



PSC 334-01: The American Presidency

247 Curry Building
Mondays & Wednesdays 2:00-3:15
Fall 2016

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3:30, and by appointment

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Course Description

This course will examine the current state of the American presidency. Key issues and themes to be discussed will include: how scholars go about studying the president (the individual holding the office at any given time) and the presidency (the institution, regardless of the individual in office); the constitutional foundations of the office; the rise of presidential dominance among other American political institutions, particularly the Congress; how increasing levels of partisan polarization has both stymied the legislative presidency and invigorated the administrative presidency; the development of the current form of presidential campaigns and elections; the role of the president in the domestic and foreign policy processes, including President Bush's and President Obama's responses to events since 9/11; and the president's relationship with the public.

Along the way we will examine several questions: How *does* or how *should* the president go about making decisions? Is the president well-served by the White House staff, the Cabinet, and the bureaucracy? What strengths and weaknesses does the president bring to his relationship with the Congress? Does the process by which we select presidents provide us with qualified, capable people to run the government? Are the powers of the executive adequate to permit the president to meet the responsibilities of the office and the expectations of the public? How did the Bush administration's theory of a very powerful executive accord with common understandings of separation of powers among coequal branches? Has the Obama administration been any different in this regard? We will focus on these and related questions during the semester. We will discuss them in the context of both the historical foundations of the presidency, as well as the experiences of recent presidents, including Reagan, Bush, Clinton, Bush, and Obama.

Course Goals

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- critique the president's role in contemporary American government;
- discuss the various methods political scientists use to study the presidency;
- critically analyze a variety of texts that deal with the president as an individual and the presidency as an institution;
- construct and communicate clear, concise arguments regarding the president and the presidency.

Course Requirements

If you are new to political science and/or have never taken PSC 100, American Politics, you should seriously consider whether you are sufficiently prepared for this class. My assumption is that you already know, or can easily brush-up on, the basics, which include the constitutional outlines of the presidency and the secular development of the executive branch. See me if you have any questions about your ability to understand the advanced material you will be required to read, interpret, do research on, and write about.

The format of the course will involve lecture, discussion, and questions—hopefully lots of them. *Always* feel free to ask questions if what we're talking about particularly interests, troubles, or confuses you. The course grade will be determined on the basis of the quality of class participation, reading quizzes, other assignments associated with the readings, a term paper based on a presidential advising simulation, a midterm, and a final exam. You can make up the midterm, scheduled for September 28, *only* if you provide me with *documented notice* of a reasonable excuse (*e.g.*, extracurricular commitment, illness, family issue) *in advance of the exam*. Students who miss the midterm and do not notify me in advance will receive a non-negotiable zero. You cannot make up the December 12 final exam. I will allow an incomplete grade *only* under extraordinary circumstances that are carefully documented.

Randomly scheduled reading quizzes will include your responses to questions I pose about course readings. Quizzes give you a material incentive to keep current in your reading and an opportunity to think carefully about issues central to understanding the presidency—issues that you will encounter again on the exams. At the beginning of each class, a dice roll will determine whether or not the class takes a quiz. The probability of taking a quiz on any given day is 0.5. Therefore, you can expect to take approximately 12 quizzes over the course of the semester. Your aggregate grade on the quizzes makes up 15 percent of your final grade.

A percentage of your overall grade will be dedicated to active class participation in general and, more specifically, active participation in the election simulation. Be aware that "active participation" encompasses more than intelligent discussion, which is, of course, crucial. It also refers to your demeanor, which should reflect your willingness to listen attentively and respectfully to others, *take notes*, and turn off all noisy and disruptive electronic devices before the start of class. And note this helpful pet-peeve alert: *plan on remaining in class the full 75 minutes*. In other words, do what you have to do so that you don't have to leave during class without good reason. Sauntering in and out of class is disruptive to other students and disrespectful to me. This admonition applies to group meetings held as part of the election simulation. Such meetings are key requirements of the simulation; they are not scheduled bathroom breaks.

