading.

Students select the weeks they would like to write their five short papers, subject to the constraint that they write at least two papers before spring break and at least two papers after spring break. The medium-length paper is due on Friday, May 6.
 - b. **Research Course.** Students who choose the second option write *two* short papers that focus on the week's readings and one research paper (maximum 25 pages).

Students select the weeks they would like to write their two short papers, subject to the constraint that they write one paper before spring break and one paper after spring break. The research paper is due on Friday, May 20.
4. **Short Papers (all students).** The short papers are opportunities for you to discuss the week's required reading, unprompted by the instructor or your fellow students. Your papers should be typed, double-spaced, and a maximum of five pages. They are due at the start of the seminar in which their subjects are scheduled for discussion. I will return each of the short papers with my comments a week after they are due.

The key to a good paper is to pose an interesting question and then answer it. You might focus on the value of a scholar's theory, examining its logical rigor, the plausibility of the arguments, or its relation to other theories. You might focus on the adequacy of the empirical evidence, asking whether the scholar used appropriate methods, whether the evidence really supports the hypotheses, or whether other evidence contradicts it. Alternatively, you might address the question of how well a piece of scholarship helps to illuminate other happenings in the real world. Does a book help to explain why government makes the decisions it does? Under what conditions does it appear useful? These papers are not an opportunity to summarize the week's readings. You should assume that anyone who reads your paper has also done the week's reading.

These papers should be well organized and well written. A paper that fails to develop an argument until the last paragraph is called a first draft. A paper that fails to anticipate potential counter arguments, is written in the passive voice, or is filled with grammatical, spelling, or typing errors, is called a second draft. A paper that you would be proud to read to the class is called a final draft.

5. **Final Paper (for reading course).** Each student who chooses the first option writes one medium-length paper (maximum ten pages) that is due on Friday, May 6. Much like the shorter papers, this paper is an opportunity to analyze a subject discussed in the assigned readings. For the final paper, however, the emphasis is on examining a theme that cuts across two or more weeks of readings.
6. **Research Paper (for research course).** Each student who chooses the second option writes an original research paper (maximum 25 pages). The exact subject is chosen in consultation with the instructor. You should select a topic by Thursday, March 10 and submit a one-page description. The research paper is due on Friday, May 20.
7. **Grades.** Grades reflect effort and performance in seminar discussion and in written work.

C. Availability of Readings

1. **Reserve Readings.** There is at least one copy of each required book on reserve in the Politics Graduate Study Room at Firestone Library.
2. **Additional Free Copies.** Many of the books for this course are also used in other Princeton courses and may be found in the appropriate libraries. You may find copies either in the Reserve Collection, located on A Floor of Firestone Library, or in the Donald E. Stokes in Wallace Hall. Check the University's online catalogue for details.
3. **Books Available for Purchase.** I have asked the Princeton University Store to order copies of ten books that are used most intensively (Dahl; Zaller; Iyengar and Kinder; Mendelberg; Fiorina; Mayhew; Krehbiel; Arnold; Carpenter; Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson).
4. **Electronic Course Reserves.** Articles are available as part of the library's electronic course reserves (marked ECR on the syllabus).
5. **Suggested Readings.** The suggested readings are places you might turn if you want to learn more about a given subject. Although these works are available somewhere in the Princeton University library system, I have not placed them on reserve for this course. For additional suggested readings, please refer to the Department's "Reading List for the Ph.D. General Examination in The Politics of the United States" (Fall 2003).
<http://web.princeton.edu/sites/politics/grad/AmericanReadList.pdf>

D. Times and Places

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| 1. Seminar Meetings. | Thursday, 1:30-4:20 | Corwin Hall, Room 126 |
| 2. Office Hours. | By appointment | Robertson Hall, Room 310 |
| | Phone: 258-4855 | arnold@princeton.edu |

I am readily available by appointment. Please send me an e-mail that includes all the times that are *impossible* for you over the coming week. I will respond with an appointment that works for both of us.

