

The American Presidency
Political Science 116
Spring, 2007

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

Class Meeting: 12:45-2:00 T/Th ([1957 E, 213](#))

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, decisions regarding the war in Iraq, 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), 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.

Teaching Fellow: Maeve Carey, mcarey@gwu.edu, 609 21st Street (2nd floor; rm 202), Office Hours: 10:00-12:00, Th;, phone 994-2532.

Required Texts: All of the texts for this course will be available in the bookstore in the basement of Marvin Center. Students who wish to save approximately \$15, can use the on-line version of the Waterman book (available at www.atomicdog.com). The online version purchased directly from Atomic Dog is \$32. If you wish to have a paper copy of the book, want to save about \$10, you can order directly from www.atomicdog.com and skip the bookstore. Regardless as to whether you utilize the online or hardcopy of the Waterman text, you can register at www.atomicdog.com for the online version (the paper copy comes with the on-line version for free). The course registration number for my section is **2814541506080**. If you have a used copy, do not worry about registering the text. Bob Woodward's book *State of Denial* is a best seller and is frequently offered by major bookstores for 30% off the list rate. The required texts for my course are:

1. Richard Waterman, *The Changing American Presidency* 2nd ed.

2. George Edwards, *Governing by Campaigning*.
3. Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*
4. George Edwards, *Readings in Presidential Politics*
5. Bob Woodward, *State of Denial*
6. Samuel Kernell, *Going Public 4th ed.*

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's "readings" area.

Graded Assignments: The grade in this course will be based on a midterm exam (40%), a final exam (40%), your performance on 5 Waterman "reading quizzes" (5%); and an in class 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 will 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 in-class essay will be based upon Woodward's book *Plan of Attack*. If we need to make up the class period, I will convert the in-class essay to a take home essay.

Tentative Exam/Assignment Due Dates:

1. Midterm Exam, March 6 or 8 (very tentative)
2. Reading Quiz #1. This is to be based upon Waterman chapters 1 and 3. It is due by February 6.
3. Reading Quiz #2. This is based upon unit 2 assignments. It is due by February 13.
4. Reading Quiz #3. This is based upon unit 3 assignments. It is due by February 20.
5. Reading Quiz #4. This is based upon unit 4 assignments. It is due by March 1.
6. Reading Quiz #5. This is based upon Waterman units 9 and 7. It is due by April 24.
7. 5-7 page paper, April 19
8. Final Exam, May ____

Any changes in the aforementioned schedule will be announced in class. You are responsible for being aware of such changes.

The in class may be converted to a take home essay. If GW cancels any classes or if we fall too far behind schedule, the assignment will be converted.

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.

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.

Reading Quizzes: The reading quizzes will be available via blackboard. Although they will be open book, once you start the test you will be forced to submit it. Each quiz can only be submitted once.

Unit 1: Studying the Presidency (January 16 and 18)

Reading: Waterman, chapters 1 and 3

Unit 2: The Presidential Dilemma (January 23 and 25)

Reading: Waterman, chapters 2, 4, and 5

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/>)

Skrownek, "Leadership by Definition: First Term Reflections,," (packet)

Ackerman, "Testimony on the Impeachment of ,,, (packet)

Unit 3: Road to the White House (January 30 and February 1, 6, and 8)

Reading: Waterman, chapters 6 and 8

Edwards, "The Flawed Foundations" (Edwards Readings)

Mayer, "Why Presidents Break Promises?" (Edwards Readings)

Campbell, "Introduction: The 2004 Presidential..." (packet)

Preston/CNN, "N.H., Iowa Could Have..." (packet)

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)

Brownstein, "Dems Considering Earlier 2004 Primaries," LA Times (packet)

Broder, "Election '04 Early Birds," Wpost (packet)

Lester, "New Primary Plan Survives A Round" AP (packet)

Berke, "Bradley Faces McCain in an..." NYT (packet)