Your term paper assignment will be based on the presidential election simulation that the class will participate in during the middle third of the semester. Each student will take on one of a number of roles in either the Democratic or Republican campaigns. (Sorry Green or Libertarian Party supporters.) Your job during the simulation will be twofold: to fulfill your role in a way that contributes to victory for your candidate, and to use your experience in a way that informs your term paper. The term paper is due on **Monday, November 21**. Source material used in the papers must be completely documented. Papers will be penalized one half of one letter grade for each day they are handed in after the beginning of the class on the date they are due. *The late penalty will continue to accrue on weekends and holidays*. I will provide much more information later in the semester on the simulation, research expectations, the term paper, and proper citation style in class and on Canvas.

• Required Readings

The following required text is available at the UNCG Bookstore:

[PPS] Nelson, Michael. 2013. *The Presidency and the Political System*, Tenth Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Assignments from the Nelson volume are indicated by "PPS" in the Course Outline below. Other course readings are available on Canvas and indicated by a "C". Go to Canvas, click on "Modules" and search for readings corresponding to the dates on the Course Outline.

• Grading

The overall grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Participation in general & in the simulation	10%
Reading quizzes	15%
Term paper	30%
First exam	20%
Second exam	<u>25%</u>
	100%

When calculating final course grades, I will compute your overall numerical average and use the following table to convert these averages to letter grades:

Letter scale	Numerical ranges for final grades	Letter scale	Numerical ranges for final grades
A+	>=98	C	>=72, <78
A	>=92, <98	C-	>=70, <72
A-	>=90, <92	D+	>=68, <70
B+	>=88, <90	D	>=62, <68
B	>=82, <88	D-	>=60, <62
B-	>=80, <82	F	<60
C+	>=78, <80		

• Special Needs

If you have any special needs that will affect your ability to learn in this class, please inform me and I will take appropriate steps to assist you. If you seek special consideration, such as extra time on the exams, you must register with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (<http://ods.uncg.edu/>) and provide me with the proper paperwork well in advance of each exam.

• Cheating & Plagiarism

The university's Academic Integrity Policy, which addresses the consequences of cheating and plagiarism, is available via the web at: <http://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy/>.

The policy defines cheating as: "Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise." Plagiarism is defined as: "Representing the words of another, as one's own in any academic exercise."

In other words, exams are closed book, closed notes. You may study together if you like—in fact I encourage you to form study groups—but think for yourselves. In your papers, if you are using words and ideas that are not your own, whether a sentence, a paragraph or a longer passage, put them in quotation marks and attribute them to the proper source. *Even if you paraphrase information, you must still properly cite your source.* If you have questions about the appropriate format for citations, make sure that you ask me before turning in the paper, access the citation reference guide posted on Canvas, or consult this Jackson Library web site: <http://uncg.libguides.com/citation>. Turabian or APSR are the required citation styles for political science in general and this class in particular. You can also visit the Writing Center (3211 MHRA) for additional assistance with citations. For more information, visit the Writing Center's web page at <https://writingcenter.uncg.edu/>.

• Communicating with the Instructor

I encourage you to make use of my office hours. You do not need an appointment to come talk to me during these times (every Tuesday from 1:30 to 3:30). Simply show up at my office (Curry 327) and come in or wait your turn if there is a line. I'm more than happy to answer questions about any aspect of the course. If you cannot make my office hours because of other obligations, I am happy to schedule appointments with you at a mutually convenient time. I schedule appointments via email.

Email etiquette: When emailing me to set up an appointment, please provide your full name, the course number (PSC 334), and the days and times you have available to see me. I receive a lot of email from students in all my classes during the semester. In order to facilitate my response to you, please include an informative subject line (e.g., "Question about PSC 100" or "Appointment request from PSC 100 student"). Also, please do me the courtesy, along with anyone else with whom you enjoy a professional relationship, of including a salutation in your email. Appropriate salutations include "Professor Holian", "Dr. Holian", and "Mr. Holian"; inappropriate salutations include "Hey", "Hi", and nothing at all.

