

**The Presidency
POS 3413
Spring 2009
Charles Perry 438 M/W/F 9:00-9:50**

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NB: This syllabus and schedule are subject to change at any time. If changes occur, the syllabus will be changed on Blackboard and announcements will be made in class.

Introduction

This course is an introduction to the central actor in the American political drama – the American presidency. This is not to imply that the president as an individual is the most important political actor, or that the presidency as an office is the “highest” office, but simply that the chief executive tends to sit at the center of national political action. This course explores the nature of presidential leadership through an examination of the leadership strategies of past presidents and the current incumbent. The goals are to deepen students’ understandings of how the presidency works, and to sharpen students’ abilities to assess the qualifications of candidates and the job performance of presidents.

The presidency is unquestionably the most visible institution in the American republic, but it is often poorly understood. In this course, students will examine the key orienting questions that surround this office. What is the constitutional design of the presidency, and why did the Framers structure it such? How does the presidency relate to the other branches of government – and how *should* it? What constraints do history and context place on a president’s ability to act? Does the individual make the office, or vice versa? Does character matter? And finally, how should American citizens evaluate their presidents? What should be our criteria for success or failure? In this course students embark upon an exploration of the place of executive leadership in republican government.

The course is organized into the following three parts and associated lecture topics.

A. Development of the Presidency: How and why did presidential power grow? What does presidential history teach the American people to expect of presidents? How does historical precedent affect current presidential performance?

1. Introduction: The Presidency and Presidential Leadership
2. Executive Power: Giving Direction to Government in Comparative Perspective
3. The Presidency Defined and Launched: Constitutional Foundations and George Washington
4. The Expansion and Democratization of Presidential Power: From Jefferson to Lincoln
5. The Reaction Against Presidential Power: From Johnson to McKinley
6. The Presidency Modernized: TR, Wilson, FDR
7. Imperial Presidency or Imperiled Presidency?

B. The Presidency in Action: What are the responsibilities of the institution, and what resources are available to meet them? What are the “state of the art” strategies for deploying resources to achieve a president's political and policy objectives? How can the quality of a president's performance in office be reasonably measured?

1. The Domestic Policy Arena – Confronting Congress
2. The Budget and Economic Policy

3. Foreign Policy
4. The News Media

C. Evaluating Presidents and Presidential Candidates: What are the grounds for choice among candidates for president? How important should character be in appraising the qualifications of presidential candidates, compared to stands on issues and records of political experience and competence? How well does the system for presidential selection work?

1. Evaluating Presidents – How do we rate their performance?
2. The Campaign for Office
3. Candidate Qualifications – Evaluating Presidential Candidates
4. Avoiding Troubled Candidates: Is this possible?

Course Materials:

Pika, Joseph A., and John Anthony Maltese. 2008. *The Politics of the Presidency*, 7th ed. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Nelson, Michael, ed. 2006. *The Presidency and the Political System*. Published Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Grading:

The course grade is comprised of three equally weighted exams and a paper (see below). There will be NO extra credit assignments offered. The exams are each worth 20% of the course grade and the paper is worth 40% of the course grade. In summary:

Exam One:	20%
Exam Two:	20%
Exam Three:	20%
Paper:	<u>40%</u>
	100%

NB: If you miss an exam, you **MUST** have one of the following: A) a note from a doctor proving you were too ill on the day of the exam to take it; or B) a copy of an obituary, in the unfortunate case you have to attend a funeral. **NO OTHER EXCUSES FOR MISSING AN EXAM WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Note this well! Anyone who cannot take the exams at the scheduled time and place should not enroll in the course. Do yourself a favor by rereading the previous sentence. You will not be excused because your brother/sister is getting married and you need to leave for that event. Special family holidays that require you to leave campus early to meet them will also not provide an excused absence.

There are no reasons that will permit a make-up examination. If you miss an examination the exam portion of the grade will be determined by upweighting the remaining examinations, but only after you present an acceptable reason for missing the examination. I am the sole judge of what constitutes an acceptable reason for missing an examination (see above). If your reason for missing the examination is not acceptable, you will receive a zero for that exam and that will be included in the calculation of the examination portion of the grade. Needless to note, but I will – just to emphasize it, a zero will have a very negative effect on the final grade. If you miss two examinations, expect a failing grade for the final grade.

Last Thing on Grades

A grade of Incomplete will be given only for exceptional circumstances. Do not expect that your circumstances will be exceptional.

You should feel free to question the professor or TA if you believe that the grade assigned to any assignment is inappropriate. However, be aware that the **only ground** to appeal a grade is that the answer is accurate or the

assignment submitted is better than the grade assigned. You need to explain why it is better than our assessment of it. No other consideration is relevant. Keep in mind: the professor and TA will discuss your answers and report. We do not “discuss grades.”

