Political science professors have many responsibilities, covering the broad areas of teaching, research, and service. Fortunately, political scientists at Iowa excel in each of these areas. Our faculty routinely receive outstanding teaching awards, research grants, and publication opportunities. These scholarly activities are well-known, and benefit a department that regularly scores high in various academic rankings. But beyond the call of scholarship lies service, and here I speak of service to the community by media involvement. The Iowa political science faculty is exceptional in the contributions they make to radio, television, and the press. Individuals and organizations in the media frequently contact Iowa political scientists, asking for their opinions on the major questions of the day. These interviews, freely given, provide a way for my colleagues to apply their trade and, in so doing, show the world the talents of our faculty.

Over the last year, for example, Iowa political scientists were quoted in national and international newspapers over 200 times. This gives the department extremely high visibility across the globe, and fosters our growing reputation as a center of intelligent political commentary. Below, I quote some selected examples from different colleagues, to give you a flavor of our news presence.

“For the most part, the candidates are going to hear the same things here that they’ll hear elsewhere. Iowa is not particularly out of step with the rest of the nation.” Peverill Squire, St. Petersburg Times, July 21, 2003.

“If unemployment is higher in June next year than it is in January, that spells danger for President Bush.” Michael Lewis-Beck, Financial Times, July 29, 2003.
Despite some dark clouds tensed up by state budget tightening, the sun generally shone on the department this past year. A full party, the Legislative Studies Quarterly Talent Show, hosted by Vicki Helsel, made us see some of our utmost strengths. A winter party, hosted by Tom and Ann Rice, helped us through the dark days of January. An early spring party, hosted by Gary Segura for Margaret Levi, new APSA president and visiting Ida Beam Lecturer, focused our minds on the fan of the discipline. A late spring party, hosted by Doug and Jeanne Madsen, gave us the courage to finish up finally.

Besides generating good social feeling, we also experienced many professional successes. Three new faculty were hired, Tom Rice, as Professor, Sara Mitchell, as Associate Professor, and Matt Gelder, as Visiting Assistant Professor. You will read more about these fine folks in the pages of this newsletter, as you will about our welcome visitors from the Ukraine.

In the profession, numerous faculty received appointments worthy of note. Vicki Helsel was named Chair of the APSA Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession, and many colleagues received awards or grants. Pervin Squire was named Colleague Fellow and Regent’s Professor, and won the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Teaching Award. A Best Paper award went to Matthew Whittaker and Gary Segura, for “Racial/Ethnic Group Attitudes Toward Environmental Protection in California: Is ‘Environmentalism’ Still a White Phenomenon?” Charles Shipan’s book, Deliberate Discretion: The Institutional Foundations of Bureaucratic Autonomy, with John Huber, won an unprecedented three national scholarly awards. Bob Boynton received a grant from the Academic Technologies Advisory Council. Dave Redlawsk was awarded grants from UI Social Sciences Funding and from the NSF-sponsored Time-sharing for Experiments in the Social Sciences Program.

Graduate students Megan Shannon and Brent Steele claimed Outstanding Teaching Assistant Awards. Jill Nittner received an International Studies Association travel grant.

Kendra Holtman won a scholarship from the Vincent L. Hawkins Foundation for Peace and Justice. Seven undergraduates were inducted into Phi Beta Kappa and Lindsay Grieve won a scholarship to support her research in Durban, South Africa.

Undoubtedly, I have missed some appointments, awards, or grants over the past year, but you can still see that Iowa political scientists have been quite active professionally. And this goes without listing the many papers published or presented at conferences. Our scholarship flowers in abundance, and the list is simply too long to pencil out. Take just one example, at the Midwest Political Science Association spring meeting, our faculty and students made thirty different presentations! Besides work that is directly or indirectly involved with scholarship, many of our faculty are active politically. One example there is seen in Tim Hagle’s interesting essay on his work with the campus Republicans. We may practice politics, as well as teach it.

We have been engaged in different forms of outreach activity over the year, the most notable of which was an Alumni Event in Des Moines on the Iowa Caucuses. Pervin Squire, Dave Redlawsk, Bill Reininger, Doug Madsen, and Mike Lewis-Beck organized that event, which was extremely successful. Hopefully, among other things, it will inspire attendees to contribute to a bit of some of our worthy programs. Speaking of which, I want to thank the many donors (listed herein) who so generously gave to one of our funds. In these times, such contributions are especially appreciated.

