Article II of the Constitution says that the executive power will be vested in the president. While the study of the presidency has been regarded as a theoretical backwater in comparison with the literature on Congress and courts, in recent years a new literature has put the study of the executive branch on firmer ground. The literature on the presidency, like the literature on bureaucracy, is grounded in models of information asymmetry, agency, delegation, and separation of powers. This course will examine some of the most important concepts and models, as well as examining the empirical literature on the historical development of the executive branch, its relations with other branches of government, and the internal politics of staffing and structure.

Course goals and requirements
I understand that different people are taking this course for quite different reasons. Some may hope to do research in the area. For others, there might be tools that can be borrowed for research on courts, comparative politics, or IPE. Others may wish for general literacy in an area that is not particularly close to their research interests. Hopefully, the seminar can be flexible enough to help people with a variety of goals.

In the past, it has been extremely helpful in a seminar setting to ask students to submit a 2-page memo, an hour or two before class starts, on any aspect of the course topic for that day. These memos do not have to recreate or summarize the entire argument of a book or article; they can consist simply of your initial reaction to some part of the readings, as you go into the seminar. I would like to have eight such memos turned in to me during the 14 weeks of class (either hard-copy or email) by 1:30 p.m. the day of class. You pick which 8 weeks. For example, you may turn in a memo on the idea of the particularistic presidency. Of course, that is a huge topic that could support a much longer paper; the idea, however, is to give your first, brief, initial reaction. I will be able to look over the memos to get a sense of what the seminar participants are seeing in the readings. This will help me organize the afternoon seminar. I will probably call on you during the seminar to present your thoughts on the subject you choose. In order to encourage creativity and risk-taking, I will not grade the memos—just keep track of the number turned in. I would like for two of these 8 memos to be a bit more substantial, and support a five- to fifteen-minute presentation to the class. (Again, your pick.)

To make the course accommodative of diverse interests, you don’t have to limit your memos to items on the required or recommended reading list. You may choose a reading that gives a comparative or IPE spin to a week’s topic, or one that uses an empirical methodology or formal model that you are interested in. Other participation opportunities will include classroom and take-home exercises which I may occasionally
assign. Overall, I expect that everyone who turns in their memos and participates fully will get full credit for this part of the course, which counts toward 20% of the grade.

In addition, I would like 2 short papers of approximately four to eight pages each, and one longer project of 10-15 pages. These can build on your memos, if you wish. Depending on your interests, a short paper can be a problem statement for a possible research project, a literature review and commentary on some aspect of the course that you find particularly interesting, or a rigorous analysis of some aspect of the course that you think overlaps with your interest in comparative politics, judicial politics, methods, formal theory, or political theory. If you like, you can think of the two short papers as building blocks for the final, more substantial paper. I would like one short paper by the end of February, and one by the end of March. Each short paper is worth 20% of your grade, and the final project is worth 40%.

**Contact Information**

I will have office hours on Mondays from 11-12, and will be happy to arrange times for other meetings by email.

Readings: In order to accommodate the variety of interests that I usually find in the executive politics seminar, the readings are diverse and lead in a lot of different directions. So don't expect the readings to constitute a careful, logical construction of ideas and concepts. There should be something in the readings, most weeks, that is a little off-beat and surprises you.

**Book.** (available in the bookstore.)

SECTION I.
AGENCIES AND DELEGATION

1/16  EXPERTISE, AUTHORITY, AND CONFLICT

1/23  INFORMATION ASYMMETRIES AND PRINCIPAL-AGENCY THEORY (2)

Read:
Watson. *Strategy* Ch. 25.

Recommended:


1/30  ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT (3)
Miller and Whitford. "Bureaucratic Defiance" (handout.)

Recommended:

2/06 THE PRINCIPAL'S OTHER PROBLEM: POLITICAL MORAL HAZARD AND CREDIBLE COMMITMENT

Read:
Recommended:


2/13 MORAL HAZARD OF BUDGET-BREAKING (5)

Read:


Recommended:

SECTION II.
MULTIPLE PRINCIPALS: 
CONGRESS, PRESIDENT, AND COURTS

2/20 SEPARATION OF POWERS AND VETO-BARGAINING. (6)

Read:


Executive Orders 12866 and 13422

Recommended:

2/27 CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (7)

Read:

Kriner and Reeves. 2012. APSR 106.

Recommended:

3/06 THE UNITARY EXECUTIVE (8)

Read:

Berry et al. 2010. “President and the Distribution of Federal Spending.APSR 104:766/
Recommended:
Constitutionalism” Perspectives on Politics. 3(4): 801.
Stuart Streichler, "Mad about Yoo, or, Why Worry about the Next Unconstitutional
John Yoo. “THE PRESIDENT’S CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT
MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST TERRORISTS AND NATIONS
SUPPORTING THEM” http://www.justice.gov/olc/warpowers925.htm
Carey and Shugart. Executive Decree Authority. Cambridge Univ. Press.

3/13 SPRING BREAK!

3/20 SHARED OVERSIGHT (09)
Read: John T. Gasper and Andrew Reeves. 2011. “Make it Rain? Retrospection and the
Attentive Electorate” AJPS.
Peterson and Chubb, ed.
Whitford. 2002. "Decentralization and Political Control of the Bureaucracy". 
Recommended:
Congressional Dominance, Legal Constraints, and Bureaucratic Autonomy”. 
JLEO 12: 112-66.
the Separation-of-Powers System.” JLEO.
Ting. 2002. ”A Theory of Jurisdictional Assignments in Bureaucracies.” 
Hammond and Miller. 1985. "Dictatorship, Decentralization, and the Principles of 
Hammond. 1986. “Agenda Control, Organizational Structure, and Bureaucratic Politics”,
AJPS 30 (2): 379-420.
SECTION III
CONSTRAINING PROFESSIONAL AGENCIES

3/27 INCENTIVES AND THE CONTROL PARADOX (10)

Read:
Miller. 2005. ”Can the Good Soldier Svejk be Trusted?” In Cook and Kramer, ed. Trust and Distrust in Organizations.

Recommended:

4/03 PATRONAGE AND MERIT SYSTEMS (11)

Read:
Recommended:
Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.
Geddes. Politician’s Dilemma.

4/10 PROFESSIONALISM AND BUREAUCRATIC DISCRETION (12)
Read:
Mosher. 1982. Democracy and the Public Service. Ch. 5 "The Professional State"
Tonon. 2006. "Political Appointees, Credible Communication, and Costly Signaling" JTP.

Recommended:
4/17 RULE OF LAW

Read:

Recommended:

4/24 FINANCIAL REGULATORS AND CRISIS

Read:

Recommended:
Maxwell, Sylvia. *Gatekeepers of Growth*. 