Academic Dishonesty

The purpose of this university is to create and disseminate knowledge. Academic dishonesty undermines the most fundamental activity of the university, and it is a basic offense. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating or knowingly assisting an act of cheating by another; or submitting any written material as one’s work when it has been prepared by or copied from another. A student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty has failed to satisfy a basic performance requirement for this course. The offender should expect disciplinary action. The grade for the course will certainly be affected up to, and including a failing grade for an assignment, examination, or the course. Further, the Provost’s office will be notified. University action should be expected. *When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, consult with me.*

Special Accommodations

If you have special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and need assistance, notify the Disability Resource Center (GC 190, 348-3532) and me immediately. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your needs.

Grades will be assigned as follows –

Below 60.00	= F
60.01 to 63.00	= D-
63.01 to 66.99	= D
67.00 to 69.99	= D+
70.00 to 73.00	= C-
73.01 to 76.99	= C
77.00 to 79.99	= C+
80.00 to 83.00	= B-
83.01 to 86.99	= B
87.00 to 89.99	= B+
90.00 to 93.00	= A-
93.01 to 100.00	= A

Please note from this scale that there will be no “rounding up” of grades.

The Paper

We have examined the presidency, and certain specific presidents, in great detail. One of the last things we will consider are rankings of presidents by historians, political scientists, and other scholars. When these surveys are taken, scholars are asked to rank presidents on several criteria. These are: public persuasion; moral authority; relations with Congress; crisis leadership; international relations; and administrative skills, which includes the quality of appointments made by the president. Not all presidents are ranked highly in each of these six areas, but a high score in some areas can make up for lower scores in others when calculating their overall ranking.

In this assignment, you will do the following:

- 1) First you must demonstrate a clear understanding of what each of the categories is intended to measure. Do you think these categories make sense as a way of measuring presidential performance? Why or why not? Either way, you must explain your answer – simply writing “Yes” or “No” is not acceptable. If for instance, you feel one or more of the categories is irrelevant and should be removed from consideration, explain why you feel that way. Finally, you must think of at least one category you would add to this system of ranking presidents and explain why you think it should be included.
- 2) Choose one president and provide a detailed examination of your chosen president, using the criteria

outlined above and whatever you have added to the system of ranking presidents. Your assessment of the president necessitates that you research your chosen president. How did your president perform, based on your understanding of the criteria?

3) Decide where your chosen president should be ranked. If you happen to feel that your chosen president already has the perfect ranking, you must explain why you feel that way. Finally, provide your own ranking of the presidents, placing not only your president in his place, but also ranking George W. Bush. You should provide a brief explanation for your ranking of President Bush, based on the criteria for ranking presidents.

For this paper, you will need to check out biographies about your chosen president.

You may also use your textbooks, political science and history journals (e.g. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*) and journalistic accounts (these can be newspapers, magazines, broadcast accounts, blogs and other web-based materials). There are only two **FIRM** limits on the type of material you may use:

a) You absolutely, positively **MAY NOT** use Wikipedia as a source for this paper. Wikipedia is way too open to the political biases of its contributors. Since nearly anyone with an ill-informed opinion can make changes to Wikipedia entries, you simply cannot rely on anything on the site, especially where politics are concerned.

b) In a related restriction, you **MAY NOT** use websites that clearly advocate a politically partisan point of view **UNLESS**, for instance, you have created some kind of ideological or party leadership category to add to your list of criteria for judging presidential performance.

For this paper, you must consult a **MINIMUM OF FIVE SOURCES**, following the rules outlined above, and **cite them consistently using the APSA Style Manual for Political Science** (available on Blackboard).

The paper should be 5-7 pages long, **NOT INCLUDING** title page and works cited page(s).

This means double-spaced, 12 point Times Roman font with 1 inch margins on the left and right sides and 1 inch margins top and bottom. Pages **MUST** be numbered. Staple the pages together. **DO NOT** submit anything in *any kind* of folder or binder.

Note this well! The clarity of the writing as well as the grammar, spelling, punctuation, organization and so forth will substantially influence the grade you receive for this assignment. Bad spelling and/or grammatical errors will reduce your grade for the paper. You will also suffer for poor writing.

Several other things to note:

- Proof-read and spell-check the document.
- Democrat/s/ic and Republican/s are **proper nouns**. You will be penalized for failing to capitalize the words.
- Do not write statements for which you do not have evidence. The paper is not an exercise in speculation or proselytizing. A bit of speculation is acceptable so long as it is clear to any reader that you know it is speculation and your point is not offered as empirically established. You are expected to conduct balanced, trustworthy, and sensible analyses. Needless to note – but I will – I am the judge of whether what you write is balanced, trustworthy, and sensible.
- I do not care about your political views. If they are all over the paper, your grade will suffer. The papers are not propaganda or venting exercises.
- The paper will not be returned, so save a copy if you want to know what you read.

