

Political Science 4610H
THE U.S. PRESIDENCY
Spring 2019 (48451)
Baldwin 302
MWF 2:30 - 3:20 p.m.

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Course Overview

This honors seminar is intended as a broad survey of the literature on presidential and executive branch politics. The central focus of the course will be on the U.S. Presidency, but much of what we discuss will have direct relevance for the study of executive politics more generally. As such, we will focus on the role of the president in the U.S. political system, presidential selection, executive politics, inter-branch relations, presidential power, and executive policymaking. Throughout the course, we will pay attention to current political and scholarly controversies in terms of identifying important research questions as well as examining and improving upon existing research designs. By the end of the course, you should have a better understanding of how the executive branch operates.

Required Texts

Howell, William G. 2003. *Power Without Persuasion: The Politics of Direct Presidential Action*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Howell, William G. 2013. *Thinking About the Presidency: The Primacy of Power*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kriner, Douglas L. and Andrew Reeves. 2015. *The Particularistic President: Executive Branch Politics and Political Inequality*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sides, John, Michael Tesler, and Lynn Vavreck. 2018. *Identity Crisis: The 2016 Presidential Campaign and the Battle for the Meaning of America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Course Materials

The readings for the course will be drawn from the list of books above, in addition to scholarly articles each week. Required books are available for purchase from the usual sources or may be checked out from the library. Unless otherwise indicated, assigned articles can be downloaded from www.jstor.org or from the UGA library (<http://www.libs.uga.edu/ejournals/>). Please keep in mind that assigned readings or the course schedule may be altered at the discretion of the instructor.

General Expectations

I expect all students to behave professionally in this class. You are expected to attend class regularly, to show up on time, and be prepared to participate in discussions. You are responsible for all material in the readings and lectures, even if you are unable to attend class. It is your responsibility to remain aware of specific deadlines or dates posted on the syllabus and to be sure that assignments are completed on time.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your grade in this course will be based on the following components:

1. Attendance/Participation (20%)
2. Short Writing Assignment (10%)
3. Final Paper (20%)
4. Midterm Exam (25%)
5. Final Exam (25%)

In terms of final grades in light of the +/- grading system, an A will be given to anyone receiving 94 or more points, an A- to those receiving 90-93 points, a B+ to those receiving 87-89 points, a B to those receiving 83-86 points, a B- to those receiving 80-82 points, a C+ to those receiving 77-79 points, a C to those receiving 73-76 points, a C- to those receiving 70-72 points, a D to those receiving 60 to 69 points, and an F to anyone receiving fewer than 60 points in the course.

Attendance/Participation

Your grade in this area will be based on class attendance and the quality of your classroom participation. You are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. If you exceed this, your attendance grade will be penalized unless you have a legitimate excuse for missing class. *Since this is an upper division honors seminar, each student will be expected to present the assigned material and lead the class discussion at least once during the semester starting in mid-January.* Students are expected to actively participate through asking questions and answering inquiries raised in class even on days they are not responsible for leading class discussion. Keep in mind that this class is a collaborative enterprise. For the seminar to be a useful learning experience, you *must* come to class and be prepared to participation in discussions.

Short Writing Assignment

Each student will be required to submit a short writing assignment on the day that you are responsible for leading class discussion. This assignment should briefly summarize and critically analyze the assigned readings. The paper should be approximately 2-3 pages in length in a typed, double-spaced format with one-inch margins. *Be sure to spell check and read over your paper before submitting it for a grade.*

Final Paper

Everyone will be required to submit a final paper near the end of the semester (more details to follow in the coming weeks). These papers should be approximately 5-7 pages in length in a typed, double-spaced format with one-inch margins. Final papers will be due on **April 24, 2019**. *Your grade on the project will be penalized if there are grammatical or spelling errors in the completed paper.*

Exams

There will be a midterm and a final exam in this course. Exams are closed book and will include a mix of identification, short answer, and essay questions. The final exam is cumulative and will include material covered in the class lectures and the assigned reading. *A blue book will be required for each exam.*