We have a vibrant and growing department, and we hope to keep it that way.

-Michael Lewis-Beck
Faculty Awards and Service to the Discipline

A prominent scholar in the field of international relations attended a two-day conference dealing with the possibility and implications of a global democratic peace entitled, "A Global Democratic Peace?" The conference, held at the University of Iowa on March 28 and 27, was organized by the UI Political Science Department with support from an International Programs Major Projects Grant.

According to conference organizer Kelly Kadera, since Immanuel Kant first suggested democratic governance as a tool for creating and maintaining peace, researchers have attempted to test his proposition.

"Past research efforts have found mixed evidence for the hypothesis that democratic states are more peaceful, but they have found strong support for the proposition that democracies do not go to war against each other," Kadera said. "This has encouraged policy leaders, especially Presidents Clinton and George H. Bush, to adopt the spread of democratization as a tool for establishing peaceful relations. However, academic research has not focused on the role democratization has on the system as a whole, specifically does an increase in the global level of democracy make the world a safer place?"

The conference participants debated this important question while relying on evidence from different research agendas dealing with global democratization and peace. The diversity of the participants' theoretical backgrounds and the questions they considered provided new light on the underdeveloped but important question of how democracy might or might not promote peace, across the world, Kadera said.

Rhetoric of Inquiry and published by the University of Iowa Libraries. The journal is available on browsers everywhere at http://expresslibuiowau.edu/pers/.

Dick Kesey will chair the APSA Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession for a term from September 2004 to August 2007. The committee monitors and reports on the status of women in the profession, advances research on women and an issues of concern to women, develops and assesses curriculum materials, and works to ensure fair and equal treatment of women in the profession.

Tom Rice has been appointed to the board of PS magazine. Gary Segura has been appointed as the General Program Chair for the 2004 Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association.

Two Outstanding TAs in Political Science

In recognition of their dedication to undergraduate teaching, the University of Iowa Council on Teaching has honored Brent Steele and Megan Shannon as two of the 25 winners of the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Awards for 2003-04. The awards have been given each year since 1988, and the competition is stiff. Congratulations to both of them for their hard work.

Outstanding Faculty Teaching Award

Pevorill Squire has been awarded the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Teaching Award for 2004. This designation reflects the high regard that colleagues and students have for the quality of teaching. He will be publicly recognized for the award at the fall 2004 University Convocation.
Generations of donors have helped create a series of awards to honor and support our very best students. The department held its annual Undergraduate Awards Reception in early May to honor the departmental scholarship award winners. The Helen Fairall Scholarships for 2003-2004 have been awarded to undergraduate students: Elizabeth Cervantes, Rebecca Schloss, and Patrick Finn. These funds are used to support undergraduate students in courses of study in international relations and comparative politics. The awards are highly competitive, yet many majors in the Department continue to benefit each year from these scholarships. The Laurence Fairall Scholarships for 2003-2004 have been awarded to graduate students: Brent Steele, Holly Hansen, and Jill Witrock; and undergraduates: Josephine Dang Hieu Ngo, Ryan Post, Patrick Finn, Rebecca Schloss, and Sarah Wallace. The Laurence Fairall Scholarships are limited to Iowans by birth and education. They are open to international students. Again the competition is extensive, yet many students in political science keep earning these awards.


Lauren Frances McCarthy (political science and international studies) won the Bill and John Teten Scholarship, and Stacy Christman (political science and pre-law) won the Wadysn Harris Scholarship. Seven of our senior undergraduate majors were inducted into Phi Beta Kappa, the premier honor society for undergraduate students in the liberal arts and sciences on May 2.

Patrick Finn, studying English and political science, Jakez Pisku, studying political science and environmental economics and policy, Josephine Ngo, studying political science and global studies with a minor in English, Megan McErmott, studying political science and religious studies, Jakez Pisku, studying political science and global studies with a minor in English, Megan McErmott, studying political science and religious studies, Jakez Pisku, studying political science and global studies with a minor in English, Megan McErmott, studying political science and religious studies, Jakez Pisku, studying political science and global studies with a minor in English, Megan McErmott, studying political science and religious studies.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has announced their 2004-2005 Liberal Arts and Sciences Scholarship Competition winners. Two political science majors were among them: Lauren Frances McCarthy (political science and international studies) won the Bill and John Teten Scholarship, and Stacy Christman (political science and pre-law) won the Wadysn Harris Scholarship.

