POL 30120-001 Presidency and the Executive Bureaucracy  
Department of Political Science  
Kent State University  
Spring 2012

Time: Tuesday and Thursday 3:45-5:00 pm  
Location: 208 Bowman Hall  
Instructor: Michael Ensley  
Office Hours: Tuesday 9-11, Thursday 9-12 and by appointment  
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Course Description
The President of the United States is one of the most recognizable and powerful individuals in the world and is the focal actor in our political system. In this course, we will investigate the presidency as an institution, and thus, our focus will be on how the presidency has evolved and consider the role and influence of the president in the contemporary United States. Specifically, we will consider the historical origins of the presidency and powers conferred by the U.S. Constitution. Next we will consider the process of nominating and electing the president and how the president presents and behaves in the public sphere once elected. We will investigate how the presidency is organized and what the implications are for the management of the federal government. Finally, we will consider the role of the president in shaping domestic, economic, and foreign policy. In analyzing these various topics we will ask what are the implications for democratic governance in the United States. In other words, does the presidency that has emerged in the twenty-first century inhibit or enhance the representation of citizens’ interests?

Assignments and Grading
Attendance and Blog Participation 15%  
Blog Posts 15%  
Media Paper 30%  
Midterm Exam 20%  
Final Exam 20%

All assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade. Instructions for blog posts and media paper can be found at the end of the syllabus. Your participation grade will be based on attendance and contributions to the blog posts. You are expected to attend every class.

Note: PAPER GRADES WILL BE DOCKED 5% FOR EACH DAY THE PAPER IS LATE.

Key Dates
March 1 Midterm Exam  
April 12 Paper Due  
May 4 (Friday) Final Exam at 7:15-9:30 a.m.

Student Accessibility Policy
University Policy 3342-3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have
a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through Student Accessibility Services (contact 330-672-3391 or visit www.kent.edu/sas for more information on registration procedures)

Registration Requirement
The official registration deadline for this course is January 22. University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending. Students who are not officially registered for a course by published deadlines should not be attending classes and will not receive credit or a grade for the course. Each student must confirm enrollment by checking his/her class schedule (using Student Tools in FlashFast) prior to the deadline indicated. Registration errors must be corrected prior to the deadline. The last day to withdraw is March 18.

Student Cheating and Plagiarism
Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated in this class. If you have any questions about plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty, please consult with the professor.

University policy 3342-3-01.8 deals with the problem of academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism. None of these will be tolerated in this class. The sanctions provided in this policy will be used to deal with any violations. If you have any questions, please read the policy at http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/chap3/3-01-8.cfm and/or ask.

Required Readings
Additional Materials to be posted on Blackboard.

Lecture Schedule
PM refers to The Politics of the Presidency by Pika and Maltese
PD refers to Understanding the Presidency by Pfiffner and Davidson
** Readings available through Blackboard

January 10: Introduction
Review the Syllabus

January 12: Recent Presidents as a Lens to the Executive Branch
PM, Chapter 11
PD, Readings 41, 42
** Cillizza, Washington Post, “5 Myths about the president’s first year”
** Balz, Washington Post, “For Obama, A tough year to get the message out”

January 17: Constitutional Foundations
PM, pp. 1-11
PD, Readings 1-4
January 19: Evolution of the Presidency
PM, pp. 12-35
PD, Readings 6-10
**Nichols and Bimes, Founders and the Modern Presidency

January 24: Elections and the Constitution
PD, Reading 5

January 26, 31: Nomination Politics
PM, pp. 36-60
PD, Readings 11, 12

February 2, 7: The General Election
PM, pp. 61-100
PD, Readings 13, 14, 16

February 9: Elections, Mandates, and Public Opinion
PD, Readings 15, 30

February 14, 16: Image, Symbolic Politics, and the Media
PM, Chapter 3
PD, Readings 17-20
**Bumiller, NYT, "Keepers of Bush Image Lift Stagecraft to New Heights"
**Horowitz, “The Obama ‘narrative’ is overshadowing this presidency's real stories”

February 21, 23: Character and Personality
PM, Chapter 4
PD, Reading 39
**Winter, “Philosopher-King or Polarizing Politician? A Personality Profile of Barack Obama”
**Zaller, PS, “Monika Lewinsky’s Contribution to Political Science”

