

Political Science 342

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Spring 2013

TU-TH 1-2:30

## THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY

The position of the presidency is only partially defined by explicit features of the U.S. Constitution. We will also review implied, unofficial, and political powers of the presidency, with emphasis on how the institutions of American politics interact to produce the public policy that affects all of us as citizens. Section I will review key elements of the constitutional definition of the office. Section II will review the period of Congressional dominance in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Section III will examine the additional resources and extended role of the president from Roosevelt through Nixon, and begin a close up examination of how presidential decisions are made in the context of the expanding machinery of the executive branch. The final section of the course will examine whether the president's dominant position in foreign policy makes possible an expansion of the powers of the presidency, often called the "imperial presidency". The final weeks of Section IV will focus on the foreign policy role of the president from Nixon through Bush and Obama. In each of the three sections, we will spend some time understanding the presidential election process, partly by analyzing particular historical and recent elections.

Teaching this course is my most important commitment for this semester. Short of a family emergency, this course has my full attention and interest. I find the course material fascinating, and I intend to do everything I can to make this a memorable experience for you. If you want to ask questions or talk about course material, do not hesitate to approach me. My office is in Seigle 287, and my office hours are Friday 11:00 - 12:00. Or e-mail me at [gjmiller@artsci.wustl.edu](mailto:gjmiller@artsci.wustl.edu) and suggest a meeting time.

## COURSE GOALS

*Conceptual tools for a lifetime.* A basic goal of the course is to provide students with the basic conceptual tools that will allow you to stay informed about American politics for a lifetime. While this entails learning some basic facts about American politics, a more important skill is learning analytical skills that will allow you to interpret and understand standard sources of information on American politics (newspapers and television).

*Normative vs. positive analysis.* A second goal is to understand the difference between "normative" and "positive" analysis of politics. "Normative" analysis means trying to establish what is good; "positive" analysis means trying to understand how things work—whether or not they are good. For example, it may be possible for both liberals and conservatives to agree that voter turnout increases with lenient

registration laws—although they may disagree strongly on whether lenient voter registration laws are a good idea. Although political scientists inevitably have differing normative perspectives, the discipline is grounded in a shared belief that positive analysis of politics can advance through logical argument, the statement of testable hypotheses, and careful empirical investigation of those hypotheses. We also have the hope that the more we understand about politics, the more hope we may have for normative agreement. For example, the more we understand about the relationship between poverty and crime, the more we may be able to agree on the appropriate policies to follow.

*Free and open dialogue.* This nation is founded on an ideal of freedom of speech that is often difficult to implement and practice. The course should provide students with the experience of having a free and open dialogue on constitutional, political, and policy issues. One of the premises of democratic government is that it is possible to have such a debate, even involving people with diametrically opposed views, without rancor or harmful emotional attacks. This ideal is sometimes more difficult to carry out in times when the nation is engaged in military action, as it has been since September 11. Despite this, however, we would like to affirm a commitment to a free expression of ideas, without harmful consequences from fellow students, teaching assistants or myself. The university has a special responsibility to demonstrate the possibility and power of free and democratic discourse, in which individuals are respected and encouraged to present their opinions. The only ground rule for debate is respect for other people and their point of view, no matter how different from your own. You should feel that your views are challenged this semester, but you should not feel personally threatened or belittled. If you feel at any time that you are the subject of any form of hostility, abuse, or retribution because of your political views or any other reason, please see me.

## TEACHING STRATEGY

The teaching strategy is to use the lectures to present you with concepts and analytical tools that you can use to understand the role of the presidency in American politics as presented in newspapers, magazines, and television. Lectures and newspaper articles are therefore the most important part of the class.

However, psychologists have demonstrated that people retain only a small fraction of what they hear in a lecture; that is just an unfortunate biological fact. In order to learn the material adequately, it will be necessary for you to do more than come to lectures regularly. You will have to use different ways to engage the material of the course more actively. The more actively we engage the material, the more we understand and retain.

Questions in class are one obvious aid. Every time you ask a question, it helps to break up the inefficient one-directional flow of information from the instructor, and

provides a different perspective on the material for the entire class. Furthermore, in your question, you are likely to say things differently than I am, and that helps retention by other students. Other students are likely to try to answer your question, if only in their heads, and that promotes more active involvement in the material. Consequently, we encourage you to ask questions as they pop into your mind. Your question does not have to be well-formulated and thoughtful--it may simply be, "Can you go over that again?" If you need to hear something a second time, the odds are that other students do too.

An even more important aid to active involvement is discussion among students (outside of lecture). It will be worthwhile if you can identify one or two other students with whom to discuss the lectures, readings, and current events. And of course discussion can be a valuable way to deepen and extend your understanding.

