

Political Science 463
The American Chief Executive
Fall 2008

Professor David Darmofal
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Office: 316 Gambrell Hall
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Office Hours: MW, 4:00-5:00
and by appointment

Class Meetings:
MW 2:30 – 3:45 PM, 153 Gambrell

Course Overview:

Over the course of American history, and particularly during the past several decades, the presidency has become the focal point of our national government. Not surprisingly, the presidency has also become a prime concern of political scientists. As we will see this semester, political scientists focus on a variety of substantive questions when studying the presidency. This variety of topics is driven by, and mirrors, the many different dimensions of the modern presidency, including the president as commander in chief, party leader, and public spokesman, and differences between the president as an individual actor and the executive branch as a bureaucratic institution.

In this course, we will examine these many different dimensions of the presidency. We will begin where all presidencies begin: with the election of the president. Next, we will examine the transition to governing and the staffing of the presidency. This will be followed by a consideration of how presidents interact with the public. In the second half of the course, our attention will shift to presidential governance. We will examine the twin topics of presidential character and presidential performance. Next, we will turn to the many different dimensions of politics and policymaking, including how presidents interact with Congress and the judiciary. Finally, we will conclude by considering several different types of policies, including domestic, economic, and national security policies.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Identify and contrast the different dimensions of the modern presidency
- Identify and explain how and why the presidency has changed over the course of American history
- Compare and contrast differing perspectives on the proper rhetorical role for presidents
- Compare and contrast executive vs. congressional leadership in the government
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative structures for executive decisionmaking

Required Readings:

There are two required textbooks that are available at the campus bookstores:

Milkis, Sidney M., and Michael Nelson. 2008. *The American Presidency: Origins and Development, 1776-2007*, 5th Edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

The Presidency and the Political System, 8th Edition, ed. Michael Nelson. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Course Grades and Grading:

Course grades will be determined by student performance on three non-cumulative exams during the semester. There will be two non-cumulative midterm exams and one non-cumulative final exam (dates of each exam are noted on the syllabus). The two midterm exams will each count for 30% of the student's grade in the course, while the final exam will count for 40%. Makeup exams will only be offered in extreme circumstances (e.g., a documented death in the family or medical emergency). Verifiable proof of the emergency is required.

There will be one extra credit assignment allowed during the course. More information will be provided about the extra credit assignment during the semester. The maximum number of points awarded for the extra credit assignment will be two percentage points on the student's overall course grade.

Course grades will be based on the following grading scale:

A = 90 – 100	C+ = 77 – 79	D = 60 – 66
B+ = 87 – 89	C = 70 – 76	F = 59 and below
B = 80 – 86	D + = 67 – 69	

Course grades at the end of the semester will be rounded up a half point if they are at .5 or higher. Thus, an 89.5 will become a 90. There will be no other adjusting of grades or curving of grades. If you cannot accept this, you should not take this course.

Academic Honesty, Integrity, and Behavior:

All electronic devices such as cell phones must be turned off for class; if they are not, this may affect your grade. Students' work in this course is expected to be their own. The University's commitment to academic integrity is enshrined in the *Carolinian Creed* and is detailed in the *Rule of Academic Responsibility*. Information on violations of academic honesty and integrity and the University's punishments for these violations can be found in the *Carolina Community Student Handbook* (Student Affairs Policy STAF 6.25). It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to the *Rule of Academic Responsibility*, which can be found online at <http://www.sa.sc.edu/carolinacommunity/housing.htm>.

Disabilities Issues:

Students with disabilities should contact me during the first week of the semester about their needs and any assistance or arrangements that may be necessary. Students with disabilities should also contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 777-6742 to learn about the many programs and services that the University provides.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

In order to get the most out of the course, students should read the assigned material prior to the classes for which it is assigned. Chapters noted by (N) are in Nelson's *The Presidency and the Political System*.

Week 1 (Week of August 25th): Course Introduction, Development and Change in the Presidency

Milkis and Nelson, Chapters 1 and 2

Week 2 (Week of September 1st): Development and Change in the Presidency

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1ST: LABOR DAY -- NO CLASS

Rockman (N)

Tulis (N)

Week 3 (Week of September 8th): Electoral Politics

Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 5

Week 4 (Week of September 15th): Electoral Politics, Continued

Pious (N)

Aldrich, Griffin, and Rickershauser (N)

Week 5 (Week of September 22nd): Presidents and the Public

Milkis and Nelson, Chapters 9 and 12

Week 6 (Week of September 29th): Presidents and the Public, Continued; Presidential Character and Performance

Hetherington and Globetti (N)

Jacobs (N)

Nelson (The Psychological Presidency) (N)

Week 7 (Week of October 6th): Legislative Politics

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6TH: EXAM 1

Dickinson (N)

Week 8 (Week of October 13th): Legislative Politics, Continued

Milkis and Nelson, Chapters 4 and 7

Week 9 (Week of October 20th): Executive Branch Politics

Milkis and Nelson, Chapters 8 and 11

Burke (N)

Week 10 (Week of October 27th): Executive Branch Politics, Continued; Judicial Politics

Lewis (N)

Yalof (N)

Week 11 (Week of November 3rd): Domestic Policymaking

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD: EXAM 2

Quirk and Nesmith (N)

Week 12 (Week of November 10th): Domestic Policymaking, Continued; Economic Policymaking

Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 10

Week 13 (Week of November 17th): Economic Policymaking

Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 14

Week 14 (Week of November 24th): National Security Policymaking

Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 13

Polsky (N)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26TH: THANKSGIVING BREAK -- NO CLASS

Week 15 (Week of December 1st): National Security Policymaking, Continued

Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 15

**Final Examination
Wednesday, December 10th
2:00-5:00 p.m.
153 Gambrell Hall**