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PSCI 346.01: The American Presidency

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Political Science 346: The American Presidency

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Spring 2012
University of Montana
Location: Fine Arts 302
Time: TuTh 3:40-5:00
Office hours: Wed 10:00-12:00

Course Description

Few institutions are perceived to be as powerful or prestigious as the American presidency. In this class, we will explore sources and limits of presidential power, the president's need to interact with other political institutions, and the electoral process that puts the president in office. It is my hope that this course will not only give you a deeper and more analytical understanding of the institution of the presidency, but also that it will give you the tools to critically evaluate (a.) current and past presidents' performance in office and (b.) the rhetoric surrounding the upcoming presidential election. Regardless of whether you support a second term for President Obama or hope to see a new face in the White House, students who successfully complete this course should come away with a better grasp of the powers, responsibilities, expectations, and challenges of the presidency.

Readings

One book is required for this course and is available at the campus bookstore:

The Presidency and the Political System (9th ed.) edited by Michael Nelson (Washington: CQ Press, 2010)

In addition to this text, **a number of readings for this course will be made available online** on the course's Moodle site (umonline.umt.edu).

It is my expectation that you come to class having read the assigned material for that week. I reserve the right to add, delete, or alter course readings as needed. In addition to the assigned readings, I strongly recommend that you stay informed of current events involving the American presidency. Knowledge of ongoing political events (and the president's role in them) will be very valuable in your understanding of the course material.

Assignments and Grades

GRADES. Your grade in this course will consist of the following components:

Paper #1	30%
Paper #2	30%
Final Exam	30%
Class Participation	10%

In order to receive a passing grade in the course, you must complete both writing assignments and both exams. Late papers will be accepted with a penalty of one full grade per day late. Extensions and exam reschedulings will be allowed only in extreme cases and will require sufficient notice.

PAPERS. There will be two writing assignments for this course. The first is due March 8, and the second on April 26. Details on the assignments will be distributed approximately two weeks before their due dates.

EXAM. The final exam for this course is scheduled for Wednesday, May 9 from 1:10-3:10 PM (in our usual classroom). Review material and details regarding the exam format will be distributed before the end of regular classes.

PARTICIPATION. This course is intended to be a mix of lecture and discussion. As such, it is expected that you attend class regularly, do the assigned readings before coming to class, and be prepared to talk about the material. I strongly prefer not to "cold call" on students but will resort to such a tactic if the discussion seems too inactive. I will not take attendance every class, but two bad things will happen if you frequently skip class: (1) your grade will suffer directly due to your participation score (since you will not be present to participate), and (2) you will not understand the material as well as if you see the lecture material, which will bring down the other components of your grade.

Office Hours

My office hours are every Wednesday from 10 AM to 12 PM. If this time is inconvenient for you, I am also available by appointment. Office hours are a great opportunity for us to discuss the material in more depth, to go over assignments or difficult concepts, or to talk about anything else on your mind. Coming to office hours is by no means required, but they do help you get the most out of this course.

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) will not be tolerated. Information on academic honesty is available here: libguides.lib.umd.edu/plagiarism. Those who commit acts of academic dishonesty will not pass this course. If you are unsure whether or not something counts as academic dishonesty, please come talk to me; I would much rather help you prevent plagiarism beforehand than be forced to punish you for it after the fact.

Disability Services

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations on exams, papers, or other course requirements should contact me as soon as possible, and must contact Disability Services for Students (DSS) in order to arrange for and provide me with a letter of approval for accommodations at least one week prior to the first exam. DSS is in Lommasson Center 154.

Class Schedule

PART I: PRESIDENTIAL POWER

Week 1 (Jan. 24 & 26): Introduction

Lyn Ragsdale, "Studying the Presidency: Why Presidents Need Political Scientists," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, pp. 34-67.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, "Historians Rate U.S. Presidents," *Life*, November 1, 1948. [online]

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "Rating the Presidents: Washington to Clinton," *Political Science Quarterly* 112, No. 2 (1997): 179-190. [online]

Watch: State of the Union address (Jan. 24, 7:00 PM).

Week 2 (Jan. 31 & Feb. 2): The Constitution and Presidential Power

US Constitution (provisions that relate to the Presidency) [online]

The Federalist nos. 47, 69, & 70 [online]

Week 3 (Feb. 7 & 9): The Constitution and Presidential Power, continued

Akhil Reed Amar, *America's Constitution: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 2005), pp. 177-204. [online]

Jeffrey Tulis, "The Two Constitutional Presidencies," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, pp. 1-33.

Marc Landy & Sidney M. Milkis, "The Presidency in the Eye of the Storm," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, pp. 68-107.

Week 4 (Feb. 14 & 16): Leadership

Paul J. Quirk, "Presidential Competence," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, pp. 108-141.

Michael Nelson, "The Psychological Presidency," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, pp. 142-166.

