

PS 1212: The American Presidency, Spring 2016
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30pm – 3:45pm, 00352 CL

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Office Hours:

Tuesdays, 10:30am – noon and Fridays, 2:30pm – 4pm or by appointment

Course Description:

This course critically analyzes the role of the president in the American political system. It explores his constitutional role and the ways in which the president derives power from other sources. In particular, we consider the president's influence in policymaking by examining his relationships with other political institutions, the public, and foreign actors.

Required Readings:

There are no required textbooks for this course. All required readings will be posted on CourseWeb. Please bring assigned readings to each class.

Recommended Readings (Optional):

Pfiffner, James and Roger Davidson. *Understanding the Presidency*. 7th Edition. 2013.
The Oxford Handbook of the American Presidency (ed. Edwards and Howell)
Researching the Presidency: Vital Questions, New Approaches (ed. Edwards and Kessell)
The Politics of the Presidency (ed. Pika and Maltese)

Grades:

Class Participation: 10%
Short Paper Assignment: 10%
Midterm Exam: 25%
Final Paper: 30%
Final Exam: 25%

Class Participation

Each class will consist of a lecture and discussion on topics related to the weekly themes and readings. While class attendance is not mandatory, I will evaluate how well you participated in every class. I expect students to come to class prepared to discuss the readings for the week. Participation can include asking questions, responding to questions posed, or engaging in respectful debates with other classmates during designated periods of discussion. The use of cell

phones in not permitted in class. It is active non-participation and will be counted against your grade.

Short Paper Assignment

Students are required to find an example of how the office of the American presidency has been misrepresented (or correctly represented) in contemporary media or pop culture. Examples could include a news story (print, television, internet, radio, podcast, etc), a movie, an episode of a television show, a song, or an interview/speech from a public figure.

Students should explain exactly how this example misrepresents (or accurately reflects) the office of the presidency and why, given what we have learned in class. Such representations could include what powers the president can and cannot exercise, the powers of the other branches of government in relation to the president, or the checks that outside groups (the public, interest groups, or the media) have over the president.

In addition, students should use the readings and class discussions to clarify what the actual representation of the president should be in place of the wrong image conveyed in the example. Please incorporate at least 1-2 readings from the course in this analysis to support your arguments. This paper should be 3 – 5 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt. font. Please include proper citations. Papers must be submitted to me by midnight on **February 23rd**.

Midterm Exam

This exam will be in-class on **February 25th** and will cover material through Lecture 11. The exam will consist of short answers on key definitions and concepts as well as 1 or 2 long essay questions requiring students to develop arguments related to broader course themes.

Final Exam

This exam will be in-class on **April 21st**. This is a comprehensive exam, but will mainly focus on material following the midterm. The format will be similar to the midterm, but slightly longer.

Final Paper

Each student will be required to select any U.S. president and evaluate that presidency according to the theories discussed in this class and the readings. Evaluations can include (but not limited to) the president's overall success or failure in office, his legislative agenda and policy success, his interactions with the public, media, and other branches of the government, his image while in office and legacy after leaving office, his reactions to events or crises during his term, his leadership or managerial style, and any other actions.

The purpose of this paper is for students to think about and discuss how the main themes and theories of this course are evident (or not evident) in their chosen president and why. While students may choose any president, it may be more straightforward to select presidents in the 20th or 21st century since most of the theories we will discuss are developed around these modern presidents. However, I am open to reading papers about earlier presidents that could center on why these theories may or may not apply to this president and the reasons why.

This paper should be 8 – 12 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt. font. I expect students to develop their paper around clear and organized arguments, with supporting evidence from the readings and lectures. Students may need to rely on outside sources for background on their specific president. Please include citations and a bibliography.

