GOV 381L/PA 388K
The American Presidency
Unique #’s 39130/62049

Professor Bruce Buchanan
Spring, 2011
Thursdays 3:30-6:30
BAT 5.102
Office Hours: Tuesday 11-2
BAT 3.122
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Course Content and Aims

The course is cross-listed in the Government Department and the LBJ School, which reflects its theory-practice orientation. Course topics and readings offer an overview of the interdisciplinary field of presidency studies. The three broad questions that integrate the disparate topics covered are “How does the presidency work?” “What is presidential leadership and what makes it effective?” “What is the state of scholarly research on these topics?” The course has three aims: To provide a coherent introduction to the major literature on the presidency, to identify and address enduringly important research and practical questions about the institution and its central figure, and to sharpen student problem clarification, writing, deliberation and presentation skills.

Required Books/Readings

The following titles have been ordered through the Co-op:


Additional required readings in Readings Packet (designated “RP” on syllabus) and on this course’s Blackboard site (designated BB on syllabus). The RP is available at Speedway Copying in Dobie Mall. You are also expected to be up-to-date on major presidential news.
Student Responsibilities

1. Six 'reaction' papers. (30%) 3-5 pages, (assigned questions are starred * on outline)
2. Two brief presentations (with handouts) on outside readings (20%)
3. Final paper. (15%) Topic depends on student objectives.
4. Final paper presentation (15%)
5. Verbal participation (20%) in seminar discussions.

Topics, Dates, Paper Assignments

I. Introduction
   A. Requirements; The Functions of the Presidency; Presidency Research (1/20)
   B. Presidential Leadership: Research and Practice (1/27)
      *(What is presidential leadership? presidency research? How do/should they relate?)*
II. History, Presidential Accountability and the Constitution
   A. History: Theories and Cases (2/3)
   B. The Presidential Accountability System (PAS) and the Constitution (2/10)
      *(How well does the PAS support the Constitution?)*
III. The Operational Presidency
   A. Managing the White House (2/17)
   B. Domestic Policy Leadership (2/24)
   C. Presidential Influence in Congress (3/3)
      *(identify and assess the tools of policy leadership)*
   D. The Budget and Economic Policy (3/10)
   E. Foreign Policy/National Security (3/24)
      *(Appraise President Obama’s performance to date in economic and foreign policy)*
IV. Classic Theoretical Perspectives
   A. Presidential Power (3/31)
   B. Presidential Character (4/7)
      *(compare Neustadt/Barber/Lord visions of presidential leadership)*
V. The Presidency and the People
   A. Presidential Selection (4/14)
   B. Media and Communications (4/21)
   C. Public Opinion and Performance Evaluation (4/28)
      *(Appraise the core interactions between presidents and citizens).*
VI. Final Paper Presentations (5/5)

Weekly Assignments and Supplementary Readings

The starred (*) items are assigned weekly readings. Items listed under “background” are
suggestions for further exploration of the topics.

PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP: RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

What is Presidential Practice?

*Neustadt, pp. ix-xxiv

What is Presidency Research?

*Morris text, pp. 1-55.
*Moe, Terry. 2009. The Revolution in Presidential Studies
Presidential Studies Quarterly
http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/122652268/HTMLSTART

Background

Rockman, Burt. 2010. Does the Revolution in Presidential Studies Mean "Off With the President's Head"?
Presidential Studies Quarterly
http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/122652264/HTMLSTART
Presidential Studies Quarterly
http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/122652256/HTMLSTART
http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/122652280/HTMLSTART
Symposium on Presidency Research, December 2009. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*
democracy from the barbarians; pp xi-xvii Book objectives; 1-112 Possibilities, necessities, goals
of leadership
University Press.

2. HISTORY: THEORIES AND CASES

Press, pp. 60-94. (RP5).
*Greenstein, 1-231. FDR-Barack Obama.
*Skowronek, Presidential Leadership in Political Time, pp. 89-135 (RP6).
*Morris Text, pp. 56-87

**Background**

Greenstein, Fred I. 2009. *Inventing the Job of President: Leadership Style from George
Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

Gerring, John. 2004. *What is a Case Study and What is it Good for? American Political Science
Review* 98: 341-354
New York: Free Press.

3. THE PRESIDENTIAL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM AND THE CONSTITUTION

*Buchanan, Bruce. 2009. Checks, Balances and Beyond: The Presidential Accountability
“System,” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association
(BB1 or http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/cf_dev/AbsByAuth.cfm?per_id=1324444.
Background


4. MODELS OF PRESIDENTIAL MANAGEMENT

*Morris text, pp. 190-203
*Jones, pp. 66-127.
*Buchanan, Bruce (1990) "Constrained Diversity: The Organizational Demands of the Presidency" *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 20:791-822. (RP 10)

Background


5. DOMESTIC POLICY LEADERSHIP

*Lewis and Moe, “Presidency and Bureaucracy: Levers of Control,” in Nelson, 367-395

Background


6. PRESIDENTIAL INFLUENCE IN CONGRESS

*Morris text, pp. 154-172
*Jones, pp. 221-338

**Background**


**7. THE BUDGET AND ECONOMIC POLICY**

*Morris text, pp. 216-234.

**Background**

Obama “House on a Rock” speech (BB5).
8. FOREIGN POLICY/NATIONAL SECURITY

*Morris text pp. 204-215.
*Polsky, “The Presidency at War” In Nelson, pp. 489-506.
*Buchanan, B. 2008. “Presidential Accountability for Wars of Choice”

Background

Obama West Point Speech (BB6)
Obama Nobel Prize Speech (BB7).
Obama Cairo Speech (BB8).

9. PRESIDENTIAL POWER

*Morris text, pp. 88-132
*Neustadt, 1-318.

Background

http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/122652253/HTMLSTART

10. PRESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

* Review "Emotional Intelligence" discussion in intro and conclusion and for each president in Greenstein

Background

11. PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION

*Kenski, Hardy, and Jamieson, pp. 1-314.

Background


12. MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

*Review relevant portions of Kenski, et. al.

Background


13. PUBLIC OPINION AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

*Morris text, pp. 235-252
*Jones, pp. 128-176
*Miroff, Presidential Leadership as Spectacle, in Nelson, pp. 210-235.
*Lord, Leadership and Politics, pp. 215-220

**Background**