

Elizabethtown College  
Department of Political Science  
Political Science 313  
Spring 2005

PS 313: The American Presidency

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Office Hours: MTThF, 2:00-3:00 p.m.  
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Course Objectives

This course examines the development of the American presidency, focusing in particular on the modern presidency from Franklin D. Roosevelt to George W. Bush. Topics to be covered include:

- (1) the nature of presidential power, its formal and informal roots;
- (2) the role and influence of personality and staff on presidential behavior;
- (3) the process of national security, domestic and economic decision-making in the executive branch;
- (4) relationships between the presidency and the public, Congress, bureaucracy, courts and international actors; and
- (5) the exercise of presidential leadership in international, military, domestic and economic affairs.

Along the way students will be exposed to approaches to studying the presidency and examples of presidential scholarship, and will be invited to become presidential scholars themselves. Students should come away with a realistic understanding of the potential and limits of presidential leadership in the American political process.

Course Prerequisite

PS 313 is an elective offering in political science. Because of the demanding (and rewarding) nature of the course material and assignments, PS 111 American National Government is a pre-requisite for this course.

Course Requirements

- (1) a mid-term exam, counting 25% of the total grade;
- (2) a final exam that counts 30%;
- (3) a research project, counting 25%, consisting of a 7-10 page analysis and class presentation of legal, institutional or policy development in the George W. Bush administration (see below); and
- (4) course participation, which counts for the remaining 20% (see below).

Research Project

The research project should describe and analyze how and to what extent the presidency of George W. Bush has affected the legal/constitutional development, power, psychological understanding, or institutional development of the American presidency. Topics include:

- Bush’s interpretation of his legal authority in regards to secrecy, wartime justice (e.g. enemy combatants, treatment of prisoners), warmaking powers, or treaty-making (and breaking)
- Bush’s relationships with the public (presidential approval rating), the media, the First Lady, the Vice President, White House staff, Cabinet officers (individually or collectively), Congress, interest groups (such as Christian fundamentalists, Catholics, Latinos, big business), or world leaders
- Bush’s activities as campaigner-in-chief, such as strategizing, traveling and fund-raising, or his relationships with the Republican Party and his campaign organization
- Bush’s personality, character, ideology, or relationships with his family and their impact upon his behavior as president
- Bush’s work habits as President, use of rhetoric, travel activities
- National security policy-making toward terrorists generally or in specific areas, toward issues in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Israel & the Palestinians, Ukraine, Sudan, missile defense, pre-9/11 and post-9/11 homeland security, intelligence reform or disaster relief (e.g. the South Asia tsunami)
- Domestic policy-making in education, energy, faith-based social services, stem-cell research, judicial nominations, income tax reduction, economic stimulus, Social Security, Medicare reform and prescription drug benefits for seniors, tort reform, campaign finance reform, or same-sex marriages

You may work on this project individually or in pairs. The project shall be 7-10 pages, double-spaced, in length, and is due the week of May 3 at the same time as your class presentation. Your presentation shall be 10 minutes in length and include a written summary or outline of the major points to be distributed in class.

### Course Participation

Course participation includes:

- (1) a small group project in executive branch decision-making from The Art of Policy Making (5%);
- (2) at least four 2-page summary/analyses of assigned readings and outside events by all students in the class (noted in the course outline as “all”) or by designated hitters (“DH”) (5%);
- (3) active classroom participation (5%); and
- (4) participation in a field trip TBA to Washington D.C. to interview practitioners and observers of the presidency (5%).

### Course Policies

- (1) Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. Refer to the 2004-06 Elizabethtown College Catalog, pp. 238-39, for the definition and handling of instances of academic dishonesty. Also see Ann Raimes, Keys for Writers: a Brief Handbook, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (2005), pp. 116-28. Though students will formally sign the Pledge of Integrity only on exams, this course assumes the Pledge is in effect for all student work submitted to the instructor.
- (2) Makeup Exams will be provided without penalty for those with authorized absences from the Health Center or the Dean’s Office. Makeup exams for

unauthorized absences will be accompanied by a letter-grade reduction. This policy will be strictly enforced.

- (3) Disabilities Statement: If you have a documented disability and need reasonable accommodations to fully participate in course activities or meet course requirements, you must:
- a. Contact the Director of Disability Services, Shirley Deichert, in the Center of Student Success, BSC 288, (717) 361-1227, [deichesa@etown.edu](mailto:deichesa@etown.edu); AND
  - b. Meet with me, the instructor, within two weeks of receiving a copy of the accommodation letter from Disability Services to discuss your accommodation needs and their implementation.

Required Readings

- (1) Michael Nelson, ed., The Evolving Presidency, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2004);
- (2) Richard E. Neustadt, Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents (1990);
- (3) George Shambaugh IV and Paul Weinstein Jr., The Art of Policy Making: Tools, Techniques and Processes in the Modern Executive Branch (2003);
- (4) Bob Woodward, Plan of Attack (2004);
- (5) Stephen Skowronek, The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to Bill Clinton (1997); and
- (6) Access to a daily national newspaper or news service, such as <http://www.nytimes.com/>, <http://washingtonpost.com> or <http://www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/>. The most closely-followed insider on-line source is <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/TheNote/>. Other readings may be assigned or placed on reserve by the instructor.