Incompletes and Make-Up Policy

A final grade of “Incomplete” will only be given in this course under exceptional circumstances and is solely at the discretion of the instructor. If an incomplete is given, it is the student’s responsibility to complete the necessary requirements as early in the following semester as possible. Legitimate excuses for absence from an exam (e.g., a university-sanctioned activity, religious holiday, medical emergency, or illness) must be accepted **prior** to the exam when feasible to allow a make-up to be scheduled. As a rule, late assignments will not be accepted unless approval is obtained in advance from the instructor.

Miscellaneous

No “extra credit” will be assigned under any circumstances. *Final grades may only be changed in the event of a clerical error* (e.g., points summed incorrectly). Keep in mind that information pertaining to course grades cannot be discussed over the telephone or via email. The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Instructor Availability

If you would like to speak with me outside of class, feel free to stop by my office during scheduled office hours. Occasionally I have meetings during the day and may be unavailable. To ensure that I am in my office on a given day, email me ahead of time to set up a specific time to meet.

Special Needs and Academic Honesty

Students with special needs that require accommodation should notify me and the Office for Disability Services as soon as possible so the appropriate arrangements can be made. All information as well as documentation is considered confidential. All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The link to more detailed information about academic honesty can be found at: http://www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/culture_honesty.htm.

Emergency Preparedness

Emergencies during the course of the semester are rare, but it is important to be as prepared as possible should one occur. If the fire alarm sounds, we will exit the building and reassemble in front of Baldwin Hall to make sure everyone exited the building. If there is a tornado warning, we will move to the shelter location in the lowest level (basement) of Baldwin Hall and account for everyone. If you have concerns about other emergency scenarios or if you have special circumstances that I need to know about in case of an emergency, please speak to me after class.

Course Schedule (Assigned readings are to be completed by the dates listed below.) UPDATE

1/9	Introduction
1/11	<i>The West Wing</i> – Season 1: “Pilot”
1/14	Studying the Presidency Howell, <i>Thinking About the Presidency</i> (pgs. 1-70)
1/16	Howell, <i>Thinking About the Presidency</i> (pgs. 71-143)
1/18	<i>The West Wing</i> – Season 1: “Let Bartlet Be Bartlet”
1/21	<i>No Class, MLK Day</i>
1/23	Presidential Elections Sides, Tesler and Vavreck, <i>Identity Crisis</i> (pgs. 1-68)
1/25	<i>The West Wing</i> – Season 2: “The Midterms”
1/28	Sides, Tesler and Vavreck, <i>Identity Crisis</i> (pgs. 69-153)

- 1/30 Sides, Tesler and Vavreck, *Identity Crisis* (pgs. 154-220)
- 2/1 *The West Wing* – Season 4: “Game On”
- 2/4 **The Presidency as an Institution**
Ragsdale, Lyn and John Theis. 1997. “The Institutionalization of the American Presidency, 1924-92.” *American Journal of Political Science* 41(4): 1280-1318.
- 2/6 Dickinson, Matthew and Kathryn Dunn Tenpas. 2002. “Explaining Increasing Turnover Rates Among Presidential Advisors, 1929-1997.” *Journal of Politics* 64(2): 434-448.
- 2/8 *The West Wing* – Season 3: “Documentary Special”
- 2/11 **Presidential Approval**
Kriner, Douglas L. and Eric Schickler. 2014. “Investigating the President: Committee Probes and Presidential Approval, 1953-2006.” *Journal of Politics* 76(2): 521-534.
- 2/13 Christenson, Dino P. and Douglas L. Kriner. 2017. “Mobilizing the Public Against the President: Congress and the Political Costs of Unilateral Action.” *American Journal of Political Science* 61(4): 769-785.
- 2/15 *The West Wing* – Season 2: “Lies, Damn Lies, and Statistics”
- 2/18 **The President and Congress**
Canes-Wrone, Brandice and Scott de Marchi. 2002. “Presidential Approval and Legislative Success.” *Journal of Politics* 64(2): 491-509.
- 2/20 Rogowski, Jon C. 2016. “Presidential Influence in an Era of Congressional Dominance.” *American Political Science Review* 110(2): 325-341.
- 2/22 *The West Wing* – Season 2: “The Stackhouse Filibuster”
- 2/25 Gilmour, John B. 2011. “Political Theater or Bargaining Failure: Why Presidents Veto.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41(3): 471-487.
- 2/27 Hassell, Hans J. G. and Samuel Kernell. 2016. “Veto Rhetoric and Legislative Riders.” *American Journal of Political Science* 60(4): 845-859.
- 3/1 *The West Wing* – Season 3: “On the Day Before”
- 3/4 **The President and the Courts**
Johnson, Timothy and Jason Roberts. 2004. “Presidential Capital and the Supreme Court Nomination Process.” *Journal of Politics* 66(3): 663-683.
- 3/6 **Midterm Exam**
- 3/8 *The West Wing* – Season 5: “The Supremes”
- 3/11 *No Class, Spring Break*
- 3/13 *No Class, Spring Break*