The Department will hold an undergraduate career workshop this coming fall on October 21st. This will bring a panel of Iowa Political Science alumni to the campus for an evening’s discussion of the various career opportunities which may be available to our students. We are hoping to have representation from different walks (and stages) of professional life. If you would like information, please let Professor Douglas Madsen know of your interest. You may contact Doug at douglas@iowa.edu or call 319-335-2344.
Bill Reisinger and Vicki Heili in front of the Palace of the Khan in Crimea

Our scholars from Ukraine visited the political science department during the winter semester of 2004. Oleksandra "Alex" Komorenko taught a winter session course, Introduction to the Politics of Russia and Eurasia. This was Alex's second winter session with our department. In the spring, Pavlo "Pavel" Ignatov taught Government & Politics of Eastern Europe. Both Alex and Pavel received rave reviews from their students Karine Malysheva, along with her daughter K利亚, also came for spring semester. Karine spent her time here developing teaching materials in clinical psychology. Andrew Kaminsky spent the spring semester working with the faculty in International Finance in the Henry B Tippie College of Business developing teaching materials for courses in Ukraine.

Bill Reisinger, our former department chair, has taken a new role at the University. Now Interim Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and Dean of International Programs at Iowa, he traveled to Ukraine to meet with officials at Taras Shevchenko National University and to participate in a summer conference which explored reforming Ukrainian higher education in the social sciences. Bill's talk was titled "Promoting International Education at the University of Iowa." The conference took place at Taras Shevchenko National University and included sociologists, political scientists and psychologists from all over Ukraine. It was organized by the Dean of the Faculty of Sociology and Psychology. Volodymyr Yevnakh, a previous visitor to Iowa on the partnership program Vicki Heili, the director and principal investigator in charge of this partnership, also gave a talk at the conference: "The Rule of Social Science Research in Promoting Democracy."

Given that both Bill and Vicki write about Ukraine when doing scholarly research, they wanted to explore more of the country outside of the capital city of Kiev. In Crimea, they visited Yalta, where Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin signed agreements dividing up the world into spheres of influence in the closing days of World War II. They also visited Sevastopol, the former home of the Soviet Black Sea fleet, and now one of the primary ports for both the Russian and Ukrainian navies (they share the port now).

In the fall of 2003, Vicki Heili and a team of four University of Iowa pediatricians (Jeffrey Segor, Jonathan Klein, Michael Arcangel and Edward Bell) held a neonatology workshop under the direction of Olena Sulina, the Chief Neonatologist for the entire country of Ukraine. Two scholars from Ukraine visited us in the fall. Pavlo Dzyuba and Leonid Burlachuk Dzyuba, who researches transfer pricing in multinational companies, spent his time working with the faculty in the Tippie College of Business and Burlachuk, who researches psychodiagnostics, personality psychology, and clinical psychology, met with UI faculty in his area of research.

The University of Iowa entered into this partnership with Taras Shevchenko National University in 1990. With grants from the United States Department of State to Vicki Heili, faculty members from each institution travel to the other to teach and work together with the goal of supporting democratization, the rule of law and public policy reform in Ukraine.

Richard Hale Roberts Fund

Political science faculty rely on resources provided by alumni giving to support research efforts. For example, David Redlawsk has been able to draw on the Richard Hale Roberts Fund to provide funding for two different projects, both of which have involved active participation by undergraduate students. The Roberts Fund supported exit polling carried out by Redlawsk and his classes during the 2000 and 2002 general elections. The exit polls were designed to understand the attitudes of voters towards political corruption at a time when more and more corruption of all sorts is in the news. Redlawsk's research finds that there are two different perspectives on corruption. Some voters seem to think corruption simply represents politics as usual, and just assume a certain amount of it will always occur. Others, however, view corrupt activities as a violation of public trust, and for those voters, seeing corruption in politics may drive them into the arms of third party candidates. Thus, thinking of the system only in terms of a subset of all voters, those who view politics with somewhat of an idealistic lens.

The Roberts Fund also has provided important support allowing David Redlawsk to run an experiment designed to understand how voters use the information campaigns provide. Experiments can be very expensive. Roberts fund resources helped pay for subject recruitment, and to hire undergraduate students to help run the experiment. As part of a larger project that will result in a book in 2009, this experiment examined how voters react to unexpected information about candidates they like and don't like. Rather than adjusting how they feel about a liked candidate when learning something bad, voters seem to often become more positive towards that candidate, at least in the short run. Redlawsk's project is designed to figure out just how much negative information voters need to encounter before they stop liking a candidate and consider voting for another one.

