

## The U.S. Presidency PS 3050/Fall 2009

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Office Hours: MW 2:05-3:30 p.m.  
F 11:15 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.  
Also by appointment

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The American Presidency is one of the most remarkable institutional creations in the world. Since its original conception at the Constitutional Convention, the office, and the individual, has grown well beyond the role the founders had intended. This course will focus on the institutionalized role of the American chief executive, and how that role has changed over time. While we will certainly talk about individuals, our main focus is on the broader concept of the office itself.

This class is divided into three sections. First, we will look at the presidency and the **public**. This includes the formation of the office, elections, the initial creation of a staff, and how the president reaches the people, with a particular emphasis on the evolving role of the media. Included in this section is a look at the psychological presidency. In part two, we will focus on the presidency in a **separated system**. In this system, the presidency must work with, alongside, and sometimes against the Congress and the courts. In part three, we will look at the presidency as a **policy-maker** in both the domestic and foreign arena.

**Required Book** (Available at the University Bookstore)

- Pika and Maltese, *The Politics of the Presidency* (6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> ed.)

You are also **strongly** encouraged to keep up with current political developments, ideally by subscribing to a weekly newsmagazine (i.e. U.S. News or Newsweek), or reading a daily newspaper (New York Times or Washington Post, e.g.).

Web sites you may wish to supplement this coverage (from all political viewpoints) include:

<http://www.cnn.com/POLITICS> (blanket political coverage, esp. of Washington)  
<http://www.msnbc.com>  
<http://www.foxnews.com>  
<http://congress.org> (useful directory to Congress & ongoing Capitol Hill activities)  
<http://whitehouse.gov>  
<http://www.slate.com> (general news site; slants somewhat left)  
<http://www.drudge.com> (huge compendium of political info; slants somewhat right)  
<http://www.realclearpolitics.com>

**Class Requirements:**

**Exams (20% x 2)**

There will be two exams in the course based on the material covered in class and in the P & M text. If you miss an exam, you will receive a zero for that test.

**Term Paper (25%)**

Choice of paper topics and instructions will be handed out by the middle of September. Essays will be due at the start of class on November 2, 2009. Don't wait until the last minute to write your essay.

**Presidential Biographies (25%)**

We will have group presentations of presidential biographies. You will sign up for your group and presidents you will cover on the first day of class. Do a good job because 25% is a lot of your grade. Also, you all don't get the same grade. As a part of your assignment, you will be asked to evaluate the others in your group.

**Attendance (10%)**

Why do you have an attendance grade? Because people don't come to class... but if you want a good grade on the tests you sort of have to be present to get what I am saying... some really awesome stuff just can't be found in the textbook. But that isn't what I am most concerned about... you have to make presentations in class. I want to make sure your colleagues are in attendance for the presentations.

Sometimes things happen beyond our control – you might get sick, have car trouble, be hung-over, etc. That's why I will give you the chance to miss one of these biography days without being penalized. Just one. I am taking attendance every time there is a class presentation. Because I have an excused absence "built in" to your grade, I make no distinction between excused or unexcused absences except in the most exceptional of circumstances (hospitalization, for example). Please see me if you have any questions about this policy.

I use the plus/minus scale. Grades divisions are thus: 90-100=A; 87-89=B+; 83-86=B; 80-82=B-; 77-79=C+; 73-76=C; 70-72=C-; 67-69 D+; 63-66=D; 60-62=D-; below 60, F

**Do you have a lottery scholarship?**

To retain Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship eligibility, you must earn a cumulative TELS GPA of 2.75 after 24 and 48 attempted hours and a **cumulative** TELS GPA of 3.0 thereafter. You may qualify with a 2.75 **cumulative** GPA after 72 attempted hours (and subsequent semesters), if you are enrolled full-time and maintain a **semester** GPA of at least 3.0. A grade of C, D, F, or I in this class may negatively impact TELS

eligibility. Dropping a class after 14 days may also impact eligibility; if you withdraw from this class and it results in an enrollment status of less than full time, you may lose eligibility for your lottery scholarship. Lottery recipients are eligible to receive the scholarship for a maximum of five years from the date of initial enrollment, or until a bachelor degree is earned. For additional Lottery rules, please refer to your Lottery Statement of Understanding form, review lottery requirements on the web at <http://scholarships.web.mtsu.edu/telconteligibility.htm>, or contact the Financial Aid Office at 898-2830.