- 3/15 *No Class, Spring Break*
- 3/18 **The Unilateral Presidency**
Howell, *Power Without Persuasion* (pgs. 1-100)
- 3/20 Howell, *Power Without Persuasion* (pgs. 101-187)
- 3/22 *The West Wing* – Season 1: “Take This Sabbath Day”
- 3/25 **Presidents and the Media**
Baum, Matthew A. and Samuel Kernell. 1999. “Has Cable Ended the Golden Age of Presidential Television?” *American Political Science Review* 93(1): 99-114.
- 3/27 Druckman, James. 2003. “The Power of Television Images: The First Kennedy-Nixon Debate Revisited.” *Journal of Politics* 65(2): 559-571.
- 3/29 *The West Wing* – Season 2: “Bartlett’s Third State of the Union”
- 4/1 **Presidential Power and Leadership**
Gronke, Paul, Jeffrey Koch, and J. Matthew Wilson. 2003. “Follow the Leader? Presidential Approval, Presidential Support, and Representatives’ Electoral Fortunes.” *Journal of Politics* 65(3): 785-808.
- 4/3 *No Class, Midwest Political Science Association Meeting (Chicago, IL)*
- 4/5 *No Class, Midwest Political Science Association Meeting (Chicago, IL)*
- 4/8 **Presidential Rhetoric and Agenda-Setting**
Cohen, Jeffrey. 1995. “Presidential Rhetoric and the Public Agenda.” *American Journal of Political Science* 39(1): 87-107.
- 4/10 Ostrander, Ian and Joel Sievert. 2013. “What’s So Sinister about Presidential Signing Statements?” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 43(1): 58-80.
- 4/12 *The West Wing* – Season 2: “The War at Home”
- 4/15 **Executive Branch Politics**
Kriner and Reeves, *The Particularistic President*, pgs. 1-81
- 4/17 Kriner and Reeves, *The Particularistic President*, pgs. 82-184
- 4/19 *The West Wing* – Season 2: “18th and Potomac”
- 4/22 **The “Two Presidencies”**
Fleisher, Richard and Jon R. Bond. 1988. “Are There Two Presidencies? Yes, But Only for Republicans.” *Journal of Politics* 50(3): 747-767.
- 4/24 Canes-Wrone, Brandice, William Howell, and David Lewis. 2008. “Toward a Broader Understanding of Presidential Power: A Re-Evaluation of the Two Presidencies Thesis.” *Journal of Politics* 70(1): 1-16.
- *Final Papers Due**

- 4/26 *The West Wing* – Season 2: “Two Cathedrals”
- 4/29 Course Wrap-Up and Review
- 5/1 *No Class, Reading Day*
- 5/6 **Final Examination**, 3:30 - 6:30 p.m.