Please inform me of your choice in president by **January 29th**. Please note, students are not allowed to select President Obama. Also, no more than 2 students may select the same president (on a first come, first serve basis). Students can submit an *optional* outline of their paper by **April 8th** if they wish to receive early feedback. Final papers must be submitted by **April 27th**. Late submissions will receive a letter grade off for each day it is late.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact both me and Disability Resources and Services (as soon as possible): 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, drsrecep@pitt.edu, (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users. The DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to adhere to the standards of academic honesty. Any student engaged in cheating, plagiarism, or other acts of academic dishonesty would be subject to disciplinary action. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity <http://www.pitt.edu/~provost/ail.html>. This may include, but not limited to the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating the University Policy.

Course Schedule (subject to change):

NO CLASS, January 7th

Lecture 1: Introduction and the Study of the American Presidency (January 12th)

In what ways have researchers studied the American presidency? How has this changed over time?

Required Readings:

Barber. *Presidential Character*. Chapter 1

Optional Readings:

Greenstein, “Change and Continuity in the American Presidency” in *The New American Political*

System (ed Anthony King)
Researching the Presidency. (ed Edwards and Kessell) Part II: Approaches to Studying the
Presidency, *The Oxford Handbook on the American Presidency*

Lecture 2: Constitutional Foundations (January 14th)

How did the framers conceive of the presidency? How does the president derive power from the Constitution?

Required Readings:
Federalist Papers 69 and 70

Optional Readings:
US Constitution, Article II

Lecture 3: Presidential Elections (January 19th)

How are presidents elected and how has this changed over time?

Required Readings:
Cohen. *The Party Decides*, chapters 4 and 6
Vavreck. *The Message Matters*, chapters 3

Lecture 4: Presidential Leadership and Success (January 21st)

What determines presidential success in office?

Required Readings:
Greenstein. *The Presidential Difference*, Chapter 14
Greenstein. *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, Chapter 3
Skowronek. "The Presidency in the Political Order."

Lecture 5: Foundations of Presidential Power (January 26th)

How does a president wield power?

Required Readings:
Neustadt, *Presidential Power*, chapters 3 – 5

Optional Readings:

Corwin. *The President: Office and Powers*

Lecture 6: Public Opinion (January 28th)

What factors influence public opinion of the president?

Required Readings:

Mueller, "Presidential Popularity from Truman to Johnson"

Rose and Rivers, "Passing the President's Program: Public Opinion and Presidential Influence in Congress"

Please email me with your **choice of president** by **Friday, January 29th**.

Lecture 7: Public Appeals (February 2nd)

How does public opinion influence the president's success?

Required Readings: NONE

Optional Readings:

Cohen. "The Presidency and Mass Media," in *The Oxford Handbook of the American Presidency*

Baum and Kernell, "Has Cable Ended the Golden Age of Presidential Television?"

Lecture 8: Presidential Responsiveness (February 4th)

How responsive is the president? Who is he responsive to?

Required Readings:

Wood, *The Myth of Presidential Representation*, chapters 2 and 5

Optional Readings:

Druckman and Jacobs. "Presidential Responsiveness to Opinion," in *The Oxford Handbook of the American Presidency*

Lecture 9: Presidential Pandering (February 9th)

Does the president respond to the public or does he lead the public?

Required Readings:

Edwards. "The Presidential Pulpit: Bully or Baloney?"

Canes-Wrone. *Who Leads Whom?* pp. 1 – 6

Optional Readings:

Rottinghaus, *The Provisional Pulpit: Modern Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion*

Jacobs and Shapiro, *Politicians Don't Pander*, chapter 2

CLASS CANCELLED, February 11th

Lecture 10: The President in the Legislative Arena, Part 1 (February 16th)

How does the president influence lawmaking through veto politics?

Required Readings:

Cameron. *Veto Bargaining*, chapter 7

Lecture 11: The President in the Legislative Arena, Part 2 (February 18th)

How does the president influence lawmaking through agenda setting and lobbying?

Required Readings:

Cohen. *The President's Legislative Policy Agenda*, chapters 3 and 4

Beckmann. *Pushing the Agenda: Presidential Leadership in US Lawmaking 1953 – 2004*, chapter 5

Optional Readings:

Cohen. *The President's Legislative Policy Agenda*, chapter 6

Review/Spillover Lecture (February 23rd)

Short paper assignment due on **Tuesday, February 23rd** by midnight.