Weekly Readings**1. The Constitution (February 3)**

Please read the following book before the first meeting and come to class prepared for discussion.

- a. *Required* (157 pages)

Robert A. Dahl, *How Democratic is the American Constitution?* (2001), pp. 1-157.

- b. *Suggested*

The Federalist Papers (1787-1788).

- c. *Suggested Review Essay on Dahl*

Philip Michael Bailey and David Braybrooke, "Robert A. Dahl's Philosophy of Democracy, Exhibited in His Essays," *Annual Review of Political Science* 6 (2003), 99-118.

2. Public Opinion (February 10)

- a. *Required* (309 pages)

John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (1992), pp. 1-309.

- b. *Suggested Review Essays*

Philip E. Converse, "Assessing the Capacity of Mass Electorates," *Annual Review of Political Science* 3 (2000), 331-353.

James N. Druckman and Arthur Lupia, "Preference Formation," *Annual Review of Political Science* 3 (2000), 1-24.

c. *Suggested*

V. O. Key, Jr., *Public Opinion and American Democracy* (1961).

Jennifer Hochschild, *What's Fair? American Beliefs About Distributive Justice* (1981).

M. Kent Jennings and Richard G. Niemi, *Generations and Politics* (1982).

Daniel Kahneman, Paul Slovic, and Amos Tversky, *Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases* (1982).

Herbert McClosky and John Zaller, *The American Ethos: Public Attitudes Toward Capitalism and Democracy* (1984).

Samuel L. Popkin, *The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns* (1991).

Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro, *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in American's Policy Preferences* (1992).

William A. Gamson, *Talking Politics* (1992).

Michael H. Delli Carpini and Scott Keeter, *What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters* (1996).

James Stimson, *Public Opinion in America: Moods, Cycles, and Swings*, 2nd ed. (1999).

3. Mass Media (February 17)

a. *Required* (233 pages)

Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder, *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion* (1987), pp. 1-33, 47-53, 63-72, 82-89, 112-133.

Larry M. Bartels, "Messages Received: The Political Impact of Media Exposure," *American Political Science Review* 87 (1993), 267-285 (ECR).

Martin Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Programs* (1999), pp. 102-153.

Benjamin I. Page, "Zoe Baird, Nannies, and Talk Radio," in his *Who Deliberates? Mass Media in Modern Democracy* (1996), pp. 77-105.

John Zaller, "A New Standard of News Quality: Burglar Alarms for the Monitorial Citizen," *Political Communication* 20 (2003), 109-130 (ECR).

Donald R. Kinder, "Communication and Opinion" *Annual Review of Political Science* 1 (1998), 167-197 (ECR).

b. *Suggested Review Essay*

Michael Schudson, "The News Media as Political Institutions," *Annual Review of Political Science* 5 (2002), 249-269.

c. *Suggested*

Herbert J. Gans, *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time* (1979).

Richard Brody, *Assessing the President: The Media, Elite Opinion, and Public Support* (1991).

Shanto Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues* (1991).

W. Russell Neuman, Marion R. Just, and Ann N. Crigler, *Common Knowledge: News and the Construction of Political Meaning* (1992).

Thomas E. Patterson, *Out of Order* (1993).

Marion R. Just, Ann N. Crigler, Dean E. Alger, Timothy E. Cook, Montague Kern, and Darrell M. West, *Crosstalk: Citizens, Candidates, and the Media in a Presidential Campaign* (1996).

Timothy E. Cook, *Governing with the News: The News Media as a Political Institution* (1998).

John Zaller, *A Theory of Media Politics: How the Interests of Politicians, Journalists, and Citizens Shape the News* (1999), draft book manuscript.
<http://www.polisci.ucla.edu/faculty/zaller/media%20politics%20book%20.pdf>

Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect* (2001).

R. Douglas Arnold, *Congress, the Press, and Political Accountability* (2004).

James T. Hamilton, *All the News That's Fit to Sell: How the Market Transforms Information into News* (2004).