The paper is due on April 13 at the *beginning* of class. It must be handed in as a hardcopy. No electronic submissions. Late submissions will **NOT** be accepted.

READINGS, LECTURES, AND ATTENDANCE

It is extremely important that you complete each day's reading assignment prior to class and that you attend class regularly. Without the background provided by the daily readings, you will find it difficult to keep up with the lectures. In addition, much material that is covered in the readings will not be duplicated in the lectures and vice versa. As noted above, examination questions will be drawn from material in both the assigned readings and lectures.

While attendance at lectures is not mandatory, regular attendance is encouraged. The lectures are an important aid for understanding the theories and concepts addressed in the course.

While this course is not particularly difficult, it does require diligence, attendance, and consistent effort. If you work hard, you should find this class challenging but rewarding, and emerge from it with an enhanced understanding and appreciation of the American presidency.

CLASS RULES AND NORMS

1. **Be punctual.** This class is scheduled from 9:00 a.m. until 9:50 a.m. We will begin promptly and will generally go for the entire 50 minutes. I expect you to be in your seats and ready to begin at 9:00 a.m., and to give me your undivided attention for the entire time. This means no rustling of papers, packing up, etc. early!

2. **Be considerate of your classmates.** Students should refrain from unnecessary chattering, whispering, comings-and-going, note passing etc. Any student whose behavior proves distracting to me or the class will be asked to leave the class.

3. **Electronic devices.** Every student has the right to listen to lectures undistracted by electronic devices such as cellular phones, PDAs, laptop computers, and related devices. Likewise I expect the same courtesy with respect to my ability to present lectures. To ensure that electronic devices do not distract the class, and to facilitate, rather than impede, learning, their use in this class is subject to the following rules:

A. Cellular phones, pagers, PDAs, iPods/MP3 players, etc. – Have no place in the classroom, and they may not be used during lecture for any reason. Please turn off these devices or set them to silent ring before the class begins. Class distractions such as ringing cellular phones, sending/answering SMS, etc., will be penalized in the following manner. The first infraction will incur no penalty. Each subsequent infraction will increase the length of the subsequent examination by one question.

B. Laptop computers – Laptop computers are welcome in the classroom for note taking purposes only, and may not be used for any other application. Web surfing, instant messaging, email, and other non-class related computer activities are not permitted during lecture. If a student uses their laptop for any reason other than note-taking (e.g., checking email, surfing the internet, playing a game, etc.), the entire class will be told to shut down their computers. If this happens three times, all computers will be banned from the classroom.

N.B. I do not think that typing class notes on a computer is a good idea. Note taking is not the same as dictation, and taking effective notes is a skill that must be learned and practiced. I recommend that you take notes the old fashioned way, using pen and paper, and then summarize/rephrase the lecture notes in a manner that makes the most sense to you. In the long-run you will learn more, and develop a skill that is more useful than learning to type quickly.

4. **There are no lecture notes for the course.** If, for any reason, you are unable to attend class it is *your responsibility* to obtain notes, etc., *from your classmates*. Further, if you did not attend class please do not ask your instructor if you "missed anything important." ALL lectures are important!

Important Dates

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January 12	- Last day to complete late registration. - Drop/Add Period ends; last day to drop courses or withdraw from the University without incurring financial liability. - Last day to change grading option.
January 19 Monday	- Martin Luther King Holiday (University Closed).
January 30	- Last day to withdraw from the University with a 25% refund of tuition.
February 27	- Last day to drop a course with a DR grade. - Last day to withdraw from the University with a WI grade.
March 16 – 21	- Spring Break.
March 23	- Classes resume
April 20 - 25	- Final week of the semester - modified class schedule: Final exams and other course assessment activities are scheduled during this week.

Course Outline and List of Readings (subject to adjustment at the discretion of the instructor)

Part One: Development of the Presidency

Week One (Jan. 5-9)

Course introduction: We will introduce the course and the concept of presidential leadership. We will also examine the various approaches to studying the presidency. We will then turn to a comparative study of executive power – between the American presidential system and parliamentary/cabinet systems found in Western Europe.

Reading:

Pika and Maltese, Chapter One

Nelson, Chapter Two

Gary King, “The Methodology of Presidential Research.” Blackboard

Week Two (Jan. 12-16)

Constitutional Foundations and the Earliest (most important) Precedents: We will examine the framers’ debate about the presidency and the constitutional design of the executive branch. We will also examine the presidency of George Washington in order to understand how his behavior in that office established precedents for Presidents and the presidency that are still relevant.