I will supply files of lecture slides at the course's blackboard site, available at <https://bb.wustl.edu>.

## READINGS

An important goal of the course is for you to be able to use concepts and analytical tools from the course to understand articles in the contemporary news. Thus, in ten years, it will not be important how much of the factual material from this class that you remember. It will be important that you have a conceptual and analytical background that allows you to understand what is presented to you in the news ten years from now.

To give you practice, some of the most important readings for the course will be those that have appeared in past newspaper and magazine sources. Some of these readings are available on electronic reserve. That means you will be able to access them from your computer. Those available on electronic reserve can be reached from:

<http://ares.wustl.edu/>

While the articles are intended for the general public (that is, you, your parents, and your friends), they are also quite textured and often quite deep. As a result, understanding these articles at more than a superficial level will be a challenge to you. The lectures will deliver the material (both facts and analytical tools) that should be helpful to you in your attempt to understand those articles.

There are three books for the course as well.

Nelson's *Evolving Presidency* contains a series of valuable primary documents; most of these are quite short and easy to understand.

Genovese's *A Presidential Nation* examines the expansion of presidential power and authority from the 19<sup>th</sup> into the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

Janis's *Groupthink*, provides a way to think about key presidential decision-making, especially in foreign policy, from the perspective of a social psychologist who seeks to examine how group decisions are made. (The latter two books allow you to "triangulate" on presidential foreign policy-making.)

## GRADING

There will be two possible grading systems, depending on whether you write an optional paper.

Without paper: Your grade will be based as follows: 45% final exam, 40% midterm, and 15% participation.

With paper: Your grade will be based as follows:

20% paper, 35% final, 30% midterm, and 15% participation.

I do not believe in grading on a curve. At a selective university like Washington University, the students are not distributed along a normal curve—they are extremely capable. The material, while challenging, should be accessible to virtually everyone making a sufficient effort. Grading on the curve can discourage the cooperative effort that makes achievement of those goals possible. Consequently, I believe in setting challenging standards of achievement, and then encouraging the kind of cooperative effort that will get as high a proportion of the class as possible to meet those achievement standards.

The standards are:

98+ A+	88-90 B+	78-80 C+	68-70 D+
92-98 A	82-88 B	72-78 C	62-68 D
90-92 A-	80-82 B-	70-72 C-	60-62 D-

## Participation:

To get full credit for participation, you should write two memos in each half of the course. There are at least two forms the memo can take. One type of memo is a "response" to some aspect of the readings—thoughts you had on a particular reading, connections to readings from earlier meetings of the class. The purpose of the memo is to give you an opportunity to engage the reading, and practice writing up your thoughts or response to a particular reading that you find significant. When you choose to write your memo, please turn it in to me no less than two hours before

the class that we will be discussing the reading. For example, for Thursday, Jan. 17 you may choose to write a memo on what the Cato readings told you about the nature of the Anti-federalists' objections to the presidency. If you turn in the memo by 10 a.m. that day, I will read your memo by class time and, in all probability, I will call on you at an appropriate time in class to share your insight or opinion about that particular reading.

A second type of memo will be written in conjunction with a role-playing exercise. For example, there will be an exercise on the debt ceiling negotiations in 2011. Students will write short essays in the voice of President Obama or Speaker Boehner or one of 8 other figures, on what they would like to see as the negotiation outcome. A chapter in SHOWDOWN by David Corn will provide the information needed for the role-playing. We may have further role-playing exercises later in the semester, on the Cuban Missile Crisis or Watergate.

Two such memos will be required during the semester, but will not be graded, in order to encourage risk-taking on your part. That is, you will not get a letter grade for the ideas in your memo, but every serious effort will get full credit for that memo toward your participation grade.

## Optional Paper

If you are especially interested in a particular topic, or if you are dissatisfied with your performance on one of the first two exams, you may write an extra-credit paper. The paper should be from 6 to 12 pages long. You may do extra research for this paper, but **it is more important for you to write in your own words an essay about some important aspect of the course.**

**You should be very explicit about using ideas from the course (prisoners' dilemma, median voter theorem, debt ceiling, separation of power).** You may choose to write about the role of the president in social movements like the civil rights movement. You should talk to me about a topic for the paper before you start writing. The paper will count 20% toward your final course grade. I should mention that it is very easy to get a B grade on an extra-credit paper, but very difficult to get an A grade. Errors of fact, errors of logic, structural problems in organizing the paper, or failure to make all possible use of course concepts is sufficient to prevent someone from receiving an A grade on the extra-credit paper. On the other hand, the paper grade will be counted only if it improves your course grade. The papers will be due May 1.