4. Race and Politics (February 24)

a. *Required* (273 pages)

Tali Mendelberg, *The Race Card: Campaign Strategy, Implicit Messages, and the Norm of Equality* (2001), pp. 3-275.

b. *Suggested*

Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (1982).

Jennifer Hochschild, *The New American Dilemma: Liberal Democracy and School Desegregation* (1984).

Edward G. Carmines and James A. Stimson, *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics* (1989).

Patricia Gurin, Shirley Hatchett, and James Jackson, *Hope and Independence: Blacks' Responses to Electoral and Party Politics* (1989).

Carol Swain, *Black Faces, Black Interests: The Representation of African Americans in Congress* (1993).

Jennifer Hochschild, *Facing Up to the American Dream: Race, Class, and the Soul of the Nation*, 1995.

Charles Cameron, David Epstein, and Sharyn O'Halloran, "Do Majority-Minority Districts Maximize Substantive Black Representation in Congress?" *American Political Science Review* 90 (1996), 794-812.

Donald R. Kinder and Lynn M. Sanders, *Divided By Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals* (1996).

Martin Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Programs* (1999).

David T. Cannon, *Race, Redistricting, and Representation: The Unintended Consequences of Black Majority Districts* (1999).

5. Elections (March 3)a. *Required* (230 pages)

Morris P. Fiorina, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized Electorate* (2005), pp. 1-113.

Gerald Kramer, "Short-Term Fluctuations in U.S. Voting Behavior, 1896-1964," *American Political Science Review* 65 (1971), 131-143 (ECR).

Andrew Gelman and Gary King, "Why Are American Presidential Election Campaign Polls So Variable When Votes Are So Predictable?," *British Journal of Political Science* 23 (1993), 409-451 (ECR).

Larry M. Bartels and John Zaller, "Presidential Vote Models: A Reaccount," *PS* 34 (2001), 9-20 (ECR).

Robert S. Erikson and Gerald C. Wright, "Voters, Candidates, and Issues in Congressional Elections," in Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer (eds.), *Congress Reconsidered*, 7th ed. (2001), pp. 67-95.

Gary W. Cox and Jonathan N. Katz, "Why Did the Incumbency Advantage in U.S. House Elections Grow?" *American Journal of Political Science* 40 (1996), 478-497 (ECR).

b. *Suggested*

Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, *The American Voter* (1960).

Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, *Elections and the Political Order* (1966).

Raymond Wolfinger and Steven Rosenstone, *Who Votes?* (1980).

Morris P. Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections* (1981).

Stanley Kelley, Jr., *Interpreting Elections* (1983).

D. Roderick Kiewiet, *Macroeconomics and Micropolitics: The Electoral Effects of Economic Issues* (1983).

Larry M. Bartels, *Presidential Primaries and the Dynamics of Public Choice* (1988).

Linda L. Fowler and Robert D. McClure, *Political Ambition: Who Decides to Run for Congress?* (1989).

Warren E. Miller and J. Merrill Shanks, *The New American Voter* (1996).

Paul Gronke, *The Electorate, the Campaign, and the Office : A Unified Approach to Senate and House Elections* (2000).

Gary C. Jacobson, *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, 6th ed. (2004).

6. Parties in the Electorate (March 10)

a. Required (168 pages)

Morris P. Fiorina, "Parties and Partisanship: A 40-Year Retrospective," *Political Behavior* 24 (2002), 93-115 (ECR).

Larry M. Bartels, "Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996," *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (2000), 35-50 (ECR).

Marc J. Hetherington, "Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization," *American Political Science Review* 95 (2001), 619-631 (ECR).

Robert S. Erikson, Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson, "Macropartisanship" and "Decomposing Partisan Change," in their *The Macro Polity* (2002), pp. 109-190.

Larry M. Bartels, "Beyond the Running Tally: Partisan Bias in Political Perceptions," *Political Behavior* 24 (2002), 117-150 (ECR).

b. Suggested

V. O. Key, Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (1949).

Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957).

Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, *The American Voter* (1960).

Walter Dean Burnham, *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (1970).