Reading:

Nelson, Chapter Three

Federalist #'s 47, 48, 51, 72, 73. Blackboard

Weeks Three (Jan. 19-23)

The Evolving Presidency I – Expanding, Contracting and Democratizing: We will examine the expansion of presidential power by Jefferson, Jackson, Polk, and Lincoln. We will also examine the democratization of the presidency during the presidencies of Jefferson and Jackson, who made the office more accessible to average citizens than the framers of the Constitution originally intended. Finally, we will examine the suppression of presidential power following the Civil War. This suppression lasted, as we will see, until the presidency of William McKinley, who began to lead the presidency into the modern era.

Reading:

Nelson, Chapter Four

Week Four (Jan. 26-30)

A. The Evolving Presidency I - Continued

B. The Evolving Presidency II – The Modern Presidency: We will examine the emergence of the presidency as a co-equal partner, or maybe even a leader, in the American system of government. This emergence began with Teddy Roosevelt, advanced with Woodrow Wilson, and advanced still farther with FDR.

Reading

Nelson, Chapters Five, Thirteen, and Fourteen

Week Five (Feb. 2-6)

The Evolving Presidency II – Continued

Reading

See Week Four

Note: Exam One is on Friday, February 6

Week Six (Feb. 9-13)

The Evolving Presidency III – The Postmodern Presidency: We will examine the presidencies of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, which prompted historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. to coin the phrase “the imperial presidency.” We will next examine the response to the imperial presidency, which brought about what some historians referred to as the “imperiled presidency.” We will examine the presidencies of Carter and Ford in this context. Finally, we will look to our most recent Presidents to see what they contribute to our understanding of the institution.

Reading

Nelson, Chapter Six

Week Seven (Feb. 16-20)

Evolution of the Executive Branch – the Presidency is more than a Cast of One: We will look beyond the President to other important actors in the Executive branch. We will consider the development and role of the Executive Office of the President, the Office of Management and Budget, the growth of the Vice Presidency since the 1950s and the significant policy and advisory role played by First Ladies, especially in the 20th century and beyond.

Reading:

Pika and Maltese, Chapter Six

Nelson, Chapters Sixteen and Twenty

Section Two – Presidential Operations

Week Eight (Feb. 23-27)

Domestic Policy: We will examine the President’s role in domestic policy making, both with Congress and as the head of the bureaucracy. This role includes executing the laws, proposing policies in the form of legislation, creating policy in the form of executive orders, and drafting the annual federal budget. There are both many ways in which Presidents wield power in the domestic arena and in which they are constrained.

Reading

Pika and Maltese, Chapters Five, Eight, and Nine

Nelson, Chapters Fifteen, Seventeen and Nineteen

Week Nine (March 2-6)

Domestic Policy continued: Presidents and the Courts

Reading

Pika and Maltese, Chapter Seven
Nelson, Chapters Twelve and Eighteen

Week Ten (March 9-13)

Wrapping up Domestic Policy/Presidents and the Courts

Reading

See Week Nine

Note: Exam Two is on Friday, March 13

Week Eleven (March 16-20)

SPRING BREAK – No Class

Week Twelve (March 23-27)

Foreign Policy: We will consider the role Presidents play in foreign policy making. One major lesson to be learned is that Presidents have considerably more influence in the foreign policy arena than they do in domestic policy, though there are certainly constraints from the other branches of government and from the international community.

Reading

Pika and Maltese, Chapters Ten and Eleven
Nelson, Chapter Twenty One

Week Thirteen (March 30-April 3)

Presidents, the Public, and the News Media: We will examine the interaction between Presidents, the executive branch, and the news media. Presidents both respond to and try to control the coverage they receive in the news media. This has consequences for the way they govern which then has consequences for the American people.

Reading

Pika and Maltese, Chapter Three
Nelson, Chapters Nine, Ten, and Eleven

Section Three – Evaluating Presidents and Presidential Candidates

Week Fourteen (April 6-10)

Presidents, the Public, and the News Media - Continued
Rankings, Ratings, Character, and other ways of Assessing Presidents and Presidential Candidates: We will examine the fascination people have with ranking the presidents. We will also discuss various ways in which people have tried to assess the performance of past Presidents and predict the performance of future Presidents.

Reading

Pika and Maltese, Chapter Four
Nelson, Chapter One

Week Fifteen (April 13-17)

Presidential Campaigns

In this lesson, we will first briefly consider the evolution of presidential campaigns. We will then consider the ways in which campaigns have been affected by changes in the political party system, technological changes, and changes in the way the news media cover campaigns. We will consider an important question: are our campaigns a good way of deciding who is the best person to become president?

Reading

Pika and Maltese, Chapter Two
Nelson, Chapters Seven and Eight

Note: Paper due on April 13 at the beginning of class

Week Sixteen (April 20-25)

Exam 3 - TBA