Both of these studies could not have been carried out without the support of alumni giving to the Political Science Department. This funding acts as seed money to help faculty research projects get off the ground. Both of Redlawsk's projects have developed into larger studies. The exit poll study now has included a survey of New Hampshire voters during their 2004 primary and a national survey to run during summer 2004. The ability to collect this additional data is directly related to the initial findings from the exit polling. The voting experiments also have been extended, this time with about $30,000 in funding from the University of Iowa research office. Again this funding came because of the interesting initial findings from the experiment supported by the Richard Hale Roberts Fund. In both cases a little bit of seed money has gone a long way to developing comprehensive and important research projects.

Mike Davis, Pete Mathews, and Grant Young got together during a visit by Vice President Cheney to the Republican Party of Iowa's headquarters in Des Moines. All three were very involved in the 2000 campaigns and have continued to work in politics. Davis is doing summer work for the Department of Justice and will finish his law degree from the UI in December. After working for Congressman Leach in Washington, DC, Mathews is currently working with the Iowa state legislature. Young worked on the Garne-Senate campaign in 2002 and is now the Iowa Central Region Field Director for Bush-Cheney '04.
Tim Hagle on Working with the College Republicans

The Iowa Caucuses and Iowa’s current status as a “battleground” state provide many opportunities for political science students to gain valuable campaign experience. Many students interested in politics begin participating in a group on campus. The coordination between student groups and the campaigns they support varies. Even to the extent that a campaign is large enough to devote resources to supporting a student organization, the focus is often confined to the campus environment.

Tim Hagle became involved in local politics during the campaign for the 2000 Iowa Caucuses. As the Faculty Advisor for the UI Students for George W. Bush, and later as a member of the Johnson County Republican Central Committee, he quickly learned that there was little contact between the student Republican organizations and the county party. As the 2000 general election progressed he was able to help coordinate student activities to support the county party beyond the campus.

During the 2002 campaign, a staffer for one of the candidates noted that the UI College Republicans provided the muscle for the county party. To some extent, this meant that the College Republicans were often the ones who did the bulk of the literature drops and put up most of the yard signs. Those students who remain in the Iowa City area over the summer before the general election are often called on to help with parades, walls, and other community events. Participating in such activities gives the students a chance to meet and work with campaign staff as well as the candidates themselves.

The accompanying pictures provide two examples of students working with candidates. In one several students join Congressman Jim Leach during a charity walk. For this event, several Leach supporters made pledges to the charity and the students were the walkers. In the picture, several College Republicans were making get out the vote calls on Election Day in the county headquarters when gubernatorial candidate Doug Gross stopped by and joined them.

In recent years, many of our students have built on their experiences in both political parties and the contacts they made to go on to jobs with the state party, political campaigns, or in government. Even for those students without long term political goals, working on campaigns as a student provides a greater understanding of the political process and the work that goes into running a campaign.

sudhinda bose
Lecture Series

The keynote by Mrs. Bose in honor of her husband, political scientist Sudhinda Bose, enables the Department of Political Science to sponsor a series of research presentations by faculty visitors as well as faculty members and graduate students from the Iowa campus. In 2003-2004 this fund sponsored several speakers. Ronald Tshuku, Professor Emeritus, Department of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland spoke on, "Democratic Citizenship in an Era of Disengagement." Sara Mitchell presented "A Kanton System? Democracy and Third Party Conflict Resolution". Michael Krug, Program Officer in Global Security and U S Foreign Policy at the Stanley Foundation presented, "The Consequences of Nuclear Proliferation in the Developing World: Balanced Competition or Nuclear Flashpoints?" Bruno Jérôme and Veronica Jérôme-Sperlari from the University of Metz in France gave a talk titled, "The 2004 French Regional Elections: A Nationalized Local Ballot?" And Alan M. Mark Wrighton, Assistant Professor at the University of New Hampshire Department of Political Science presented, "Did the South Rise Again? Uncontested House Seats, Electoral Competition, and Realignment in the South." The Bose Fund also co-sponsored a series of presentations with the history department on American foreign policy.