M. Kent Jennings and Richard G. Niemi, *The Political Character of Adolescence* (1974).

Morris P. Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections* (1981).

M. Kent Jennings and Richard G. Niemi, *Generations and Politics* (1982).

James Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System* (1983).

David R. Mayhew, *Placing Parties in American Politics: Organization, Electoral Settings, and Government Activity in the Twentieth Century* (1986).

David R. Mayhew, *Electoral Realignments : A Critique of an American Genre* (2002).

Donald P. Green, Bradley Palmquist, and, Eric Schickler, *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters* (2002).

7. Parties in Government (March 24)

a. Required (292 pages)

David R. Mayhew, *Divided We Govern: Party Control, Lawmaking, and Investigations, 1946-1990* (1991), pp. 1-7, 34-200.

Keith T. Poole and Howard Rosenthal, *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting* (1997), pp. 3-114, 227-232.

b. Suggested

Austin Ranney, *The Doctrine of Responsible Party Government* (1954).

James L. Sundquist, *Politics and Policy: The Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson Years* (1968).

David W. Brady, *Critical Elections and Congressional Policy Making* (1988).

Edward G. Carmines and James A. Stimson, *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics* (1989).

David W. Rohde, *Parties and Leaders in the Postreform House* (1991).

Gary W. Cox and Mathew D. McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House* (1993).

John Aldrich, *Why Parties? The Origins and Transformation of Party Politics in America* (1995).

David R. Mayhew, "Presidential Elections and Policy Change: How Much of a Connection Is There?" in Harvey L. Schantz (ed.), *American Presidential Elections: Process, Policy, and Political Change* (1996).

Morris Fiorina, *Divided Government*, 2nd ed. (1996).

William Howell, Scott Adler, Charles Cameron, and Charles Riemann, "Divided Government and the Legislative Productivity of Congress, 1945-94," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 25 (2000), 285-312.

Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal, "The Hunt for Party Discipline in Congress," *American Political Science Review* 95 (2001), 673-687.

Sarah A. Binder, *Stalemate: Causes and Consequences of Legislative Gridlock* (2003).

8. Political Institutions (March 31)

a. Required (234 pages)

Keith Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking* (1998), pp. 3-236.

b. Suggested

Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan* (1991).

David W. Brady and Craig Volden, *Revolving Gridlock: Politics and Policy from Carter to Clinton* (1998).

Nolan McCarty, "Proposal Rights, Veto Rights, and Political Bargaining," *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (2000), 506-522.

Charles M. Cameron, *Veto Bargaining: Presidents and the Politics of Negative Power* (2000).

Brandice Canes-Wrone, "The President's Legislative Influence from Public Appeals," *American Journal of Political Science* 45 (2001), 313-329.

Keith E. Whittington and Daniel P. Carpenter, "Executive Power in American Institutional Development," *Perspectives on Politics* 1 (2003), 495-513.

William G. Howell, *Power without Persuasion: The Politics of Direct Presidential Action* (2003).

9. Congress (April 7)a. *Required* (257 pages)

R. Douglas Arnold, *The Logic of Congressional Action* (1990), pp. 3-223, 265-276.

Richard L. Hall and Frank W. Wayman, "Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committees," *American Political Science Review* 84 (1990), 797-820 (ECR).

b. *Suggested Review Essay*

Nelson W. Polsby and Eric Schickler, "Landmarks in the Study of Congress since 1945," *Annual Review of Political Science* 5 (2002), 333-367.

c. *Suggested*

David R. Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (1974).

Richard F. Fenno, Jr., *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts* (1978).

Bruce Cain, John Ferejohn, and Morris Fiorina, *The Personal Vote: Constituency Service and Electoral Independence* (1987).

John W. Kingdon, *Congressmen's Voting Decisions*, 3rd ed. (1989).

Larry M. Bartels, "Constituency Opinion and Congressional Policy Making: The Reagan Defense Buildup," *American Political Science Review* 85 (1991), 457-474.

Keith Krehbiel, *Information and Legislative Organization* (1991).

