

The Ohio State University
Department of Political Science

Political Science 4110: The American Presidency

Semester Year (Location:Time)

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Instructor

Office Hours:

Or by appointment.

Overview

Section 1. The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same Term, be elected, as follows:...

- *Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution.*

The American Presidency is like no other political office. Created as the first of its kind, and before other democracies found other designs, the American Presidency remains the world's most unique - and most misunderstood - position. Most Americans have no real idea of what the role of their leader is actually like.

Originally created to be an office of sharply limited power and subservient to Congress, to be beholden to the states over the people, and to avoid the destructive impacts of campaigns and political parties, today's Presidency is characterized by ever-growing power, public opinion, and massive, heavily partisan campaigning. Debates have raged over what sort of office the sweeping changes of the past centuries of American history has actually left us with: from what candidates can get elected to what influence the President can actually wield. There have been calls for reform to nearly every aspect of the presidency from nomination onward, and in every conceivable direction.

In this course, we will study the presidency as an institution using a modern political science approach. We will focus on the gap between the presidency as it is popularly conceived, and as it actually functions in practice. The course begins with a quick introduction to the presidency and presidential scholarship, as well as the argument framework we will be using in this course. After that, we cover how presidents are elected, from nomination to election, before moving on to the "leadership dilemma" implicit in their relationships with the other branches of government and the bureaucracy and with the press and the public, and finally concluding with those areas most unique to the president - war and executive orders.

Readings

All readings will be made available electronically. All readings should be completed before the class for which they are assigned. Students will be expected to be familiar with the material assigned, and will be called upon to summarize and discuss what they have read. Readings are subject to change.

Students should also be familiar with current events, as these will sometimes be brought in during the course. Skimming any major news outlet is sufficient. Specialized political sources (such as Politico or the Monkey Cage) are recommended.

Class Structure:

Each class is laid out in two parts. We will cover multiple readings, all focused around the day's central topic. Due to the length of the class, there will be a ~10 minute break each session at the midpoint of the class.

Grading And Course Requirements

Grades in this course will be based on three components: Reading quizzes, two papers, and class participation. There are no exams in this course. If you receive notice of a final exam for this course from the university, you may ignore it.

- Reading quizzes account for 40% of your final grade. There may be up to two per class. Since these are meant to measure both reading comprehension and attendance, no makeup quizzes will be allowed for *any* reason. In order to account for circumstance, the four lowest grades will be dropped for each student.
- There are two papers for this course, each about 4-5 pages (roughly 1500-2000 words) in length. The first is worth 20% of your grade, and the final paper is worth 40%. Writing prompts for these papers will be distributed in class, and each paper must be submitted to Carmen by the date given in the course schedule. Late work will be penalized one full grade, and work overdue by more than one week will not be accepted for *any* reason.
- Finally, class participation is expected and required. Students should prepare questions or discussion points relevant to the day's topic and readings for each class. Grades will be adjusted up or down by as much as a third of a grade for exceptionally good or poor participation.

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct: (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp)

Course Policies

Incompletes will not be granted for *any* reason in the absence of an official request from the university. Special accommodations will be made when possible and practical, but it is the responsibility of the student to communicate these promptly. This document is non-binding and subject to change.

Disability Services

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

Course Schedule

INTRODUCTION:

- WEEK ONE

- 1 - Introduction to the Course, Arguments, the Presidency and Presidential Scholarship.
■ *Readings: Fisher, Madison. Review section three of Booth et al.*

GETTING TO BE PRESIDENT:

- 2 - Nominations.

- *Readings: Aldrich; Bawn; Norpoth and Perkins.*

- WEEK TWO

- 3 - Campaigns

- *Readings: Erikson; Dalton.*

- 4 - Elections

- *Readings: Dolan; Bolstad; Mutz.*

BEING THE PRESIDENT:

- WEEK THREE

- 5 - The President and the Executive Branch

- *Readings: Lewis; Lewis + Moe*

- **FIRST PAPER DUE**

- 6 - The President and Congress

- *Readings: Krehbiel; Woon; Gilmour*

- WEEK FOUR

- 7 - The President and the Courts

- *Readings: Hitt; Wheeler*

- 8 - The President and the Public

- *Readings: Canes-Wrone and Shotts; Kernell; Jacobs*

- WEEK FIVE

- 9 - The President and the Press

- *Readings: Gilens; Cohen*

THE POWER OF THE PRESIDENT

- 10 - The President and War

- *Readings: Schlesinger; Rudalevige, Fisher*

- WEEK SIX

- 11 - The President and Foreign Policy

- *Readings: Canes-Wrone et al.*

- 12 - The President, Alone

- *Readings: Howell; Rice*

- WEEK SEVEN

- 13 - Greatness

- *Readings: Balz; Schlesinger Jr.*

- 14- Review Session.

- *No Readings. Optional wrap-up and paper session.*

- 15- FINAL PAPER DUE (Graduating Seniors, please see me.)