I do not respond to unprofessional emails.

• *Deus ex machina*

In literature, the theater—and this course—a *deus ex machina* is any unlikely occurrence or device that magically resolves the difficulties or the seeming hopelessness of the plot—or, in our case, the semester. All the odd, bewildering, and/or inexplicable decisions leading to a story's climax are wiped away by an improbable intervention at the last moment. If you've ever read a book in which the heroine realizes that the horrors visited upon her were all just a dream, or watched a play in which the hero, facing disaster, is saved just before the curtain falls by some unlikely contrivance of the playwright, you're familiar with this literary gimmick. There will be no such last-second interventions in this class. My responsibilities to you include making my

expectations transparent and treating you—and everyone else in the class—fairly. My responsibilities do not include wiping away your odd, bewildering, and/or inexplicable decisions with, for example, last-second offers of extra credit available only to you. Such behavior on my part would be unfair to others in the class who worked hard enough to meet or exceed my expectations. There are no exceptions. Don't ask for one.

Course Outline

Date	Topics	Readings
August 22	Introduction to the Course	Syllabus
August 24	The Presidency & the Constitution	The U.S. Constitution
August 29	The Presidency in a Separated System	C: <i>The Presidential Job Description</i>
August 31	Judging & Ranking Presidents	PPS: <i>Quirk</i> (5) C: Ranking Presidents by Influence
September 5	No Class: Labor Day	
September 7	Presidents and Political Science	PPS: <i>Ragsdale</i> (2)
September 12 September 14	<u>Leadership: Limits & Opportunities</u> A. Political Time	C: <i>Skowronek / Crockett</i> PPS: <i>Landy & Milkis</i> (4)
September 19 September 21	B. Presidential Rhetoric	PPS: <i>Tulis</i> (1)
September 26	C. Born to Lead? Presidential Character	PPS: <i>Nelson</i> (6) C: <i>Wilson</i>
September 28	EXAM #1	
October 3	Presidential Election Simulation Introduction & Discussion NOTE: Beginning after fall break, each advising group will have 15 minutes of class time once a week to meet and discuss strategy. These group meetings are <i>mandatory</i> .	
October 5 October 10	<u>Presidential Primaries & Elections</u> A. Presidential Primaries	PPS: <i>Brown</i> (7) C: Drezner / Friedersdorf
October 12	B. General Elections	C: <i>Hetherington / Holian & Prysby</i>
October 17	No Class: Fall Break	
October 19 October 24 October 26	B. General Elections, continued	C: <i>Abramowitz</i> 2012, 2014, & 2016 PPS: <i>Edwards</i> (8) C: 50 Years of Electoral College Maps

October 31 November 2	C. The President, the Press, & the Public	PPS: <i>Miroff</i> (9) PPS: <i>Lim</i> (10)
November 7	<u>The President at Work in Washington</u> A. The Executive Branch	PPS: <i>Burke</i> (13)
Tuesday, November 8	 Election Day – Vote! (If you haven't yet...) 	
November 9	Presidential Election & Simulation Post Mortem: Who Won and Why?	
November 14	A. The Executive Branch, continued	PPS: <i>Lewis & Moe</i> (14) C: Appelbaum
November 16 November 21	B. The Congress	PPS: <i>Dickinson</i> (15) C: <i>Fleisher / Caro</i>
November 23	No Class: Thanksgiving Break	
November 28	C. The Courts	PPS: <i>Yalof</i> (16) C: <i>Toobin</i>
November 30 December 5	D. Unilateral Power	PPS: <i>Rudalevige</i> (17) C: <i>Davenport / Hulse</i>
December 6	Reading Day	
December 12	FINAL EXAM (3:30-6:30)	