

Professor George Krause

Class Session: Tuesday & Thursday
9:30am–10:45pm
(G36 Benedum Hall)

Contact Information

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Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00pm–3:00pm
or by Appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW

The American presidency is a unique institutional actor in the U.S. political system whose powers are least well defined by the Framers of the Constitution. As a result, the presidency has been a malleable institution that has adapted more to the needs of the time and demands placed upon it by the American people than either the legislative or judicial branches of government. Rather than viewing the American presidency as an *idiopathic* actor (i.e., focusing on differences between presidents based upon style and personality), we will instead treat the occupant of this office as an *institutional* actor within the larger political system. This, in turn, means that we will view the American presidency through the lens of historical institutionalism, rational choice logic, and modern behavioral theories of politics. The pedagogical focus of this course will center on logically–consistent theories and explanations of presidential behavior in a political system. Students in this course will not only be expected to acquire knowledge of substantive terms and concepts, but will also be expected to master analytical concepts and successfully apply them to applications in the realm of U.S. executive branch politics. Given our class size, class sessions will follow a lecture–discussion format. I strongly encourage students to contact me either in person or via e-mail with any questions concerning the material being covered in this course. **Successful completion of PS 0200 (or its equivalent) is a prerequisite for this course.** Students who have yet to met this prerequisite prior to this semester are strongly encouraged to take this course at a later date after they have mastered the material covered in *PS 0200: Introduction to American Political Process*.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING SCHEME

Student grades will be based exclusively on three non–cumulative examinations each covering a unit of the course (**Unit 1: Foundations of Presidential Power; Unit 2: The Plebiscitary Presidency; and Unit 3: Institutional Politics & Policymaking**). Each examination will consist of 10 objective multiple–choice questions (3 points per question = 30 Points) and 5 essay questions (total: 70 points) for a total of 100 points per exam. The material will come from assigned course readings and/or class session lecture notes. *The grading scale for each exam and the final grades based upon all three exam scores will be based upon the instructor’s judgment.* The weights assigned to these three exams are as follows:

Highest Exam Score: 45% of Total Grade

Middle Exam Score: 30% of Total Grade

Lowest Exam Score: 25% of Total Grade

Make-up exams will be granted only under extremely rare circumstances on a case-by-case basis deemed solely by the instructor. Students are required to provide at least 24 hours notice prior to the exam in question with a formal excuse that can be verified by the instructor to be considered for the possibility of receiving a make-up exam. *The instructor reserves the right to decline any make-up exam request – even when students follow the guidelines described above.* It is required that students will adhere to the university policies relating to academic integrity. University policies and procedures regarding academic integrity can be found at <http://www.pitt.edu/~provost/ai1.html>. Every reasonable effort will be made to assist students in need of special accommodations due to disabilities. Students requiring special accommodations for disabilities must contact both the instructor and Office of Disability Resources and Services, 216 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890/ (412) 383-7355 (TTY) within two weeks from the start of the semester.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Pika, Joseph A., and John Anthony Maltese. 2009. *The Politics of the Presidency*. Revised Seventh Edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. **(Main Text)**.

Morris, Irwin L. 2010. *The American Presidency: An Analytical Approach*. New York: Cambridge University Press. **(Rational-Choice Oriented Companion Text)**

Neustadt, Richard E. 1990. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan*. Third Edition. New York: Free Press. **(Unit I)**

Kernell, Samuel. 2007. *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*. Fourth Edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. **(Unit II)**

CLASS SESSION SCHEDULE

(Timing and Tempo May Vary Throughout the Semester at the Instructor's Discretion)

WEEKS 1–2: SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF THE PRESIDENCY & THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENCY IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM

(UNIT 1)

- Scientific Inquiry: The Role of Theories, Hypotheses, and Empirical Observation
- The Role of the Executive in the U.S. Constitution
- Comparative Analysis of the American Presidency
- Distinguishing Between Formal and Informal Presidential Powers.
- Overarching Trends in the “Modern” Presidency

Readings: Pika and Maltese (Chapter 1)
Morris (Chapters 2 & 3)

NO CLASS ON THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 22

WEEKS 3–5: FOUNDATIONS OF MODERN PRESIDENTIAL POWER (UNIT 1)

- The “Basics” of Presidential Power
- The “Implications” of Presidential Power
- “New” Lessons Learned on Presidential Power

Readings: Neustadt (Chapters 1–5)
Neustadt (Chapters 6–8)
Neustadt (Chapters 9–13)
Morris (Chapter 4)

Examination 1 (Unit 1 Material): Thursday October 6, 2011 (Tentative Date)

WEEK 6: NOMINATIONS, CAMPAIGNS, AND ELECTIONS

- Presidential Selection
- Presidential Campaigns
- Presidential Elections

Readings: Pika and Maltese (Chapter 2)
Morris (Chapter 5)

WEEK 7: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRESIDENCY AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC

- Presidents and Public Opinion: Whom Leads Whom?
- Presidency and the Trust of the American Public
- Presidential Issue Framing
- Presidency and the Mass Media

Readings: Pika and Maltese (Chapter 3)

WEEKS 8–9: PRESIDENTIAL APPEALS TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC

- When Do Presidents Choose to Employ a “Going Public” Strategy
- Presidents as “Insiders” versus “Outsiders”
- Overall Trends in “Going Public”
- Case Study Lessons in “Going Public”

Readings: Kernell (Chapters 1–4)
Kernell (Chapters 5–8)

Examination 2 (Unit 2 Material): Thursday November 3, 2011 (Tentative Date)

**WEEK 10: THE PRESIDENCY AND CONGRESS
(UNIT 3)**

- Presidential Formal Powers and Informal Influence over the Legislative Process
- Competing Theories of U.S. Lawmaking: ‘Party Cartel’ Government; ‘Pivotal Politics’; and ‘Conditional Party’ Government
- Analytical Modeling of ‘Pivotal Politics’ Theory (Source Material: Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics*, 1998: Chapter 2)

Readings: Pika and Maltese (Chapter 5)
Morris (Chapter 6)

**WEEK 11: THE PRESIDENCY AND THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH
(UNIT 3)**

- Principal-Agent Theory; Transaction Cost Theory
- Presidency as CEO of the U.S. Federal Government
- Presidency and Cabinet Officials: Appointment and Performance
- Presidency and American Federal Bureaucracy

Readings: Pika and Maltese (Chapter 6)
Morris (Chapter 8)

**WEEK 12: THE PRESIDENCY AND THE JUDICIARY
(UNIT 3)**

- Judiciary as “Arbiters of Conflict”
- Presidential Selection and Confirmation of Judges to the U.S. Federal Courts
- Judicial Oversight of the Executive Branch
- Analytical Modeling of Presidential-Senate Bargaining over Supreme Court Appointments (Source Material: Moraski & Shipan, 1999 *American Journal of Political Science*)

Readings: Pika and Maltese (Chapter 7)
Morris (Chapter 7)

**WEEKS 13–14: THE PRESIDENCY AND PUBLIC POLICYMAKING
(UNIT 3)**

- How Presidents Make Public Policies
- “Direct” Versus “Indirect” Means of Policymaking
- Causes and Consequences of Presidential Policymaking: Applications to Macroeconomic Policy (Fiscal, Monetary, and Income Inequality)

Readings: Pika and Maltese (Chapters 8 & 9)
Morris (Chapter 10)

Final Examination (Unit 3 Material):

Monday December 12, 2011 (10:00am–11:50am)