## SECTION I.

### THE CONSTITUTIONAL PRESIDENCY

#### TU 1/15 **Social Contract Theory and the Presidency**

Read: Nelson #1: U.S. Constitution. [game theory]  
Sunstein, Cass. "Climate Change: Lessons from Ronald Reagan"  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/11/opinion/sunday/climate-change-lessons-from-ronald-reagan.html?>

#### TH 1/17 **Constitutional Convention and Ratification**

Genovese chs. 1-2.  
Nelson #2. "Letters of Cato, #4 and 5"  
Nelson #3. "Federalist #69 and #70."

#### TU 1/22 **Election of 1800/Electoral College**

Read: Nelson. #5 "Madison's Defense of Removal Powers"  
Nelson #6. "Pacificus-Helvidius Letters."  
Nelson. #8. Jefferson's First Inaugural

#### TH 1/24 **Current Events: Debt Negotiation Role-Playing**

Read: Corn, Showdown Ch. 12 (Debt Negotiations 2011) (ARES)

## SECTION II

### THE CENTURY OF CONGRESSIONAL DOMINANCE

#### TU 1/29 **Jackson/ Popular Elections/Median Voter**

Read: Nelson #10. "Monroe Doctrine"  
Nelson #11, "Tennessee's Protest Against the Caucus."  
Nelson #12. Jackson's First Message.  
Nelson #13. Jackson's Veto of the Bank Bill.

#### TH 1/31 **Constitutional power and Implied Powers: Lincoln**

Read: GENOVESE Ch.3  
Riker: "Lincoln at Freeport"

Nelson #14. "Lincoln's Letter to Hodges"

Nelson #15. Gettysburg Address.

Nelson #16. Lincoln's Second Inaugural.

Kleineman. 2005. "Lincoln's Example: Executive Power and the Survival of Constitutionalism" *Perspectives on Politics*. 3.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3688181>

TU 2/05 **The 19<sup>th</sup> Century Weakened Presidency**

Read: Nelson #17. "Ex Parte Milligan" 1866

Nelson #18. "Impeachment" 1868.

Nelson #19. "The Pendleton Act" 1883

Nelson #20. "TR and Taft"

Nelson #22. "Teapot Dome Resolution"

**SECTION III**

**CREATING THE MODERN PRESIDENCY**

TH 2/07 **Regulatory Agencies/Packing the Courts**

Read: Nelson #24. "FDR's Inaugural" 1933.

Nelson #25. "Humphrey's Executor v. U.S." 1935."

Nelson #27. "Court-Packing"

Nelson #28. "Brownlow Committee".

Schlesinger, "Roosevelt as Chief Administrator" (ARES)

Genovese 85-108

TU 2/12 **Truman, National Security Act 1945/ Marshall Plan**

Read: Janis, Ch. 7: "The Making of the Marshall Plan".

Genovese 108-115: cold-war presidency.

TU 2/19 **Truman; North Korea/Modern Presidency**

Read: Janis Ch. 3 "IN and Out of North Korea".

Nelson #29. "Youngstown Sheet and Tube" 1952.

Th 2/21      **Little Rock/Bay of Pigs 4-61/Freedom Riders**  
Read: Nelson #30 "Eisenhower's Little Rock Executive Order"  
video: 1960 primary  
Janis Ch. 2: "A Perfect Failure: Bay of Pigs"  
Branch. "Freedom Riders" (ARES)  
VIDEO: JFK vs. States' Rights

TU 2/26      MIDTERM

TH 2/28      **CURRENT EVENTS: THE FISCAL CRISIS**  
The resolution of the Jan. 1 fiscal crisis postponed consideration of expenditure cuts and debt ceilings for two months.

TU 3/05      **Cuban Missile Crisis 1962/Ole Miss**  
Read: Janis, "The Cuban Missile Crisis"  
Nelson #32. "JFK's Letter to Khrushchev" 1962.

TH 3/07      **Birmingham 1963; Election 1964**  
Nelson #33. "JFK on Civil Rights" 1963  
Evans and Novak, "Johnson System" ARES  
Nelson 34: "LBJ's Great Society"

SPRING BREAK

TU 3/19      **Vietnam Escalation under LBJ/Voting Rights Act**  
Transcript and tape: LBJ and Russell on Vietnam  
<http://whitehousetapes.net/clip/lyndon-johnson-richard-russell-lbj-and-richard-russell-vietnam>  
Nelson #35: "Gulf of Tonkin"  
Janis, Ch. 5: "Escalation of the Vietnam War."

TH 3/21      **Election 1968/Nixon's Domestic Initiative/Party reform**



**/Third Party Race**

Chicago 1968                      VIDEO  
NELSON #37:    McGovern-Fraser Report 1972

**SECTION IV.**

**THE TWO PRESIDENTS THESIS:  
DOMESTIC POLICY, FOREIGN POLICY, AND THE IMPERIAL PRESIDENCY**

**TU 3/26            Nixon and Vietnam/Election 1972/ Modern Presidential  
Powers/War Powers Resolution**

Video Watergate

Read: Genovese    115-126.