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you have a disability that may require assistance or accommodation, or you have questions related to any accommodations for testing, note takers, readers, etc., please speak with me as soon as possible. You may also contact the Office of Disabled Student Services (898-2783) with questions about such services.

### **Plagiarism/Cheating**

While it should go without being said, plagiarism and cheating on tests will not be tolerated in any form in this class. If you have a question about whether something constitutes plagiarism, please see me before handing in an assignment. Violations will result, in the least, in **failure of the course** and possible expulsion from the university.

### **Readings**

I am constantly looking for relevant readings for this course. Therefore, I reserve the right to modify the syllabus in accordance with the direction the class takes and the needs of the students.

### **Class Schedule**

Topics will be covered in approximately the following order.

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Text Material</u>
<b>The Presidency and the Public</b>	
Aug. 31: Introduction	
Sept. 2: Constitutional Design	<i>P&amp;M</i> ch. 1
Sept. 4: Constitutional Design	<i>P&amp;M</i> ch. 1
Sept. 7: Labor Day – No Classes	
Sept. 9: Presidential Powers and Growth	<i>P&amp;M</i> ch. 1
Sept. 11: Presidential Powers and Growth	<i>P&amp;M</i> ch. 1

- Sept. 14: Presidents and the Public/Media *P&M ch. 3*  
Sept. 16: Presidents and the Public/Media  
Sept. 18: Elections *P&M ch. 2*
- Sept. 21: Elections *P&M ch. 2*  
Sept. 23: Presidential Character *P&M ch. 4*  
Sept. 25: Biographies – FOUNDERS I: Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison

### **The Presidency in a Separated System**

- Sept. 28: Presidents and Congress *P&M ch. 5*  
Sept. 30: Presidents and Congress *P&M ch. 5*  
Oct. 2: Biographies – TENNESSEE: Jackson, Polk, Johnson
- Oct. 5: The President's Staff *P&M ch. 6*  
Oct. 7: The President's Staff *P&M ch. 6*  
Oct. 9: Biographies – DEATHS IN OFFICE: Harrison, Garfield, McKinley, Harding
- Oct. 12: Presidents and the Bureaucracy *P&M ch. 6*  
Oct. 14: Presidents and the Bureaucracy *P&M ch. 6*  
Oct. 16: Biographies – WARTIME PRESIDENTS I: Lincoln, Wilson, FDR
- Oct. 19: Fall Break - No Class  
Oct. 21: Test #1  
Oct. 23: Biographies – WARTIME PRESIDENTS II: Truman, Eisenhower, JFK

- Oct. 26: Presidents and the Courts (I) *P&M ch. 7*  
Oct. 28: Presidents and the Courts (II)  
Oct. 30: Presidents and the Courts (III)

- Nov. 2: Biographies – WARTIME PRESIDENTS III: LBJ, Nixon  
Nov. 4: Biographies – NOTABLE WHIGS: Tyler, Taylor, Fillmore,  
Nov. 6: Biographies – ONE TERMERS: Quincy Adams, Ford, Carter, Bush I

### **The Presidency as a Policy Maker**

- Nov. 9: Presidents and Domestic Policy *P&M ch. 8*  
Nov. 11: Presidents and Domestic Policy  
Nov. 13: Biographies – NOTABLE REPUBLICANS: Grant, T. Roosevelt, Taft, Hoover
- Nov. 16: Presidents and Economic Policy *P&M ch. 9*  
Nov. 18: Presidents and Economic Policy  
Nov. 20: No class – Moot Court Competition

Nov. 23: Biographies – NOTABLE DEMOCRATS: Van Buren, Pierce, Buchanan, Cleveland

Nov. 25: Biographies – RECENT HISTORY: Reagan, Clinton, Bush II

Nov. 30: Presidents and Foreign Policy *P&M ch. 10*

Dec. 2: Presidents and Foreign Policy

Dec. 4: Obama – First 100 days and beyond *From 7<sup>th</sup> edition*

Dec. 7: The Vice President

None (study for exam 2)

Dec. 9: Exam #2