

PS 4230: The Presidency and Executive Branch
FALL 2007
Dr. Phillip J. Ardoin
MW 2:00 - 3:15 PM Room 1132

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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OFFICE HOURS:

Monday: 11-11:50

Tuesday: 9:30-11:50

Wednesday: 11-11:50

Thursday: 9:30-12:00 & 5-6:00

If the above posted office hours are not convenient for you due to your work or class schedule, please e-mail or simply see me before or after class to schedule an alternative time.

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VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS: Also, feel free to e-mail me. I regularly check my e-mail throughout the day and evening. It gives you instant access to me at hours not normally considered office hours. It also allows me to respond to questions about assignments, tests and other class material in an efficient and timely manner.

MY FALL 2007 CLASS SCHEDULE:

MWF 9-9:50 American National Government and Politics

MW 2-3:15 Presidency and Executive Branch

Th 6-9:00 Graduate Readings and Research in American Politics

Course Description: This course provides an opportunity to delve into a number of topics, questions, and problems associated with the office of the American President. We will be concerned with such things as the development of the office, the president's power and responsibilities, the restraints and limits on presidential power, the organization of the office, relations with other participants in American politics, and presidential elections. The goals of the course are fairly straightforward. By the end of the course you should have a fairly complete understanding of the functioning of the presidential office and some awareness of the impact of the presidency on American politics and public policy. You should understand just how powerful and powerless the president is. You should have some grasp of how the office has evolved, some knowledge of the impact different presidents have had, and be aware of the problems, criticisms and conflicts that the office is heir to. With luck, you will also be able to make some sense of what you read in the papers--keeping in mind that sometimes what you read in the papers makes no sense at all.

Course Text Books:

- *The Presidency and the Political System 8th Edition*, Edited by Michael Nelson. CQ Press: Washington, DC 2003
- *The Road to the Whitehouse 2004: The Politics of Presidential Elections*, by Stephen J. Wayne. Wadsworth Publishing: Belmont, CA 2004.
- *A Divider, Not a Uniter: George W. Bush and the American People, The 2006 Election and Beyond*, by Gary C. Jacobson. Longman Publishing, CA 2007.

Required Readings: Each week you will be responsible for reading the book chapters and outside readings associated with the week's lecture.

As per the Academic Integrity Code....

Students attending Appalachian State University agree to abide by the following code:

- Students will not lie, cheat, or steal to gain academic advantage.
- Students will oppose every instance of academic dishonesty.
- Students shall agree to abide by the Academic Integrity Code when submitting the admission application.

Grading: Your grade in this course will be calculated as follows:

- **Reaction Papers:** 20%
- **Attendance/Participation** 10%
- **Quizzes/Assignments:** 20%
- **Midterm Exam:** 20%
- **Comprehensive Final Exam:** 30%

Exams – There will be 2 exams in this course. The exams will cover all material discussed in class and covered in the assigned readings. The midterm exam will constitute 25% of your course grade and the comprehensive final exam will constitute 30% of your course grade. The exams will be a combination of multiple choice and essay questions.

Quizzes/Assignments – 6-12 quizzes and assignments will be given throughout the semester and represent 25% of your final course grade. Late assignments **will not** be accepted. No excuses (broken printer, crashed computer, hangover, illness, heart break, etc...) are acceptable for a late assignment. However, you will be allowed to drop your **2 lowest** quiz/assignment grades. If you miss a quiz or fail to turn in an assignment, this will count as one of your dropped grades. The quizzes will test you on the assigned readings and will not necessarily be announced. Come to class prepared with the assigned readings complete and you will do well on the quizzes. The assignments will typically be 1-2 page informal reaction papers related to the assigned readings or issues being discussed in class. All assignments **MUST** be typed in 12pt readable font. I will not accept any handwritten assignments.

Reaction Papers: You are required to write two formal 5-7 page reaction papers on one of the available topics provided for analysis. Your 1st reaction paper will be worth 10% of your grade and your 2nd paper will be worth 10% of your final grade. The paper is due at the beginning of class on the assigned dates. Papers submitted after class on the Due Date will receive a 10 pt penalty. Any paper submitted after 4:00pm on the due date will be penalized 25pts every 24 hours. This means a paper submitted two days late will start off as a 50. As with all deadlines, you should expect your printer will break, your car not starting, your computer crashing, and very likely a hungry dog eating your paper. If any of these or similar events occur, you still will receive the above mentioned deductions. I am not heartless, I just can't bear hearing the gut wrenching stories associated with your numerous assignments..

