

GVPT 475 – Summer 2007- Session II
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Blackboard Location: TBA

Syllabus for The Presidency and the Executive Branch

Course Purpose:

Most of the time, when discussion turns to the President of the United States, it focuses on the man occupying the office at the current time. While the individual is of course important, the person sitting in the Oval Office is only one part of the *Presidency*. Presidents come and go, but the institution of the office remains remarkably stable over time. We will explore both the individuals who created the office and those who have taken on the office since then. We will spend time at the beginning of the semester considering the history of the President; what did the Founders have in mind when they created this office; how did the events in Philadelphia in 1787 affect the current President, and how have the ideals of the founders gone askew at the same time. While this is not a history course, we will explore some of our previous Presidents whose time in the office helped to define the Presidency that we see today. We will also consider the other event and institutions surrounding the Executive, such as the electoral process, the media, and the powers of the Executive Branch.

Course Requirements:

This class is an online course. Therefore, the first requirement of all students is that you must have access to the internet (subsequently, our WebCT page).

If you are unfamiliar with WebCT, prior to the class you should refer to the *Getting Started* information under the Student Resources heading at <http://www.courses.umd.edu>

Every requirement for this course will be through the WebCT.

Participation	40%
Individual Response Essays	20%
Paper	40%

Reading Quizzes and Final Exam¹

¹ At the beginning of the semester, we will begin as if there is no reading quiz(zes) or final exam component of the course. If students are not adequately participating in discussion and response essays on WebCT, the instruction will institute a series of quizzes and a final exam; the % for all requirements will be adjusted to account for these additions, if necessary.

Participation (40%): While participation is usually the smallest component of a student's grade, due the nature of an online course, it will be one of the most important for this course. As you will see below in the syllabus, there will be reading assignments for each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of the session. You are responsible for keeping up with the reading assignments, and for checking into WebCT at the very least once every day (Monday-Friday); I will post questions for discussion on the same days as the reading assignments. Your participation grade is based on you responding to the question and also reading what your other class members have written, and responding to their statements or questions. Students should feel free to address the question(s) I put forth with their opinions, but answers should consider the readings for the day and be relatable to what you read.

Students are encouraged to be a vital participant in the discussion for each assigned set of readings. To answer the question before someone asks; responding once a day with a one or two sentence answer will not suffice if you are aiming for an A or B (and possibly C) as your participation grade.

Individual Response Essays (20%): Each student should pick four sets of readings they find particularly interesting, and write a response essay based on their opinions towards the information presented. For example, if you are interested in the readings on the bureaucracy that makes up the Executive Branch, do not write a paper about the flow chart that shows which departments go where; if however, after reading, if you get a sense that the structure of the bureaucracy creates a problem in terms of the information the President gets or the way that the Presidents goals are being implemented, write about that. Essays should be 1-2 pages in length, and can be sent to me through webCT or through regular email. Responses need to be sent to me by 12:00 (noon) of the day of the readings.

Paper (40%): The paper should represent an in-depth examination of a topic concerning the President (either the person or the institution) that demonstrates a high level of research on the selected topic. Students are free to determine the topic of their own choosing; feel free to be creative. However, all students need to write a short (1-page) proposal for their paper which will be due on August 1st. The instructor has final say on whether a topic is appropriate for the final paper. Final papers are due on the August 24th (the last day of class) by 5:00pm.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Any student who, because of a disabling condition may require some special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact me as soon as possible to make necessary accommodations. Please contact the instructor as soon as possible at the beginning of the session about these accommodations. A written request for accommodation is required. If you have questions or concerns regarding the University of Maryland's disability requirements and documentation, you may wish to contact Disability Support Services at 314-7682.

Academic Integrity: All members of the academic community at the University of Maryland are required to abide by the *Code of Academic Integrity* (<http://www.inform.umd.edu/jpo/>). Any members of the campus community may report allegations of code violations directly to the Honor Council.

Religious Observances: I will make every reasonable effort to accommodate students' requests to make up participation missed due to attendance of religious observances. It is, however, your responsibility to inform me, *in advance*, of expected absences.

**** A final note: Due to this course being online, the student will be held accountable if there are "internet problems." In other words if you are supposed to turn something in by a deadline, I will not accept an excuse that the internet was down, or your email for some reason did not include your attachment. Obviously, if there is a system wide problem with WebCT that will be taken into account.****

Required Texts:

Additional readings may be required, they will be found on the class outline below. All of these readings should be in a file on WebCT or be readily accessible on the internet.

James Pfiffner and Roger Davidson, 2004. *Understanding the Presidency*, 4th edition. Longman.

Samuel Kernell. *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership* 3rd edition. CQ Press.

Richard Neustadt. *Presidential Power and the Modern President: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan*. Free Press.

Stephen Wayne. *The Road to the White House, 2004: The Politics of Presidential Elections*. Thomson Wadsworth.

Course Outline

- M – 7/16 The Founding Father and the creation of the Presidency
- W – 7/18 Evolution of the Presidency
- F - 7/20 Presidential Campaigns – The Basics and the Selection Process
- M – 7/23 Campaigns Con't. The Race to the White House
- W – 7/25 Campaigns Con't. Presidential Voting
- F – 7/27 Campaign 2008
- M – 7/30 The President – Presidential Character
- W – 8/1 The President – Presidential Power

- F – 8/3 Presidential Power con't.
Paper Proposals Due

- M – 8/6 The President and the Power of Persuasion
- W – 8/8 Power of Persuasion cont.
- F – 8/10 The President and “Going Public”
- M – 8/13 The Media and the President
- W – 8/15 Executive Branch – The Bureaucracy
- F – 8/17 The Executive and Institutional Relationships
- M – 8/20 The Executive and Domestic Policy
- W – 8/22 The Executive and Foreign Policy
- F – 8/24 Conclusions
Final Papers Due