February 28: Midterm Review

March 1: Midterm Exam

March 6: Constitution and Presidential Power
PD, Reading 37

March 8, 13: Controlling and Managing the Executive Branch
PM, Chapter 6
PD, Readings 21-25, 29, 32
**Warshaw, “The Administrative Strategies of President George W. Bush”
**Klein, “The hard work falls to the regulators”
**Judis, “The Quiet Revolution”

March 15: The Judiciary and the President
PM, Chapter 7
March 20, 22: Spring Break

March 27: Military Conflict and Presidential Leadership
  **Polosky, “Staying the Course”

March 29, April 3, 5: The Legislative Process and Domestic Policy
  PM, Chapter 5, 8
  PD, Readings 26, 27, 31
  **Wayne, “Bush and Congress: Communication Without Much Consultation”
  **Gerson, “What happened to Obama’s middle path on health reform? 
  **Jacobs, “What Health Reform Teaches Us about American Politics”

April 10, 12: Economic Policy and Budget Politics
  PM, Chapter 9

April 17, 19: Foreign Policy
  PM, Chapter 10
  PD, Readings 33-36, 38, 40
  **Kassup and Pious, “War Powers”
  **Goldsmith, “The Accountable Presidency”
  **Lake, “The 9/14 Presidency”

April 24: The President and Representative Democracy
  PD, Readings 40, 43

April 26: Review for Final Exam
Blog Posts and Media Paper Assignment
You will choose a media outlet with Professor Ensley's approval and regularly follow the coverage of the President and the presidency from January 27 through March 16 (a seven-week period). You will write 3 blog posts based on your observations and analysis of your chosen media source. This will also serve as the evidence and foundation for your media paper, described below. You should be as systematic and thorough as possible by checking the news source on a regular and consistent basis.

The class will be divided into 2 groups. Groups will alternate weeks in which they will post.
• The first group will make posts by each of the following days: February 3, February 17, and March 9.
• The second group will make posts by each of the following days: February 10, February 24, and March 16.
• There will be no posts during the week of the midterm exam (scheduled on March 1).

By Friday of your assigned weeks, you will make a blog post (approximately 250-500 words) that provides commentary and analysis, as well links to relevant material (e.g., newspaper article, relevant actors, video clip, etc.). The post will focus on what and how the media covers the President and presidency. For example, which issues receive the most attention, how are the issues covered, is too much or too little attention paid to interest group politics, the coming election, or internal administrative politics? The purpose is to gain a sense of what citizens are learning about the President and presidency and whether this coverage presents a fair and appropriate representation. Your posts may include quotations but those do not count towards the word total.

Details on the procedures for making blog posts will be provided in class. The web site for the blog posts is: http://presidency2012.blogspot.com

Grading Scale for Blog Posts
Your blog posts will be graded on a 3-point scale as follows:
3 (Excellent): Insightful post that relates explicitly to course topics and focuses on important issues. Analysis is clear and coherent. The post demonstrates engagement with the media source.
2 (Adequate): Relevant material is presented in a clear and concise manner.
1 (Weak): Material is tangential to the presidency, not adequately explained or analyzed, and/or the presentation is poor.

Participation
You will earn participation points by commenting on other people’s posts. You are encouraged to relate, compare, and contrast your findings and insights with your classmates’ posts. However, please be polite, civil and courteous to others. And last but not least, please do not use profanity.

Media Paper
Based on the observations of your chosen media source and course readings and discussion, you will write a paper with 7-pages maximum (double-spaced typed, 12-point font with 1-inch margins). References (as well as any figures or tables) included in the
paper do not count towards the page limit.

The paper will evaluate: (1) the amount and prominence of the coverage of the president and the presidency; (2) the quality of coverage of the issues and events surrounding the president and presidency; and (3) the bias in coverage. Further, you should theorize how the coverage would affect citizens’ attitudes toward the president and understanding of the presidency. Your paper should provide examples, as well as summary of the basic findings.

**Grading Criteria for Media Paper**
The grade for your paper will be based on the following criteria:

- Creativity and originality
- Use of evidence
- Organization and coherence
- Coverage of relevant material
- Spelling and grammar

The papers should be well organized with a clear, concise introduction and conclusion. Although organization, spelling, and grammar are not the most important parts of the grade per se, they are essential to conveying your ideas to the reader. If there are many mistakes or the paper is not organized well, the reader will be distracted and may not follow the logic of your argument. You may have great ideas but if the reader misses the argument because of mistakes and poor organization, it will not matter how great the ideas are.

You should follow the APA citation style is [http://www.library.kent.edu/page/10603](http://www.library.kent.edu/page/10603). Your paper should include a proper bibliography.