NYU
Wilf Department of Politics

The American Presidency

Instructor:
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TBA

Course Description

This course is designed to explore the history and theories of the American presidency. While theoretical understanding of the executive branch will prove useful in explaining such concepts as executive power or interbranch relations, historical approach will allow us to consider real world application of theoretical concepts and abstract ideas.

The students are expected to keep up with the readings and participate in class discussions. This may prove to be a challenge given that the course is both reading and writing intensive. My suggestion is to begin as early as possible and come to class with questions about the readings. The students should also follow one or more issues related to the presidency in current events by reading the *New York Times* and submitting a 4~5 page summary of the issue(s) that they have followed during the course of the semester.

There are two exams: a midterm and a final. There are no make-up exams except in cases of documented emergencies. Attendance is mandatory. Final grade will be based on attendance (20%), participation (10%), and cumulative performance on exams (Midterm: 30% + Final: 40%).

Required Texts

There are four required texts, which may all be purchased from the NYU bookstore.

Nelson, Michael. *The Evolving Presidency*. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly Press. (ISBN 1-56802-871-7)

Nelson, Michael. *The Presidency and the Political System*. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly Press. (ISBN 1-56802-673-0)

Milkis, Sidney & Michael Nelson. *The American Presidency: Origins & Development*. Washington DC: CQ Press.

Polsby, Nelson & Aaron Wildavsky. *Presidential Elections: Strategies and Structures of American Politics*. Chatham New Jersey: Chatham Press. (ISBN: 1-889119-26-1)

Additional reading materials will be posted on Blackboard.

Schedule

Contextual Significance of the American Executive

Juan J. Linz & Arturo Valenzuela. 1994. *The Failure of Presidential Democracy: Comparative Perspectives*. Volume I. Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, MD. Chs. 1-4.

Introduction to the US Presidential Democracy and its Constitutional Origins

Michael Nelson. *The Evolving Presidency*. pp 1-30.

Milkis & Nelson. Chapters 1-3

Federalist Papers 47, 69, & 70 (http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/constRedir.html)

The Constitution of the United States of America, Articles I, II, & III (http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/constRedir.html)

Understanding the Nature of Presidential Power

Michael Nelson. *The Evolving Presidency*. pp.108-114.

Milkis & Nelson. Chapters 4-6

Michael Nelson "The Psychological Presidency" in Nelson *The Presidency and the Political System*. pp. 190-214.

Presidential Power in Political Times

Milkis & Nelson. Chapters 7-8, 11-13

Stephen Skowronek "Presidential Leadership in Political Times." In Nelson's *The Presidency and the Political System*.

The President and the Public

Milkis & Nelson. Chapter 9-10

Lawrence Jacobs. "The Presidency and the Press: the Paradox of the White House Communications War." In Nelson's *The Presidency and the Political System.*

Elections

Richard Pious "The Presidency and the Nominating Process: Politics and Power." In Nelson's *The Presidency and the Political System*.

John Aldrich & John Griffin. "The Presidency and the Campaign: Creating Voter Priorities in the 2000 Election." In Nelson's *The Presidency and the Political System.*

Polsby & Wildavsky. *Presidential Elections: Strategies and Structures of American Politics*. Chaps. 4 & 5.

Midterm

Presidency as an Institution

John Burke. "The Institutional Presidency" in Nelson's *The Presidency and the Political System*.

Madison on the Removal of Power; Articles of Impeachment against Andrew Johnson; and Humphrey's Executor v. U.S. In Nelson's *The Evolving Presidency*. pp. 34-39, 98-108; 133-138.

Federalist Papers 76-77 (http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/constRedir.html).

Interbranch Relations

INS v. Chadha
In Nelson's *The Evolving Presidency*. 240-249

Matthew Dickinson. "The President and Congress" In Nelson's *The Presidency and the Political System*.

Paul Quirk and Bruce Nesmith. "Divided Government and Policy Making: Negotiating the Laws." In Nelson's *The Presidency and the Political System.*

David Yalof. "The Presidency and the Judiciary" In Nelson's *The Presidency and the Political System.*

Two Presidencies

Wildavsky. "The Two Presidencies" *Trans-Action*. 4 (December): 7-14.

In Nelson's *The Evolving Presidency*:

Pacificus-Helvidius Letters
US v. Curtiss-Wright Export Corp.
Youngstown v. Sawyer

Lee Sigelman. "A Reassessment of the Two Presidencies Thesis." *Journal of Politics*. 41(4):1195-1205.

George C. Edwards III. 1986. "The Two Presidencies: A Reevaluation" *American Politics Quarterly*. 14(3):247-63.

Political Parties and Interest Groups

Sidney Milkis. "The Presidency and the Political Parties"

Daniel Tichenor. "The Presidency and Interest Groups: Programmatic Ambitions and Contentious Elites."

Both in Nelson's *The Presidency and the Political System*

Public Opinion and the Presidential Use of Force

John Mueller. 1970. "Presidential Popularity from Truman to Johnson" *American Political Science Review*. 64:18-34.

Bradley Lian and John Oneal. 1993. "Presidents, the Use of Military Force, and Public Opinion." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 37(2):277-300.

Evaluating the American Presidency

Michael Nelson. "Evaluating the Presidency" In Nelson's *The Presidency and the Political System*.

Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. "Rating the Presidents: From Washington to Clinton." *Political Science Quarterly*. 112: 179-190.

Wilentz, Sean. 2006. "The Worst President in History?" *Rolling Stone*. May 4.