Gary W. Cox and Mathew D. McCubbins, *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House* (1993).

Richard F. Fenno, Jr., *Senators on the Campaign Trail: The Politics of Representation* (1996).

Richard L. Hall, *Participation in Congress* (1996).

David R. Mayhew, *America's Congress: Actions in the Public Sphere, James Madison Through Newt Gingrich* (2000).

Eric Schickler, *Disjointed Pluralism: Institutional Innovation and the Development of the U.S. Congress* (2001).

10. Bureaucracy (April 14)a. *Required* (367 pages)

Daniel P. Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy* (2000), pp. 1-367.

b. *Suggested*

Anthony Downs, *Inside Bureaucracy* (1967).

R. Douglas Arnold, *Congress and the Bureaucracy: A Theory of Influence* (1979).

Mathew D. McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz, "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms," *American Journal of Political Science* 28 (1984), 165-179.

Mathew D. McCubbins, Roger G. Noll, and Barry R. Weingast, "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control," *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 3 (1987): 243-77.

Martin M. Shapiro, *Who Guards The Guardians? Judicial Control of Administration* (1988).

James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It* (1989).

Terry M. Moe, "The Politics of Bureaucratic Structure," in John E. Chubb and Paul E. Peterson (eds.), *Can the Government Govern?* (1989).

David Epstein and Sharyn O'Halloran, *Delegating Powers: A Transaction Cost Politics Approach to Policy Making Under Separate Powers* (1999).

John D. Huber and Charles Shipan. *Deliberate Discretion: The Institutional Foundations of Bureaucratic Autonomy* (2002).

David E. Lewis, *Presidents and the Politics of Agency Design: Political Insulation in the United States Government Bureaucracy, 1946-1997* (2003).

11. Macropolitics (April 21)a. *Required* (373 pages)

Robert S. Erikson, Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson, *The Macro Polity* (2002), xvii-xxii, 1-108, 190-448.

12. Political Accountability (April 28)a. *Required* (123 pages)

Brandice Canes-Wrone, David W. Brady, and John F. Cogan, "Out of Step, Out of Office: Electoral Accountability and House Members' Voting," *American Political Science Review*, 96 (2002), 127-140 (ECR).

Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, "Musical Chairs: Pocketbook Voting and the Limits of Democratic Accountability," Annual Meeting, American Political Science Association, 2004, pp. 1-55.

<http://www.princeton.edu/~bartels/chairs.pdf>

Gary C. Jacobson, "Elections, Representation, and the Politics of Congress," in his *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, 6th ed. (2004), pp. 219-258.

Arthur Lupia, "Shortcuts Versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections," *American Political Science Review* 88 (1994), 63-76 (ECR).

b. *Suggested*

E. E. Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America* (1960).

Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (1961).

Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes, "Constituency Influence in Congress," *American Political Science Review* 57 (1963), pp. 45-56.

V. O. Key, *The Responsible Electorate: Rationality in Presidential Voting, 1936-1960* (1966).

Paul E. Peterson, *City Limits* (1981).

Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, "Effects of Public Opinion on Policy," *American Political Science Review* 77 (1983), 175-190.

James M. Snyder, Jr., "Constituency Preferences: California Ballot Propositions, 1974-90," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 21 (1996), 463-88.

Adam Przeworski, Susan C. Stokes, Bernard Manin (eds.), *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation* (1999).

Lawrence R. Jacobs and Robert Y. Shapiro, *Politicians Don't Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democratic Responsiveness* (2000).

G. Bingham Powell, Jr., *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Visions* (2000).

Michael Bailey, "Quiet Influence: The Representation of Diffuse Interests on Trade Policy, 1983-94," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 26 (2001), 45-80

Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, "Blind Retrospection: Electoral Responses to Drought, Flu, and Shark Attacks," Annual Meeting, American Political Science Association, 2002.

<http://apsaproceedings.cup.org/Site/papers/004/004002BartelsLar.pdf>

Vincent L. Hutchings, *Public Opinion and Democratic Accountability: How Citizens Learn about Politics* (2003).