Pierce, "Bush's Center Strategy," CQ (packet)
Clymer and Connelly, "Poll Finds Delegates..." NYT (packet)
Cook, "Moving On" Wpost (packet)
Nagourney, "With No '04 Front-Runner, Democrats Inch..." NYT (packet)
Cillizza, "Indiana Democrat Bayh Won't...." Wpost (packet)
Balz & Murray, "Mass Governor's Rightward Shift..." Wpost (packet)
Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde, "Will Changing the Rules" (*Forum*, V. 1, #3)
(<http://www.bepress.com/forum/vol1/iss3/art2>)
Keller, "Money and Politics" (*Forum*, V. 1, #3)
(<http://www.bepress.com/forum/vol1/iss3/art5>)
Maisel, "Pick a Name; Any Name" (*Forum*, V. 1, #3)
(<http://www.bepress.com/forum/vol1/iss3/art6>)

Unit 4 Presidential Power (February 13, 15, and 20)

Reading: Waterman, chapter 16
Neustadt, *Presidential Power*: ch. 1-7 & 10-12; pp. 3-152 & 183-295
Nagourney, "Shift of Power to White House Reshapes..." NYT (packet)
Howell, "Power without Persuasion" (Edwards Reading)

Unit 5: Running the Show: White House, V.P. (February 22 and 27 and March 1 and 6)

Reading: Waterman, chapters 12, 13, 14, and 15
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)
Kornblut, "Crisis Raises Criticism" NYT (packet)
Explore: <http://www.whitehouse2001.org>

Midterm Examination

Reminder: You should have completed Woodward's *State of Denial* by the end of Spring break.

Unit 6: The Psychological Presidency (March 20, 22, 27 and 29)

Reading: Wayne, "The Influence of Personality..." (Edwards Readings)
Pfiffner, "Do Presidents Lie?" (Edwards Readings)
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://www.maavak.net/huffington/Huffington001.html>)
Barber, "The Presidential Character,"
(<http://spot.colorado.edu/~mcguire/BARBERSC.html>)
Greenstein, "The Changing Leadership..." (*Forum*, V. 1, #1)
(<http://www.bepress.com/forum/vol1/iss1/art6>)

Unit 7: The Other Side of Pennsylvania Avenue: Congress (April 3 and 5)

Reading: Waterman, chapter 9

Sinclair, "Why There is Gridlock" (Edwards Readings)

Savage, "Bush Shows Patriot Act" Boston Globe (packet)

Dennis, "Bipartisan Praise for Line-Item" CQ (packet)

CNN, "Hoekstra: Major Program Kept..." (packet)

Bumiller, "White House Letter..." NYT (packet)

Unit 8 Policy Making and Going Public (April 10 and 12)

Reading: Fisher, "What is the Appropriate Role" (Edwards Readings)

Kernell, *Going Public*, entire

Unit 9: The Public Presidency (April 17 and 19)

Reading: Waterman, chapters 7 and 17

Edwards, *Governing by Campaigning* (entire)

Jacobson, "Partisan Polarization in" (Edwards Readings)

Edwards, "The Limits of the Bully Pulpit." (Edwards Readings)

Cohen, "News that Doesn't Matter..." (Edwards Readings)

Wattenberg, "The Changing Presidential Media..." (Edwards Readings)

Corrigan, "The Disconnect between "Going Public" and the Rational Public in Presidential Policymaking - Scholarship - Statistical Data Included"

http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0KVD/is_1_1/ai_80605878)

Brody, "The American People and President Bush" (*Forum*, V. 1, #1)

<http://www.bepress.com/forum/vol1/iss1/art5>

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

Unit 10: Bureaucrats, Courts, and Parties (April 24 and 26)

Reading: Waterman, chapters 10, 11

Goldman, "Is There a Crisis" (Edwards Readings)

Edwards, "Why Not the Best" (Edwards Readings)

Maltzman, "The Politicized Judiciary..." (packet)

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

Howell, "Power without Persuasion" (Edwards Reading)