ida cordelia BEAM
Lecture

Margaret Levi, the Jane L. Bachrach Professor of International Studies at the University of Washington–Seattle visited the University of Iowa in early February as an Ida Cordelia Beam Distinguished Visiting Professor. Professor Levi spoke on how the success or failure of a political transition depends largely on trust. The Ida Cordelia Beam Distinguished Visiting Professorship is in honor of an Iowa woman whose gift of Benton County land allows The University of Iowa to bring in eminent scholars to give lectures and meet our students.
Alumni Updates

Betty Abuhidea (*’59) retired at 62 and has been traveling often. She travels to Senegal twice yearly where her daughter directs development and conflict resolution project for USAID to Togakula, working with Afghan refugee women to develop a human rights statement for hopeful inclusion in The New Constitution.

Jason Gordon (*’03) is completing his first year of law school, and was elected as Treasurer of the Intellectual Property Law Society. Jason was recently a Finalist in the Charles Evans Hughes Most Court Competition.

Betsy Guyan Donnelly (*’88) is a Human Resource Manager for Cribbank.

Caro Jacob (*’69) has run campaigns throughout the country, sat on school boards, and lobbied for the League of Women Voters. After receiving her law degree from Dayton Law School in 1982, she has worked as assistant county prosecutor and in private practice in the areas of education law, family and juvenile law, and personal injury. She has taught law at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio for 18 years.

Capt. Jeff M. Johnson, USNR, (*’78) was promoted to captain in the U.S. Naval Reserve as an intelligence officer. Jeff served on active duty for 10 months in support of Operations Noble Eagle and Iraqi Freedom. When not on active duty, Jeff works as a Senior Staff Systems Engineer at Lockheed Martin Corp. in Virginia.

Steve Kean (*’91) completed his Ph.D. in political science at University of Oklahoma in May 2000, and served as executive director and campaign coordinator for the Democratic Party of Micronesia in 2001-2003.

Lyle R. Krewson (*’67) has worked as a contract lobbyist since 1985, serving as a lobbyist for many Iowa organizations, including the Iowa Chapter of the Sierra Club. He is currently working with the Sierra Club on a campaign to raise the issue of clean energy in the 2004 presidential elections. Lyle worked in the Iowa House of Representatives from 1977-1984.

Jeff Kauter (*’93) is Executive Director of the George C. Marshall Institute, specializing in conveying scientific information to Congress and the Executive Branch. Jeff is also an At-Large member of the University of Iowa Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Lana L. Lubin (*’92) received her J.D. from Drake University in 1992, and has been working in private practice since. Lana has also been an adjunct faculty member at the University of Northern Iowa since 1997, and taught business law at Northwest College in 2001.

Ron McMullen (*’82) lives in Rangenge, Burma where he serves as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy.

Tom Reenan (*’45) created the Iowa Trails Council in 1985. He has been the executive director for 20 years, pursuing the acquisition of abandoned railroads and the development into recreational trails. Tom was one of seven lawyers nominated for the 2003 Lawrence and Eula Hagie Heritage Award, one of the largest conservation awards in the state of Iowa. Tom received his master’s degree in public administration from Harvard University.

Jim Roshour (*’66), currently assistant head coach at the University of Arizona, has been coaching basketball for 32 years, 30 of those in Division I athletics. He has coached in four Final Fours and twenty NCAA tournaments. Roshour was inducted into the Illinois Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame on April 27, 2002, to honor his outstanding prep playing career.

Mac Prichard (*’80) serves as Communications Director for Reclaiming Futures, an organization with a new approach to helping young people in trouble with drugs, alcohol, and crime. Mac has also served as a spokesperson for Oregon’s Department of Human Services, a speech writer and deputy legislative director for former Oregon governor, John Kitzhaber, as a communications manager for several state and local governments, and as a policy analyst for nonprofit organizations in Massachusetts and Washington. D.C. Mac received a master’s degree in public administration from Harvard University.

Rochelle (‘68), currently associate head coach at the University of Arizona, has been coaching basketball for 32 years, 30 of those in Division I athletics. He has coached in four national championships.

Donovan Peeters (*’72) was recently appointed Project Finance Counsel to an international power development corporation.

Jeff Patrick (*’92) started with FPC Consulting in Chicago in March 1992.

Mike Prichard (*’80) was married in June 2002. He is working as the chief policy strategist for Iowa Congresswoman Jim Muse, managing the Nussle for Congress Committee, and serving as Executive Director of the congressman’s leadership Priorities Action Committee--IOWAPAC. In May 2004, Rick graduated from Drake University Law School.