Week 5 (Feb. 21 & 23): The Power of Persuasion

Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), pp. 1-90. [online]

Fred I. Greenstein *The Hidden-Hand Presidency* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), pp. 3-14, 57-99. [online]

Week 6 (Feb. 28 & March 1): Going Public

Samuel Kernell, *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*, 3rd ed. (Washington: CQ Press, 1997), pp.1-57. [online]

Bruce Miroff, "The Presidential Spectacle," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, pp. 210-235.

John Sides, "What Can Presidential Speeches Do? A Dialogue," *The Monkey Cage*, September 9, 2011. [online]

Week 7 (March 6 & March 8): Unilateral Power

Paper #1 due: March 8 (at the beginning of class)

Andrew Rudalevige, "The Presidency and Unilateral Power: A Taxonomy," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, pp. 463-488.

Robert J. Delahunty & John C. Yoo, "The President's Constitutional Authority to Conduct Military Operations Against Terrorist Organizations and the Nations that Harbor or Support Them," *Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy* 25 (2002), 487-518. [online]

Gordon Silverstein, "Bush, Cheney, and the Separation of Powers: A Lasting Legal Legacy?" *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (2009): 878-895. [online]

Kenneth R. Mayer & Kevin Price, "Unilateral Presidential Powers: Significant Executive Orders, 1949-99," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (2002): 367-386. [online]

PART II: THE PRESIDENCY AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Week 8 (March 13 & 15): The Presidency and Congress

Mathew J. Dickinson, "The President and Congress," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, pp. 401-434.

Andrew Rudalevige, "The Executive Branch and the Legislative Process," in Joel D. Aberbach & Mark A. Peterson, eds., *The Executive Branch* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 419-451. [online]

Aaron Wildavsky, "The Two Presidencies," *Transaction* 4 (1966), 7-14. [online]

Duane M. Oldfield & Aaron Wildavsky, "Reconsidering the Two Presidencies," *Society* 26, no. 5 (1989), 54-59. [online]

Jonathan Cohn, "They Did It: The Inside Account of Health Care Reform's Triumph," *The New Republic*, June 10, 2010. [online]

Week 9 (March 20 & 22): The Presidency and the Bureaucracy

John P. Burke, "The Institutional Presidency," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, pp. 341-366.

David E. Lewis & Terry M. Moe, "The Presidency and the Bureaucracy: The Levers of Presidential Control," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, pp. 367-400.

Louis Fisher, "Congress as Co-Manager of the Executive Branch," in James P. Pfiffner, ed., *The Managerial Presidency*, 2nd ed. (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), pp. 300-318. [online]

Week 10 (March 27 & 29): The Presidency and the Courts

R. Shep Melnick, "The Courts, Jurisprudence, and the Executive Branch," in Joel D. Aberbach & Mark A. Peterson, eds., *The Executive Branch* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 452-485. [online]

David A. Yalof, "The Presidency and the Judiciary," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, pp. 435-462.

Timothy R. Johnson & Jason M. Roberts, "Presidential Capital and the Supreme Court Nomination Process," *Journal of Politics* 66, no. 3 (2004): 663-683. [online]

United States v. Nixon (1974). [online]

Week 11 (April 10): The Presidency and the Press

Samuel Kernell, *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*, 3rd ed. (Washington: CQ Press, 1997), pp. 65-97. [online]

Lawrence R. Jacobs, "The Presidency and the Press: The Paradox of the White House Communications War," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, pp. 236-263.

No class on April 12.

Week 12 (April 17 & 19): The Presidency, Parties, and Interest Groups

Daniel J. Tichenor, "The Presidency and Interest Groups: Allies, Adversaries, and Policy Leadership," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, pp. 264-294.

Sidney M. Milkis, "The Presidency and Political Parties," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, pp. 295-340.

PART III: PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION

Week 13 (April 24 & 26): The Nomination

Paper #2 due: April 26 (at the beginning of class)

Richard M. Pious, "The Presidency and the Nominating Process: Politics and Power," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, pp. 167-191

Nelson W. Polsby, Aaron Wildavsky, Steven E. Schier, & David A. Hopkins, *Presidential Elections: Strategies and Structures of American Politics*, 13th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), pp. 95-146. [online]

Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, & John Zaller, *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008), pp. 187-234. [online]

Week 14 (May 1 & 3): The Election

George C. Edwards III, "The Faulty Premises of the Electoral College," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System*, pp. 192-209.

Darshan J. Goux & David A. Hopkins, "The Empirical Implications of Electoral College Reform," *American Politics Research* 36, no. 6 (2008): 857-879. [online]

Nelson W. Polsby, Aaron Wildavsky, Steven E. Schier, & David A. Hopkins, *Presidential Elections: Strategies and Structures of American Politics*, 13th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), pp. 147-207. [online]

Andrew Gelman & John Sides, "Stories and Stats: The Truth about Obama's Victory Wasn't in the Papers," *Boston Review*, September/October, 2009. [online]