Princeton University

HONORS FACULTY MEMBERS
RECEIVING EMERITUS STATUS

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The biographical sketches were written by staff and colleagues in the departments of those honored.

R. Douglas Arnold

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R. Douglas Arnold, the William Church Osborn Professor of Public Affairs, moves to emeritus status after 42 years of service to Princeton University. Doug is one of the nation's leading congressional scholars, a key figure in the modern history of Princeton's Department of Politics, and a redoubtable member of the Woodrow Wilson School.

Doug was born and raised in upstate New York where he attended Union College, graduating Phi Beta Kappa in 1972. He then entered Yale University for graduate study in political science. In the mid-1970s, Yale was (arguably) the world's leading department for the social scientific study of politics. The department was stocked with many heavyweights from the post-war efflorescence of political science, and Doug thoroughly sampled their offerings. But he also attended to the extraordinary group of young scholars then gathered in New Haven. For example, Gerald Kramer, a blazingly talented young theorist whose career ended tragically early, exposed Doug to the new, radical, and sometimes disturbing "rational choice" approach to political science. But most importantly, Doug became one of the early students of a young congressional scholar, David Mayhew. At that time Mayhew was working out the ideas for his explosive book *Congress: The Electoral Connection,* published in 1974. The book (actually an extended essay) offered an institutionally rich account of Congress members motivated by a single-minded drive for re-election. The arguments in the book, coupled with wonderful new evidence from the innovative and meticulous fieldwork of the University of Rochester's Richard Fenno, ultimately delivered a knockout punch to earlier schools of congressional scholarship and remade the entire field intellectually. Present at the creation, Doug absorbed the new ideas and way of the thinking. But he shifted its emphasis from congressional behavior per se to representation: To what extent and under what circumstances does Congress succeed or fail in representing the people? Doug would doggedly and imaginatively pursue this question over his entire career.

In 1977, Doug joined the politics department at Princeton as an instructor. There he rapidly finished his dissertation and ushered into print his first research book, *Congress and the Bureaucracy: A Theory of Influence* (Yale University Press, 1979). The book combined an (informal) rational choice account of Congress's distribution of

"pork"— concrete, geographically specific projects like military bases and sewer grants— with novel and unprecedented data. Doug had unearthed the data in a Homeric journey through obscure Washington, D.C., offices, dusty archives, and forgotten corners of Yale University's Sterling Library. The book offered a rational choice theory of pork, coupled with a mountain of systematic quantitative evidence. This theory-evidence pairing would became a hallmark of the new American Political Science in the 1990s and thereafter. But in 1979 it was extraordinarily rare. The book remains a central and oft-cited work on pork-barrel politics.

Doug then set himself to engage his mentor's ideas directly. The result was his magnum opus, *The Logic of Congressional Action* (Yale University Press, 1990). Carefully worked out in a paragraph-by-paragraph outline hundreds of pages long, Doug turned the ideas in Mayhew's relatively discursive essay into something much closer to a master theory of Congress, in the process re-casting and re-organizing it around the theme of electoral accountability and its consequences. The book integrates an account of voter perceptions and behavior, with congressional coalition leader tactics and congressional policy choices. The first half of the book offers an extensive and elaborate quasi-deductive theory, the second half marvelous and apropos case studies illustrating "the logic" in action. The combination is somewhat intoxicating, offering clear, powerful, and innovative ideas illustrated with unforgettable true-life vignettes. The book introduced a raft of new ideas that entered the lexicon of congressional scholars: chains of traceability, latent public opinion, observability of actions versus observability of consequences, and more.

Logic was immediately and warmly welcomed by professional congressional scholars, garnering their top book prize, the Fenno Prize, in 1991. It remains a touchstone in the scholarly literature on Congress. Its relationship with positive (mathematical) political theory and political economy has been more fraught. As late as the early 2000s, it was not obvious how to formalize Doug's quasi-deductive insights in game theoretic terms. Instead, the commanding intellectual heights were seized by other theorists who (on the one hand) adapted mathematical techniques from psychometrics to scale roll call votes and campaign contributions and (on the other) used recent breakthroughs in non-cooperative game theory to study the internal organization and operation of Congress. Both endeavors largely ignored the electoral accountability at the center of Doug's approach. In the last decade, however, scholarship has begun to catch up with *The Logic of Congressional Action,* re-engaging with the sometimes

perverse and surprising consequence of electoral accountability. Almost three decades after the appearance of *The Logic,* its ideas are again at the forefront of congressional scholarship, though not always acknowledged. One might forecast a new era of influence for the work.

Doug's third research book, *Congress, the Press, and Political Accountability* (Princeton University Press, 2004), moved in a somewhat different direction from the previous two books, undertaking a massive empirical study of local press coverage of congress representatives. However, the continuity with the earlier work is obvious: democratic accountability requires observability, and observability requires press attention. So, how much can citizens actually learn about their representatives from attending to the news? The book explores this question in depth, using systematic and laboriously collected data from a sample of local newspapers. The book anticipated the soon burgeoning renaissance in media studies, which emphasizes the vital role of the press in well-functioning democracies. It also anticipated the current "text as data" movement in social science, blazing a path currently being avidly pursued by a generation of young empiricists armed with "big data" and techniques from computer science.

In addition to three core research books, Doug is the editor and contributor to two books on the future of Social Security. He remains actively engaged in research on this area of public policy.

Doug also played a central role in transforming the politics department at Princeton. Working first with Fred Greenstein, the department chair in the late 1980s, and then as chair himself for four years in the early 1990s, Doug helped build up the faculty to embrace new trends in social science, while also deepening the department's traditional strengths in political theory and public law. As one might expect, vigorous winds of change do not impel an always smooth course. Nonetheless, Doug's tenure marked a watershed in the modern history of the department. Later chairs built on this foundation, eventually making the department one of the leading political science departments in the world.

In addition to his extraordinary service to the department, Doug directed two graduate programs in the Woodrow Wilson School, first the Ph.D. program, and then the M.P.A. program. For four decades, no M.P.A. student interested in U.S. domestic policy escaped the Doug touch.

As notable as his scholarship, administrative accomplishments, and excellence in teaching have been, Doug's mentorship of doctoral students deserves special mention. A relatively small but fortunate group of doctoral students discovered that study with Doug gained them not merely deft guidance with a dissertation but something deeper: a lifelong adviser, guide, and friend.