Midterm exam, in class on **Thursday, February 25th**.

Lecture 12: The Institutionalized Presidency, Part 1 (March 1st)

How and why has the presidency become more institutionalized over time?

Required Readings:

Moe. "The Politicized Presidency," in *New Directions in American Politics*

Lecture 13: The Institutionalized Presidency, Part 2 (March 3rd)

What is the structure of the office of the president?

Required Readings:

Rudalevige. *Managing the President's Program: Presidential Leadership and Legislative Policy Formation*, chapter 2

Lewis. *The Politics of Agency Design*, chapter 1

SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS (March 8th and March 10th)

Lecture 14: Bureaucratic Control (March 15th)

What are the ways in which the president can centralize the bureaucracy?

Required Readings:

Copeland. "Federal Rulemaking: The Role of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs"

Optional Readings:

Kagan, "Presidential Administration"

Lecture 15: Executive Appointments (March 17th)

How does the president make executive appointments?

Required Readings:

Lewis. *The Politics of Presidential Appointments*, chapters 2 and 3

McCarty and Razighian. "Advice and Consent: Senate Response to Executive Branch Nominations"

Lecture 16: The Unitary Executive (March 22nd)

What is the theory of the unitary executive? How is it derived?

Required Readings:

Howell. "Unilateral Powers: An Overview"

Lecture 17: Unilateral Action (March 24th)

What are the ways in which the president can act outside of the legislative process to influence policy? In what ways is he constrained?

Required Readings:

Kelly and Marshall. "The Last Word: Presidential Power and the Role of Signing Statements"

Optional Readings:

Pfiffner. *Power Play: The Bush Presidency and the Constitution*

Cooper. *By Order of the President*

Lecture 18: The President and the Federal Courts, Part 1 (March 29th)

What are the politics surrounding the nominating process of federal judges?

Required Readings:

Cameron and Park. "Going Public When Opinion is Contested"

Yalof. *Pursuit of Justices*, Chapter 1

Lecture 19: The President and the Federal Courts, Part 2 (March 31st)

Is the president constrained by the courts?

Required Readings:

Yates and Whitford. "Presidential Power and the United States Supreme Court"

Optional Readings:

Genovese. *The Supreme Court, the Constitution, and Presidential Power*

Lecture 20: The Wartime President, Part 1 (April 5th)

What are the president's foreign policy-related powers?

Required Readings:

Wildavsky. "The Two Presidencies"

Optional Readings:

Canes-Wrone. "Toward a Broader Understanding of Presidential Power: A Reevaluation of the Two Presidencies Thesis"

Lecture 21: The Wartime President, Part 2 (April 7th)

How does the power of the president expand during times of war?

Required Readings:

Howell, *The Wartime President*, pp. 3-16; pp. 56-62; pp. 78-103

Howell and Pevehouse. "Presidents, Congress, and the Use of Force"

Lecture 22: The President and National Security (April 12th)

What are the limitations of modern presidents concerning national security? Does he enjoy greater authority or is he constrained, particularly given recent threats to homeland security?

Required Readings:

Pious. "Prerogative Power and the War on Terrorism" in *Understanding the Presidency*

Fisher. "Presidential Power and National Security" (pp. 381 – 386) in *Understanding the Presidency*

Pfiffner. "Constraining Executive Power: George W. Bush and the Constitution" in *Understanding the Presidency*

Optional Readings:

Pious. "Warrantless Surveillance and the Warrantless Presidency" in *The Unitary Executive and the Modern Presidency*

Pfifner. *Torture as Public Policy*. Chapters 2 and 5.

Lecture 24: Conclusion and Final Exam Review (April 14th)

Required Readings: NONE

NO CLASS, April 19th

Final exam, April 21st (in class)

Final paper due on Wednesday, April 27th