Seminar on the Presidency  
GOVT 605  
Schar School of Policy and Government, GMU  
Fall, 2018

Wednesday 7:20-10:00 pm  
Building/Room:  
Office Hours: Wednesday, 6:15-7:15 pm  
Office: Research Hall 359  
Instructor: Dr. Lindsay Eberhardt  
Email:

Course Description:  
In this course we will study the office and institutions of the United States presidency. The president is the head of the executive branch and employs the formal powers under the auspices of the Constitution and a host of informal powers that have developed over the years.

Learning Objectives:  
After completing this course, students will:

- Assess the presidency within the American political system and understand the role the office plays in formulating and implementing public policy
- Demonstrate knowledge of the formal and informal relations between the President, Congress, and the judiciary in a separation of powers system
- Demonstrate knowledge of the historical and philosophical development of the office and the use of executive power since the Constitution’s ratification
- Communicate their knowledge about this subject orally and in writing

Requirements:  
Attendance and participation 15 %  
Book presentation and paper 25 %  
Term paper 30 %  
Final examination 30 %

Attendance and participation. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Please arrive on time in order for your attendance to be counted. Students with one or fewer absences will receive an A for their attendance grade. Students with two absences will receive a B. Those with three will receive a C. Students with four absences will receive a D and those with five or more absences will receive an F for their attendance grade. Participation points may be added when students contribute meaningfully in class discussions or removed if students are disruptive. Disruptive behavior includes: talking
out of turn, being disrespectful to the professor or other students, using laptops for purposes other than taking notes, texting, etc.

Presentation and paper. Over the course of the semester, each student will give one teaching presentation on an important book in the field of presidential studies. On the first day of class we will pass around a list of books pegged to particular weeks. Each student will then choose a book according to their randomly assigned rank order and present on that date. Students will prepare a 25-30-minute presentation that teaches the class his or her assigned book as well as questions for class discussion. Students will give this presentation in the second half of each week’s class. The format will depend on the book and the student’s preference, but all presentations should include: background/context, the author’s thesis, a summary and extended discussion of the major arguments, and conclusion/importance of the author’s argument in the broader context. When possible, the student will provide the discussion questions to the class in advance of the presentation via Blackboard. The paper will consist of a 1250-1500-word narrative, including substantive analysis and discussion of the background, thesis, major arguments, evidence, and conclusions made by the book’s author. These papers should be written as useful guides to the book and offer a helpful resource for other students to use when refreshing their memories of that book for future study, in their term papers, or in the final exam.

Term Paper. The term paper will consist of a 2500-3000-word essay (approx. 10-12 pages). The students will answer a question provided by the professor. You will be given the assignment in late October and have until the end of the semester to complete it. The question and directions for completing the assignment will be handed out in class.

Final Examination. The final will be cumulative and will consist of short answer and essay questions. Questions about the final will be answered in class.

Completion of Assignments
A student must complete all assignments in order to pass the class. A student who does not complete the class presentation and paper, term paper, and final examination will not receive a passing grade. **No incompletes will be granted for this course and all course requirements must be fulfilled by the date of the final exam.**

Academic Integrity
Faculty in the Schar School have zero tolerance for academic dishonesty and will strictly enforce Mason’s honor code.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.
Required Texts:


Please Note:
During the quarter, there may be additional assigned readings that are not yet noted on the syllabus. These readings will be posted on Blackboard or will be distributed in class. The professor reserves the right to modify this syllabus.

Assigned Readings:
FP = *Federalist Papers*
AP = *American Presidency*
Ellis = *Judging Executive Power*
CP = *Constitutional Presidency*

August 29: Introduction and the Constitution

• AP Ch. 1, 2 and the Appendix.

September 5: Creating the Presidency

• FP Nos. 23, 25, 41, 47, 48, 51 and 67-77
• AP Ch. 2, 3
• The Pacificus-Helvidius Debates of 1793-1794, especially Pacificus I and Helvidius I

September 12: Creating the Presidency continued

• Readings cont.
• “Of the Legislative, Executive, and Federative Power of the Commonwealth,” “Subordination of Powers,” and “Of Prerogative” (from John Locke’s *Second Treatise*)
• George Washington’s Proclamation of Neutrality
• CP Gary Schmitt: “President Washington's Proclamation of Neutrality”

- AP Chs. 4-5
- Monroe Doctrine, December 2, 1823
- Jackson’s “Veto Message,” July 10, 1832; Webster’s response; “Proclamation on Nullification”

September 26: The Presidency of Abraham Lincoln

- AP Ch. 6.
- Lincoln: Address before the Young Men’s Lyceum
- Lincoln: House Divided Speech
- Lincoln: Peoria speech
- Lincoln: Dred Scott Speech
- Excerpts from Lincoln-Douglas Debates
- Lincoln: first and second inaugural addresses
- Lincoln: Emancipation Proclamation
- Lincoln: Letter to Albert G. Hodges

October 3: The Reaction against Presidential Power and the Beginning of the Progressive Era

- Readings cont.
- AP Chs. 7-8

October 10: The Progressives continued and the Rise of the Modern Presidency

- AP Ch. 8-9
- William Howard Taft: “Our Chief Magistrate and His Powers”
- Woodrow Wilson: “The President of the United States”

October 17: The Rise of the Modern Presidency continued and the Administrative State

- Readings cont.
- Franklin Roosevelt: First Inaugural Address
- AP Chs. 10-11

October 24: Enduring Constitutional Issues: Appointment and Removal, the Legislative Veto, and Executive Privilege
• AP Ch 12, 13
• Ellis *Myers v. US*
• Ellis *Humphrey’s Executor v. US*
• Ellis *INS v. Chadha*
• *Morrison v. Olson* (Blackboard)

October 31: Enduring Constitutional Issues: Appointment and Removal, the Legislative Veto, and Executive Privilege

• Readings cont.
• CP David A. Crockett: “Executive Privilege”

November 7: The Modern Presidency continued and Enduring Constitutional Issues: War Powers

• AP Chs. 14, 15
• Ellis *Ex parte Merryman*
• Ellis *Ex parte Vallandigham*
• Ellis *Ex parte Milligan*

November 14: The Modern Presidency continued and Enduring Constitutional Issues: War Powers

• Ellis *U.S. v. Curtiss Wright Corp*
• Ellis *Korematsu v. United States*
• Ellis *Youngstown Co. v. Sawyer*
• Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, August 7, 1964
• War Powers Resolution of 1973

November 21: Thanksgiving—No Class

November 28: The Vice-Presidency, summary, and review

• AP Ch. 16
• CP Joseph M. Bessette and Jeffrey K. Tulis, “On the Constitution, Politics, and the Presidency”
• CP James W. Caeser: “Demagoguery, Statesmanship, and Presidential Politics”

December 5: Makeup and review

• Readings cont.

December 12: Final Exam, Wednesday 7:20-10:00