Wildavsky, "Two Presidents"    ARES

Nelson #36:    "Nixon's China Trip"

Nelson #38:    "War Powers Resolution" 1973.

**TH 3/28            Watergate**

Read and listen: "Smoking Gun" Tape and transcript

<http://www.nixonlibrary.gov/forresearchers/find/tapes/excerpts/watergate.php>

Read: Janis,    Ch. 9    "Watergate Cover-up"

Nelson: #39 "Proposed Articles of Impeachment"

Nelson #40:    "US v. Nixon"

Nelson #41:    "Ford's Pardon"

**TU 4/02            Carter/Reagan/Iran-Contra.**

Read: Nelson #42:    "Carter's Crisis of Confidence"

Nelson #43.    "Reagan's First Inaugural"

Greider. "Education of David Stockman"    ARES

Cheney. "IRAN-Contra Minority report" (ARES)

**Th 4/04            Domestic Policy Constraints on Presidents**

Read: Weiner. "It's Dwayne's World" ARES

Nelson #47. "Clinton v. New York"  
:  
Thomas et al: "The Battle of 95" [ARES]  
Kornblut, "Tom Delay's Empire of Favors" (ARES)

Tu 4/09 **Clinton Foreign Policy/ Impeachment/Election of 2000**

Read: Nelson #48: "Articles of Impeachment Against Clinton".  
Bruni. "Bush Campaign Turns Attention to Middle Class" [ARES]  
"House Republicans Stung by Bush Criticism" [ARES]  
Berke. "Bush and GOP" ARES  
Supreme Court Decision, Bush v. Gore  
<http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/00-949.ZPC.html>  
(read both the majority opinion and the Stevens dissent)

Th 4/11 **Bush, Cheney , the Media/ The Unitary Presidency/  
Courts asConstraints (video)**

Read: Nelson #50: "Bush on Terrorism" 2001.  
Nelson #51 "The Bush Doctrine" 2002.  
PIPA "Misconceptions, Media, and Iraq War" ARES  
**Genovese, Ch. 5**  
Read: Nelson #52. "Bush's Signing Statement" 2005.  
Nelson #53: "Hamdan v. Rumsfeld" 2006.

Th 4/18 **Election of 2008/Stimulus, Bank Bail-out**

Read  
Romano and KLaidman, "The President Who Would be King."  
<http://www.zinio.com/articles/Newsweek/Oct-29-12/The-President-Who-Would-Be-King/5401031>

**Genovese, ch. 6.**

Tu 4/23 **Obama Health Care**

Read:  
Yardley. "Obama Supporters on Far Left" [ARES]

Baker: "Education of a President"

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/17/magazine/17obama-t.html>

TH 4/25      **Obama Foreign policy**

Class #27

Read: Cooper. "For Obama, Foreign Policy may Offer Avenues"

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/05/world/americas/05prexy.html>

Corn, Showdown ch 4 (START) (Ares)

Genovese, Ch. 7

FINAL EXAM    May 7    1:00-3:00

## Role-playing exercise Thursday, Jan 24: Debt-ceiling 2011

In this exercise, a number of volunteers will write a short memo before class on the subject of the debt-ceiling negotiations in 2011. Each memo-writer will take the position of one a dozen or so officials engaged in debt-ceiling negotiations in that year. The source for this exercise is a chapter in SHOWDOWN by David Corn. (This reading will be made available to you.) The ten players will present the information in their memo, sketching out that negotiator's background, official title and responsibilities, position on the debt ceiling, and strategic options. The students who are not playing a role will have an opportunity to ask questions of one or more "public figures", as reporters at a news conference.

The roles are:

1. Fed chairman Ben Bernanke (explains the case for a debt ceiling increase)
2. Speaker Boehner
3. Rep. Pelosi
4. Rep. Cantor
5. President Obama
6. Vice president Joe Biden
7. Sen. Barbara Mikulski
8. Sen Harry Reid
9. Sen. Mitch McConnell (breaks stalemate p. 338)
10. OMB Director Jack Lew (explains "deal")

Each role will be played in the order given, presenting the information about each negotiator going into the negotiation. The first round of presentation end with Sen. McConnell breaking the impasse and Director Lew summarizing the resulting "deal". Then the other participants can explain how they feel about the deal as agreed upon.

After the role playing, we will have a more general discussion about the role of the president, the way the 2011 shaped the Jan. 1 2013 "fiscal cliff" negotiation, and the implications for further negotiations in 2 months.