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.


Additional reading materials will be posted on Blackboard.
Schedule

Contextual Significance of the American Executive


Introduction to the US Presidential Democracy and its Constitutional Origins


Milkis & Nelson. Chapters 1-3

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


Understanding the Nature of Presidential Power


Milkis & Nelson. Chapters 4-6


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


Elections

Midterm

Presidency as an Institution


*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*.


Two Presidencies


In Nelson’s *The Evolving Presidency*:

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


Political Parties and Interest Groups

Sidney Milkis. “The Presidency and the Political Parties”


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

Public Opinion and the Presidential Use of Force


Evaluating the American Presidency

Michael Nelson. “Evaluating the Presidency” In Nelson’s *The Presidency and the Political System*.