Course Outline and Readings

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Topic</u>   | <u>Readings and Assignments</u>   |
|-------------|--|---|
| 1/18        | Introduction: Approaches to The American Presidency  | Article II and other excerpts, in Nelson, <u>The Evolving Presidency</u> , 1-10                       |
| 1/20        | The Legal Approach: The U.S. Constitution and the Intentions of the Framers; Inauguration Day in Washington, DC                  | Letters of Cato and <u>Federalist</u> #69 and 70, in Nelson, 10-29                                    |
| 1/22        | Conference at Villanova University: “The Second Term of George W. Bush: Prospects and Perils”, 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. (recommended) |   |
| 1/25        | From Washington to Jackson: Antebellum Evolution of the Presidency   | Nelson, 30-82<br><u>Summary/Analysis Paper – Villanova Conference or Bush Inaugural Address (all)</u> |

- 1/27 Lincoln, The Civil War and Reconstruction Nelson, 82-108  
Summary/Analysis Paper – Gettysburg Address (DH)
- 2/1 TR, Taft and Wilson: The Stewardship and Literalist Theories of Presidential Power Nelson, 108-26  
Summary/Analysis Paper – Taft vs. TR (DH)
- 2/3 FDR and the Emergence of the Modern Presidency; Introduction to the Power Approach Nelson, 127-55  
Neustadt, Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents, ix-xxvii, 1-9
- 2/8 Truman, Eisenhower and the Institutionalization of the Modern Presidency Nelson, 156-68  
Neustadt, 10-127  
Summary/Analysis Papers – Truman-MacArthur, Steel Seizure, Little Rock (DH)
- 2/8-10 RESEARCH PROJECT TOPICS DUE; MAKE APPOINTMENT WITH ME TO DISCUSS
- 2/10 JFK and the Modern Presidency Nelson, 169-81  
Neustadt, 128-82
- 2/15 LBJ and RN: An “Imperial” Presidency? Nelson, 181-222  
Neustadt, 183-229  
Summary/Analysis Papers – Gulf of Tonkin Message and the War Powers Resolution, Watergate and Impeachment (DH)
- 2/17 From Ford to Reagan to Clinton: A “Post-Modern” Presidency? Nelson, 222-68  
Neustadt, 230-318  
Summary/Analysis Papers – Iran-Contra, Ike and Vietnam, Cuban Missile Crisis, Monicagate and Impeachment (DH)
- 2/22 Bush II and an Evaluation of the Legal and Power Approaches Nelson, 268-89;  
Peter Sperlich, “Bargaining and Overload: An Essay on Presidential Power,” in Aaron Wildavsky, ed., Perspectives on the Presidency (1975)  
Summary/Analysis Paper – Bush Doctrine (DH)
- 2/23 Wednesday at 11: Jeff Jacoby, Boston Globe columnist, “What We Can Expect from the President’s Administration Following the Election,” Leffler Chapel

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| 2/24  | Introduction to the Psychological Approach  | Michael Nelson, "The Psychological Presidency," in Nelson, <u>The Presidency and the Political System</u> , 7 <sup>th</sup> ed. (2002)<br><u>Summary/Analysis Paper – Jacoby Lecture (all)</u> |
| 3/1-3 | Bush II and an Evaluation of the Psychological Approach                                     | Stanley Renshon, <u>In His Father's Shadow: The Transformations of George W. Bush</u> (2004), excerpts   |
| 3/15  | MIDTERM EXAM (in-class)   |  |
| 3/17  | The Institutional Approach: Policy-Making in the Executive Branch                           | Shambaugh & Weinstein, <u>Art of Policy Making</u> , 1-38  |
| 3/22  | Policy-Makers in the Executive Branch   | Shambaugh & Weinstein, 39-69   |
| 3/24  | Tools of the Policy-Making Trade  | Shambaugh & Weinstein, 70-123  |
| 3/31  | Case Studies in Executive Branch Policy-Making: Bush I and Clinton                          | Shambaugh & Weinstein, 125-174; begin Woodward, <u>Plan of Attack</u>  |
| 4/5-7 | Policy-Making in the Bush II Administration and an Evaluation of the Institutional Approach | Woodward (entire book)   |
| 4/5-7 | FIRST DRAFT OF RESEARCH PROJECT DUE; MAKE APPOINTMENT WITH ME TO DISCUSS                    |  |
| 4/12  | Class Reports: Practice Scenarios in Executive Branch Policy-Making                         | Shambaugh & Weinstein, 175-84  |
| 4/14  | The Historical Approach: Cycling Through the Presidency                                     | Skowronek, <u>The Politics Presidents Make</u> , 1-58  |
| 4/19  | Jeffersonian and Jacksonian Eras  | Skowronek, 59-196<br><u>Summary/Analysis Papers – Jefferson and Jackson as Reconstructive Leaders (DH)</u>   |
| 4/21  | Republican and Liberal Eras   | Skowronek, 197-406<br><u>Summary/Analysis Papers – TR and LBJ as Articulators (DH)</u>   |

- 4/26 The Reagan Era Skowronek, 407-64 & Preface (pp. *xi-xvii*)  
Summary/Analysis Papers – Carter as  
Disjunctive Leader, Clinton as Preemptive  
Leader (DH)
- 4/28 Bush II in Historical Perspective Fletcher McClellan, Matthew Miller and  
Jessica Defenderfer, “A Republican  
Realignment? Not So Fast,” Elizabethtown  
Magazine, April 2004
- 5/3-5 Class Reports: Legal, Power, Psycho-  
logical, Institutional, and Historical  
Developments in the Bush II Administration
- 5/10 FINAL EXAM (11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.)