Fred Slocum (*’97 Ph.D) received tenure and promoted to Associate Professor of Political Science at Minnesota State University, Mankato, in May 2003.

Juliana Kern Vishl (*’01) works as Program Coordinator for the conference. She is a former political science student and has a background in foreign relations, which provides members, specialized groups, and the general public with a forum for the consideration of significant international issues and their bearing on American foreign policy.

Greg Vannehke (*’92), currently a Ph.D. candidate at Rice University, attended the Peace Science Society (International) meeting in Ann Arbor in November for the conference. Greg coauthored a paper (with Cliff Morgan, Marvin Rapp, and Valentin Krasnos) titled “When Enough is Enough: Ending Economic Sanctions.”

Kenneth A. Wagner (*’70) began participation in the early retirement program at California State University, Los Angeles, and will continue to teach political science half-time for the next few years.

J. Mark Wrighton (*’97 Ph.D) has been selected as one of the 2004-2005 AIPAC Congressional Fellows.

William R. Yates (*’42) has retired after 27 years as Deputy Commissioner in Virginia.

political science faculty

Recommends good books

Once again, the faculty has recommended several interesting books which you might like to check out of your local library. Below is a short list of the recommendations presented in a brief description drawn from the book jacket.

From Jerry Lee Ketterling: Benjamin Franklin--An American Life, by Walter Isaacson.

[‘Franklin was], during his 84-year life, America’s best scientist, inventor, diplomat, writer, and business strategist, and he was also one of its most practical [political thinkers]. He proved by flying a kite that lightning was electricity, and he invented a rod to tame it. He sought practical ways to make stools less smoky and commonwealths less corrupt. He organized neighborhood constabularies and international alliances, local lending libraries and national legislatures. He was the only man who shaped all the founding documents of America. And he helped invent America’s unique style of humanism, democratic values, and philosophical pragmatism.”

From Chuck Shipman: High and Mighty: The Dangerous Rise of the SUV, by Keith Bradsher. [The] automotive industry and consumers have become increasingly suspicious of sport utility vehicles and their poor safety records, heavy air pollution, and misleading marketing. Yet SUV sales continue to rise, leading average fuel consumption of new vehicles to a twenty-two year low and pushing traffic deaths to the highest level since 1998. Bradsher makes a powerful case that these vehicles are much worse than cars--for their occupants, for other motorists, for pedestrians, and for the planet itself. In so doing, he shows how a flawed regulatory system, a desperate Detroit, and our national love for ‘bigger and better’ have combined to create this highway arms race.”

From Gary Segura: The Presumed Alliance: The Epiphanic Conflict Between Latinos and Blacks and What It Means for America, by Gary Segura. “As Latinos and African Americas increasingly live side by side in large urban centers as well as in suburban clusters, the idealized concept of a ‘rainbow coalition’ would suggest that these two disenfranchised groups are natural political allies. [But] as the number of Latinos has increased dramatically over the past ten years, competition over power and resources has led to antagonism and a Failure to cooperate…Vaca examines the historical context as well as the contemporary manifestations of the conflicts between Latinos and African Americans.”

From Kelly Kaden: Reliable Partners: How Democracies Have Made a Separate Peace, by Charles Lipson. “Democratic countries often go to war but almost never against each other… Why? Examining decades of research and speculation on the subject and testing this against the history of relations between democracies over the last two centuries, Charles Lipson contends that constitutional democracies have a ‘contracting advantage’--a unique ability to settle conflicts with each other by durable agreements. [This is because] their politics are uniquely open to outside scrutiny and facilitate long-term commitments. They cannot easily bluff, deceive, or launch surprise attacks. While this transparency weakens their bargaining position, it also makes their promises more credible--and more durable, for democracies are generally stable.”

From Ben Read: The Two Americas: Our Current Political Deadlock and How to Break It, by Stanley Greenberg. “The 2000 presidential election left the world standing still, but it was no fluke. America is divided right down the middle--the product of a half-century, unique in our country’s history, of inconclusive, increasingly heated partisan battle. The result: partisans are more partisan, politics more polarized, America more divided. This book tells the history of each party’s failed efforts to dominate the era’s politics and ideas.”

It provides an in-depth guide to the new groups at the center of our politics.”