

The American Presidency
Political Science 116
Fall, 2008

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Office Hours: T/Th. 11:00-12:30
Or by appointment

Class Meeting: 12:45-2:00 T/Th ([Funger 103](#))

This course will review theoretical and empirical issues related to the American Presidency. We will begin by discussing the constraints that make it difficult to satisfy the duties and expectations that are held for America's chief executive. Next, we will study the various resources that a President can use to fulfill (or attempt to fulfill) the obligations that they assume. This study will include a discussion of both the personal skills (such as bargaining strategy) and institutional resources (such as the White House staff) that a President utilizes. We conclude with a discussion of the President's relationship with Congress, the general public, the federal bureaucracy, the courts, interest groups, and foreign governments.

Because of the nature of the field, most of the readings for this course will discuss the decisions and actions that have shaped past administrations. The experiences of the Bush Administration, the 2008 presidential election, and current events will also be used to understand and analyze the presidency. For this reason, current events will play a large role in this course. Consequently, keeping up with the news will enhance the value of this course for you. A routine reading of daily newspapers (particularly the *Washington Post*, available online at www.washingtonpost.com) and political web sites (such as www.politico.com), watching television programs such as *The News Hour* on the Public Broadcasting Service (channel 26), and listening to radio programs such as *Morning Edition* or *All Things Considered* on National Public Radio will put you in a position to ask informed questions and comprehend some of the classroom discussion. In addition to the readings listed on the course syllabus, I will occasionally email additional news items that are relevant to our class.

Learning Objectives/Goals:

By the end of the semester, I expect you to:

- have an appreciation for the limits on presidential power
- understand how presidents try to accomplish their goals within these limits
- appreciate different ways of studying the presidency
- understand how rational choice, organizational theory, psychology, and historical approaches help us understand what President's do and accomplish
- recognize that there are patterns over time and across administrations

Teaching Fellow: Christina Caan, ccaan@gwmail.gwu.edu, 609 21st Street (2nd floor; rm 202), Office Hours: 2:30-4:00, Thursday.

Required Texts: All of the texts for this course will be available in the bookstore in the basement of Marvin Center. The bookstore has received all of the books. The required texts for my course are:

1. George Edwards and Stephen Wayne, *Presidential Leadership 7th ed.*
2. Samuel Kernell, *Going Public 4th ed.*
3. Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*
4. Bert Rockman and Richard Waterman, *Presidential Leadership: The Vortex of Power*
5. Robert Draper, *Dead Certain: The Presidency of George W. Bush*

We will also make extensive use of Berkeley Electronic Press's *The Forum*, ed. by Nelson Polsby. GW subscribes to *The Forum* and you should be able to access its articles free of charge from any computer on campus. The readings labeled "Packet" will be available via Blackboard. Go to the section entitled, "Readings."

Graded Assignments: The grade in this course will be based on a midterm exam (39%), a final exam (40%), your performance on 4 "practice quizzes" (6%) based upon just the Edwards and Wayne text; and an essay (15%). Because these assignments are not being weighted equally, a student who wishes to do well in the class will need to earn a good grade on more than just the papers or quizzes. Students who wish to do well in the class (e.g. earn a passing grade) should do all of the assignments. While a curve may be used in determining the final distribution of grades, any student who acquires at least 90% (or more) of the weighted points will not receive a grade lower than an A, 80-90% a B, 70-80% a C, and 60-70% a D. Thus, the curve will only be used to improve your grade. You should note that I do not give pluses or minuses for any grade in the D or F range. Furthermore, you should be aware that for Department of Political Science majors grades in the D and F range will not count towards satisfying department requirements. If your graduation depends upon this course, earning a D or F is really stupid. I do not allow students to submit extra work in an attempt to raise their grade, unless I have specified to the entire class that such an opportunity exists.

The exams will cover both material covered in the assigned readings and in the lecture. Since the lecture material will not necessarily be presented in the readings, missing class will put you at a disadvantage.

The essay will be based primarily on Draper's *Dead Certain*.

Tentative Exam/Assignment Due Dates:

1. Midterm Exam, October 30 (very tentative)
 2. Practice Quiz #1. This is to be based upon units 1, 2, and 3. It is due by September 25.
 3. Practice Quiz #2. This is based upon units 4 and 5. It is due by October 23.
 4. Practice Quiz #3. This is based upon units 6 and 7. It is due by November 17.
 5. Practice Quiz #4. This is based upon unit 8. It is due by November 25.
 7. Essay, December 2.
 8. Final Exam, December ____ (Determined by the registrar)
- Any changes in the aforementioned schedule will be announced in class. You are responsible for being aware of such changes.

As you will undoubtedly notice, the reading load varies significantly from unit to unit. For some units, there is an unreasonable amount of reading. For others, the reading load is relatively light. Thus, many of you will want to readjust when you read the assigned material.

Schedule: There will be no class on September 30 or October 9.

Email: On an occasional basis, I will email to everyone in the class updates and other information/readings. Thus, you should check your email regularly.