Attendance/Participation – You are required to attend class. You can not participate if you are not here and 10% of your grade will depend on your class participation. You are allowed 3 absences (**this includes excused absences**), no questions asked. Absences in excess of three will result in a deduction of 25 points per absence from your class participation grade. Therefore, come to class and be prepared.

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Important Dates		Grading Scale			
Midterm Exam	Oct 15	A	94-100	C	74-76
Fall Break	Oct 11-12	A-	90-93	C-	70-73
Thanksgiving Break	Nov 21-23	B+	87-89	D+	67-69
Last Day of Classes	Dec 4 th	B	84-86	D	64-66
Reading Day	Dec 5 th	B-	80-83	D-	60-63
Comprehensive Final Exam	Dec 12, 9-11:30AM	C+	77-79	F	Below 60

Date	Class Topics and Assigned Readings
Aug 22	Introduction
Aug 27/29	Ch 1 (Wayne): Presidential Selection: A Historical Overview
Sept 5	Ch 2 (Wayne): Campaign Finance
Sept 10/12	Ch 4 (Wayne): The Race for Delegates / Ch 7 (Nelson) The Presidency and Nominating Process
Sept 17/19	Ch 7 (Wayne): Media Politics
Sept 24/26	Ch 8 (Wayne): Understanding Presidential Elections
Oct 1/3	Ch 9 (Wayne): Reforming the Electoral System
Oct 8/10	Catch up/Exam Review
Oct 15/17	Midterm EXAM Ch 2 (Nelson) The Presidency in Perspective
Oct 22/24	Ch 2 (Nelson) The American Presidency in Comparative Perspective:
Oct 29/31	Ch 21 (Nelson): The Presidency at War
Nov 5/7	Ch 10 (Nelson) The Presidential Spectacle / Ch 11 (Nelson) The Presidency and the Press
Nov 12/14	Ch 17 (Nelson): The President and Congress / Ch 13 (Nelson) The Presidency and Parties
Nov 19	Ch 1-4 <i>A Divider, Not a Uniter</i> by Gary C. Jacobson
Nov 26/28	Ch 5-8 <i>A Divider, Not a Uniter</i> by Gary C. Jacobson
Dec 3	Ch 9-10 <i>A Divider, Not a Uniter</i> by Gary C. Jacobson
Dec 12	Cumulative FINAL EXAM 9-11:30AM

*Test dates will not change, while the dates of the specific class topics may change depending on the speed with which we progress.

Reaction Paper Topics and Due Dates

Part I

September 17

1. Discuss the role of alternative media (particularly the internet and blogs) in the 2004 Presidential Election and the upcoming 2008 Presidential Election? Does the role of alternative media differ significantly between various political parties? What role do you believe alternative media will play in the 2008 Presidential Election? Considering the strong ideological bent of most web pages and blogs, do they really make a difference or are they simply echo chambers? Have they improved or hurt our Presidential Election process and American Politics in general?

September 24

2. Do Presidential Campaigns *really* matter in most presidential elections? Are the results of the campaign predetermined by external factors such as the economy, international crises, the partisanship of the country, incumbency advantages, etc... For instance, is there anything the Dukakis (1988) or Dole (1996) campaigns could have done to attain an electoral victory? Is there anything the campaign's of Bush I (1988), Clinton (1992/1996) and even Bush II (2004) could have done to result in an electoral defeat?

September 24

3. The American Dream suggests that every American Citizen could some day be President? Based on what you know as a POLITICAL SCIENTIST, would you say this is true? Considering the lineage of our most recent pool of Presidential Candidates, one might argue this is clearly not the case (Bush I, Bush II, Cheney, Gore, Kerry, and Dean all attended elite private prep schools and or had wealthy families with long and distinguished political connections). However, most American's still believe anyone can be President and the Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton Presidential candidacies go a long way in promoting this dream. In line with this dream or the presidential hopes of an individual from a middle or lower income family realistic? Can someone from ASU get elected president?

September 24

4. Is the United States' process of electing a President broken? Are the characteristics necessary for being a successful presidential candidate the same as those necessary for being a successful President? If it is broken, what reforms would you suggest? What are the likely negative and positive consequences of these reforms? What is the likelihood of your suggested reforms actually being enacted?

