

Political Science 340: The American Presidency

Fall 2004
2:00-2:50 MWF
334 Buckman Hall
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Office Hours: M 3-4, T 1-3, W 3-4,
or by appointment

There are few better times to study the American Presidency than this semester. We have seen one of the most contentious presidential elections in American history only to find another close election brewing. The horrific events in New York, 2001 and the subsequent military endeavors undertaken by President Bush in Afghanistan and Iraq have reenergized a debate on the proper boundaries of presidential power. The administration finds itself embroiled in battles over domestic and foreign policy, executive privilege, and the legal status of terrorists held in military prisons.

All of these events enable us to consider an important paradox. The President is commonly considered the single most powerful political figure in the world, yet many observers argue that he is often at the whim of public opinion, Congress, the Courts, historical and economic forces, or even his own psychology. We will study the presidency with these central questions in mind: how powerful is the President? What are the sources of presidential power? How have we come from a figure some Founders derided as the “Chief Clerk” to one sometimes referred to as the “Leader of the Free World”? Through a study of history, institutional development, personalities, and current events, we will seek to formulate a better understanding of such questions, if not necessarily definitive answers to them.

I will frequently ask questions and initiate discussion in order to provide a more active learning environment. While speaking in front of your peers can be intimidating, voicing and offering your thoughts for potential criticism is a powerful learning tool.

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Disability at x3994 as soon as possible.

Course Requirements:

Students will complete the following requirements for this course:

One 4-6 page opinion paper	15%
One 10-20 page research paper, draft version	10%
In-class presentation of research	15%
One 10-20 page research paper, final version	30%
Final exam	30%

Though there is no formal requirement to do so, you are strongly encouraged to become an active citizen of our Republic by reading a good daily paper, or browsing one online. We will frequently discuss news from the campaign trail, or other events that relate to the study of the presidency. Frequent and meaningful participation in class discussion will settle “borderline” grades in your favor at the end of the semester.

Note: Though online newspapers are normally free, some may require you to register and provide some nominal personal information.

At the end of all work, you must affirm the principles of the schools’ honor code. I will not accept late work without a fantastic reason (and you’ll know it if it happens to you). Failure to complete the above assignments will result in a failing grade.

Required Texts:

The Evolving Presidency, Michael Nelson

Presidential Leadership (6th), George Edwards and Stephen Wayne
The Road to the White House 2004, Stephen Wayne
Nazi Saboteurs on Trial, Louis Fischer

Though the textbooks do not always provide the most scintillating readings, they contain a great deal of useful information. For this reason, I strongly encourage “active” reading; that is, taking notes and summarizing information in a way that suits you. Simply running your eyes over the material ensures that you will forget most of it, making the class less of a worthwhile experience.

You will also note that there are a few web-based readings (WB) on the syllabus. You can launch these articles from Web CT or the emailed copy of the syllabus you will receive. You may read and print these articles as you see fit, but you are responsible for reading them. If for any reason you encounter a broken link, please notify me *immediately*. Do not fall into the trap of just scanning web-based readings; you should still take notes in whatever fashion best suits you.

Assignments and Lecture Schedule

August 25

Introduction

I. Constitutional Origins

August 27

The Constitutional Convention

Nelson, reading 1

August 30

Debates over Ratification

Nelson, readings 2, 3

September 1, 3

Formal and Informal Powers

Nelson, readings 6, 19

II. Rise of the Modern Presidency

September 6

No class, Labor Day holiday

September 8

Lincoln, Prerogative Power, and the Nation

Nelson, readings 14, 15, 16

September 10, 12

Domestic Powers and the Modern State

Nelson, readings 13, 22, 27, 28, 32

September 15, 17

Distribute Short Paper Topics 9.15

Foreign Affairs: World Wars and Cold War

Nelson, readings 10, 24, 36

III. The Modern Presidency: Resources and Limits

September 20, 22

Organization of the Office

Nelson, reading 26

Edwards and Wayne, chapters 6, 7

September 24

Running the Bureaucracy

Edwards and Wayne, chapter 9

September 27, 29	Persuasion and the Public Nelson, readings 20, 41, 49 Edwards and Wayne, chapter 4
October 1	The Media Edwards and Wayne, chapter 5 Wayne, chapter 7
October 4 <i>Short Papers Due</i>	Presidential Character Edwards and Wayne, chapter 8
IV. Presidential Elections	
October 6	A Brief History of Presidential Elections Wayne, chapter 1 Nelson, reading 11
October 8, 11	Campaign Finance and the Invisible Primary Wayne, chapter 2 Marci Hamilton, " The Supreme Court's Recent Landmark Campaign Finance Decision: Acknowledging the Record of Corruption in Congress ," FindLaw Commentary, December 18, 2000 (WB) FEC Watch, A Graphical Summary of McConnell v. FEC
October 13 <i>Long Paper Assignment Distributed</i>	Presidential Primaries Wayne, chapter 4
October 15	No class
October 18	No class: Fall Break Holiday
October 20	Where are the Voters? Wayne, chapter 3
October 22, 25	General Elections Wayne, chapters 6, 8
October 27, 29	The 2000 Election Nelson, reading 48 " Deadlock: The Inside Story of America's Closest Election ," <i>Washington Post</i> (WB, all eight sections)
November 1	<i>Bush v. Gore</i> James Raskin, " Bandits in Black Robes ," <i>Washington Monthly</i> , March 2001 (WB) " The Triumph of Expedience ," Panel Discussion with Pamela Karlan and Richard Posner (WB) Nat Hentoff, " Justice Scalia was Right ," <i>The Village Voice</i> , December 26, 2000 (WB)
November 3	The 2004 Election

No readings
Pay attention to the election returns!

November 5

Electoral Reform
Wayne, chapter 9

V. The Separation of Powers in the 21st Century

November 8, 10

Drafts of Long Papers Due 11.8
Drafts for Respondents Due 11.8

The Presidency and Congress
Edwards and Wayne, chapter 10
Nelson, readings 18, 37, 47

November 12, 15

Drafts of Long Papers Returned 11.15

Executive Privilege
Nelson, readings 38, 39
Michael Dorf, "[A Brief History of Executive Privilege. From George Washington Through Dick Cheney.](#),"
FindLaw Commentary, February 6, 2004 (WB)
John Dean, "[More litigation will follow on the Cheney Energy Task Force.](#)," CNN.com, posted July 5, 2004 (WB)

November 17, 19, 22

Class Presentations

In-class presentations; no readings

November 24, 26

No class: Thanksgiving Holiday

November 29, December 1

The Presidency and the Judiciary
Edwards and Wayne, Chapter 11

December 3, 5, 8

Final Exam Question Distributed 12.8

Presidential Power and Terrorism
Louis Fischer, *Nazi Saboteurs on Trial* (entire)
Marci Hamilton, "[The Supreme Court's Terrorism Cases: What They Held, and Why They are Important.](#),"
FindLaw Commentary, July 1, 2004 (WB)
Paul Starobin, "[Dawn of the Daddy State.](#)," *Atlantic Monthly*,
June 2004 (WB)
Nelson, reading 50

Monday, December 13, 5:30 pm

Final Exam (Location TBA)