Unit 1: Studying the Presidency (September 9 and 11)

Reading: Edwards and Wayne, chapter 1 and appendix A
Waterman and Rockman, "What is Presidential Leadership) (Rockman reader)

Unit 2: The Presidential Dilemma (September 12 and 14)

Reading: Edwards and Wayne, chapter 15 and appendixes B and C
Rockman, "The American Presidency in Comparative..."(packet)
Skowronek, "Presidential Leadership"(packet)
Tulis, "The Two Constitutional Presidencies" (packet)
Hamilton, "Federalist #69" (<http://www.law.ou.edu/hist/federalist/>)
Hamilton, "Federalist #70" (<http://www.law.ou.edu/hist/federalist/>)
Skowronek, "Leadership by Definition: First Term Reflections,," (packet)
Ackerman, "Testimony on the Impeachment of ,,, (packet)

Unit 3: Road to the White House (September 16, 18, 23, 25, and October 2)

Reading: Edwards and Wayne, chapters 2 and 3
Dahl, "The Myth of the Presidential Mandate" (available via JSTOR at: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0032-3195%28199023%29105%3A3%3C355%3AMOTPM%3E2.0.CO%3B2-7>)
Amar, "The Electoral College," NYT (packet)
Clymer, "With Words, Gore and Bush..." NYT (packet)
Holland, "Blanket Primaries..." AP (packet)
Biscupic, "Blanket Primaries Effect on Parties Reviewed," Wpost (packet)
Broder, "Election '04 Early Birds," Wpost (packet)
Clymer and Connelly, "Poll Finds Delegates..." NYT (packet)
Cook, "Moving On" Wpost (packet)
Nagourney, "With No '04 Front-Runner, Democrats Inch..." NYT (packet)
Nagourney, "Gore Rules Out Running in '04 For President" NYT (packet)
Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde, "Will Changing the Rules" (*Forum*, V. 1, #3) (<http://www.bepress.com/forum/vol1/iss3/art2>)
Allen, "Anti-Mormon campaign slams Romney" (*Politico*) (<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0507/4007.html>)
Hook, "Obama is Shifting..." LA Times (packet)
Oxford Analytics, "Early Primary Schedule May Not..." *The Hill* (packet)
Schneider, "Betting on Private Money..." *The Atlantic* (packet)

Zelney, "Public Financing" *International Herald Tribune* (packet)
Curry, "What Role for Democratic Super Delegates?" *MSNBC* (packet)

Unit 4 Presidential Power (October 7, 14, and 16)

Reading: Edwards and Wayne, chapters 15
Neustadt, *Presidential Power*: ch. 1-7 & 10-12; pp. 3-152 & 183-295
Dickinson, "The Politics of Persuasion" (Rockman reader)
Nagourney, "Shift of Power to White House Reshapes..." NYT (packet)

Unit 5: Running the Show: White House, V.P. (October 21, 23, 28, and 30)

Reading: Edwards and Wayne, chapters 6 and 7
Lewis, "The Evolution of the Institutional..." (Rockman reader)
Kernell, "The Evolution of the White House Staff" (packet)
Neustadt, "Does the White House Need a Strong..." (packet)
George, *Presidential Decision Making in ...* ch. 8 (packet)
Berke, "Bush is Providing Corporate Model for White House," NYT (packet)
Bumiller and Sanger, "A Look Behind the Scenes," NYT (packet)
Brownlow Committee, "The White House Staff" (packet)

Midterm Examination

Unit 6: The Psychological Presidency (November 4, 6, and 11)

Reading: Edwards and Wayne, chapter 8
Greenstein, "Understanding Presidential Personality" (Rockman reader)
Draper, *Dead Certain*
George, *Presidential Decision Making in ...* ch. 4 (packet)
Maraniss, *The Clinton Enigma*, ch. 5, 9-12 (packet)
Huffington, "George W. Bush: Presidential or Pathological?"
(<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0032-3195%28199023%29105%3A3%3C355%3AMOTPM%3E2.0.CO%3B2-7>)
Barber, "The Presidential Character,"
(<http://spot.colorado.edu/~mcguire/BARBERSC.html>)

Unit 7: The Other Side of Pennsylvania Avenue: Congress (November 13, and 18)

Reading: Edwards and Wayne, chapter 10
Cameron and Park, "A Primer on..." (Rockman reader)
Fleisher, Bond, and Wood, "When President's Are..." (Rockman reader)
Savage, "Bush Shows Patriot Act" Boston Globe (packet)
Dennis, "Bipartisan Praise for Line-Item" CQ (packet)

Unit 8 Policy Making (November 20)

Reading: Edwards and Wayne, chapters 12, 13, and 14
Howell and Kriner, "Power without Persuasion (Rockman reader)
Panetta, "Politics of the Federal Budget..." (packet)

Unit 9: The Public Presidency (November 25 and 30)

Reading: Edwards and Wayne, chapters 5

Kernell, *Going Public*

Edwards, "Impediments to Presidential..." (Rockman reader)

Baum and Kernell, "How Cable Ended..." (packet)

Unit 10: Bureaucrats, Courts, and Parties (December 2 and 4)

Reading: Edwards and Wayne, chapter 9

Fine and Waterman, "A New Model..." (Rockman reader)

Epstein, Kristensen, & O'Halloran, "Conditional..." (Rockman reader)

Maltzman, "The Politicized Judiciary..." (Rockman reader)

Moe, "The Presidency and the Bureaucracy" (packet)