Part II

October 29

5. Should we reform the office of the presidency to provide the President with more or less power? A review of contemporary presidents clearly indicates few have been able to succeed in meeting the expectations of the American People. In suggesting that we increase or decrease the powers of the President, provide an unbiased argument in support of your position.

October 29

6. During times of crises is it acceptable and or even necessary for the President to stretch the limits of the U.S. Constitution in order to defend/protect America? History clearly suggests presidents of both parties regularly abuse their powers during times of crises in the name of defending our country? If

this is necessary, how or who should define what is a crises? If this abuse is unacceptable, how would you suggest a President lawfully act in times of crises (which require swift decision making) under our system which was purposefully created to move slowly and often results in gridlock.

October 29

7. Does the mainstream media have a conservative/Republican bias or a liberal/Democratic bias? Both Democrats and Republicans believe passionately that the media has a bias against their party and or ideological views. Why do both sides come to such different conclusions? Can we provide an unbiased, valid, and reliable measure of media bias? Are there other (non-ideological) biases which are easier to measure or more significant with regard to coverage of the President and Presidential Campaigns?

October 29

8. Is the mainstream media too hard on presidents or is mainstream media simply a tool of the President and his administration? Explain and provide an unbiased defense of your position. What is the role of alternative media in today's contemporary political climate and how is alternative media similar and different as compared to mainstream media?

November 12

9. Is the President or Congress more powerful? The President has the bully pulpit, is the leader of his party, he can veto congressional legislation, he is Commander in Chief. Congress actually writes all legislation, Congress can over ride a Presidential Veto, Congress must confirm all presidential appointments to the judiciary and his cabinet, the Senate must approve treaties and ultimately the federal budget must be written and approved by Congress. Does the answer to this question depend on the President and his popularity and or leadership abilities, on the issues being addressed, on which Party control's congress, or other factors? Did the Framers succeed with the system of checks and balances which they created between the President and Congress? Did they go too far or not far enough?

November 12

10. Is divided government good for America (providing a check on the powers of the President and Congress and producing moderate public policies) or does it simply create gridlock and prevent our political leaders from fully addressing the critical issues facing our country?

Reaction Paper Requirements

Length:	5-7 pages
Font	11 pt Arial or Times New Roman
Page Format	1 inch margins
Submitting Paper	The PAPER is due at the beginning of class on the DUE Date. Please see syllabus for penalties regarding late submissions. An ELECTRONIC version of your paper must also be submitted via e-mail on the day it is due. The paper must be in MS Word and the file name must be YourLastname_DueDate.doc For example, my file would be Ardoin_Sept17.doc
Reference #	You must include at least 5 references and at least three of your references must be from non-internet resources (articles from real journals which you attain through the ASU library's electronic resources are considered non-internet sources – do not list the html source code when referencing these articles. Reference their print journal citation)
Referencing:	Do not plagiarize. You will fail this class if you are caught plagiarizing. Any direct quotes or original ideas you acquire from your research must be fully referenced. An electronic copy of all reactions papers must be submitted on the day you submit the hard copy. The electronic copies will be submitted to into an anti-plagiarism software which compares your document to all articles previously submitted, published on the web, and available through a number of paper writing services.
Bibliography	Use the APSA standards for citations and research. This a relatively straight forward referencing style and available via our class WebCT page. If you prefer an alternative referencing style, you must contact me prior to submitting your paper to receive authorization. However, I want to know this before receiving your paper.
Bias	I do not want a one sided argument. Your analysis MUST provide an unbiased scholarly analysis of the issues/questions which your research exams.
Research Topic	You do not have to address every issue which I put forward in the various research topics. However, your research should fully address at least one of the primary issues put forward under each research topic.

Grading Rubric

Issue	Possible Points	Points Received
Does the author use a sufficient number of references and diversity of references?	10pts	
Does the author properly reference sources used throughout the paper?	15pts	
Are the footnotes/endnotes and bibliography properly formatted?	8pts	
Is the thesis statement or research question clear?	7pts	
Does the author adequately address the thesis statement or research question?	10pts	
Does the author provide a balanced and unbiased analysis?	15pts	
Does the author provide a clear intro, litt review, discussion/analysis, and conclusion?	10pts	
Does the author provide support for his conclusion?	5pts	
Does the author use proper grammar and correct spelling throughout the paper?	10pts	
Is the paper of sufficient length?	10pts	