This course examines how presidents get, use, sometimes abuse, and invariably lose power. The premise of the course is very simple but in some ways quite radical: presidential power depends on using each tool of presidential governance adroitly, while integrating them into a mutually supporting whole that “fits” the strategic context. Hence, the two keys to presidential power are strategy and execution. Effective presidents first must craft a governance strategy that “fits” the political context; then, they must execute that strategy skillfully using the available tools of governance.

We spend some time on governance strategy but much more on execution. So we focus on the “nuts and bolts” of each tool of governance – how it works and how it affects the president’s performance. We read some of the best political science on each tool, along with (I hope) vivid case studies of its use. We also read some classics on the presidency.

By the end of the course you will not be ready to be President (sorry!). But you might be able to offer a president some shrewd advice, and you will certainly be a more informed observer of presidential power.

POWER TOOLS

Six governance tools or executive activities arguably constitute the core of the modern presidency: 1) public relations aimed at opinion leadership, 2) formulating a legislative program, 3) directly lobbying Congress, 4) indirectly lobbying Congress by “going public,” 5) politicizing the bureaucracy via appointments, and 6) taking direct action using executive orders.

Beyond the core tools, there are about a dozen tools or activities that sometimes assume importance: 1) vetoing legislation (including issuing veto threats and fighting over-rides), 2) making appointments to the federal judiciary, especially the Supreme Court, 3) using central clearance to vet regulations and modify agency actions, 4) indirectly lobbying Congress by “going local,” 5) making appointments to independent regulatory agencies like the Federal Reserve, 6) formulating the executive budget, 7) coordinating over-lapping departments (especially the State Department and the Defense Department, via the National Security Council), 8) re-organizing and terminating agencies, 9) negotiating and securing treaties and making executive agreements with foreign powers, 10) threatening foreign powers with military force and economic sanctions (saber-rattling), and 11) acting as a war leader.
In addition, there are four other activities – call them support activities – that are invariably important because they buttress the other activities: 1) setting policy priorities and managing the president’s time, 2) organizing, staffing, and running the White House, 3) managing press relations, and 4) fighting the inevitable fires, that is, crisis management.

### COURSE CONTENT FOR FALL 2014

It is impossible to cover all the tools and activities in a one semester course. This year, I propose covering 5 of the 6 core activities, two of the “additional” activities, and one of the “support” activities, specifically:

- Opinion leadership (core)
- The legislative program (core)
- Going Public (core)
- Executive Appointments (core)
- Executive Orders (core)
- Supreme Court Nominations (additional)
- Central Clearance (additional)
- Transitions/Organizing the White House (support)

In addition, we will read several political science classics about the presidency.

### CLASS ORGANIZATION: THEORY AND CASES

The course has a lecture/discussion format, and combines social science – systematic theory and quantitative evidence – with case studies. I consider the latter to be vital, since it is critical to have clear pictures in your head of presidents actually at work, before theorizing or moving to quantitative evidence.

After three introductory lectures, each week introduces a new tool, x in all (see above). The first half of each class focuses on what political scientists know and don’t know about the tool. During weeks 4-12, the second half of each class is devoted to one or more case studies of the tool. Broadly speaking, I will present the social science; you will present the cases.

The lecture-oriented readings comprise a big slice of the best contemporary political science on the presidency, and the case-oriented readings the best case I could find, typically employing at least some primary material (video, tape recordings, memoirs, documents, reportage, investigative journalism).

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Student evaluation is based on 1) Two “Memos to the President”, 2) Write-up of a case and leadership of class discussion, 3) Class participation, and 4) Either a paper or a final exam (your choice but I must approve all papers [cf. “Central Clearance” below]).

1 Memo to the President (20%)
Sometime during Weeks 4-12 you write a practical memo to President Obama explaining how he should use a governance tool. Given the situation facing the President, what should he do? What should he not do? You should provide some historical examples but also address specific issues facing Obama. A successful memo is one that could actually help the President improve his performance – and also one that reflects the readings. (If you simply repeat the “wisdom” de jour from the blogosphere, I will be quite displeased.)

Memos should be brief, about 4-6 pages, typed and double-spaced. Your memo is due to me AFTER the class addressing the topic (this is to allow you to benefit from the lecture and the case presentation on the subject).

A memo CANNOT be on the same topic as your class presentation.

Early in the course I will give you the opportunity to request particular weeks for your memos. But I reserve the right to re-assign you to maintain a reasonable balance of memos across weeks.

2 Case Study Presentation (15%)

In nine of the sessions (Weeks 4-12), one or more students will serve as Case Study Presenter. Students tasked with this leadership role should 1) prepare a PowerPoint briefing on the case study; 2) formulate discussion questions and distribute them to members of the class prior to class; and 3) lead discussion of the case. You should anticipate taking this role once during the semester. Depending on enrollment, on a few weeks, two students may share the job of Case Study Presenter. Some of the cases require a degree of original research, which will be reflected in grading.

3 Case Study Write-Up (15%)

I would like you to write up your case study as a Teaching Note, in an 8-10 page paper. The write-up should provide background to the case, a time-line, and a narrative chronology of events. In addition, it should identify and discuss the theoretical and practical issues raised by the case. It should include your discussion questions. You should identify the sources used in your case, giving links to electronic sources. You may include as an Appendix such materials as news stories, declassified documents, and the like.

3 Class Discussion (15%)

You should participate in class discussions in an intelligent and informed way, showing familiarity with the case study and an understanding of the material in the required readings. How can the material in the lecture and required readings be applied to the case study? Being helpful to the Case Study Presenter is a good idea, since you will be one yourself.

4 Final Exam or Paper (30%)

You may choose either one. However, if you choose to write a paper, you must meet with me early in the semester to discuss your topic and lay out a plan for carrying it out. And, I must approve the paper topic (this is to protect you from undertaking a paper that cannot succeed). For the case
studies that require some research, I am willing to consider a paper expanding on the case study, but this is putting a lot of eggs in one basket.

The exam will be an open book take-home final in which you use the concepts in the class to analyze one or more concrete problems facing a President: How should he think about this problem? What should he do? What should he not do? Using lessons from recent administrations, what should he think about "best practices"? How should he craft an integrated governing strategy, using several tools in tandem?

**BOOKS FOR PURCHASE**

Copies of the following have been ordered at Labyrinth Books on Nassau Street.

Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan* (any edition is fine, you can easily buy this used)

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

Fall 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9/11</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>9/25</td>
<td>The Strategic Presidency</td>
<td>Cuban Missile Crisis (Film: 13 Days)</td>
<td>The Job, the Tools</td>
<td>Moe, Cameron</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>10/9</td>
<td>Opinion Leadership</td>
<td>The Economy* Grenada* War on Terror*</td>
<td>Presidents, Voters &amp; The Media</td>
<td>Edwards, Zaller, Gentzkow</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>10/16</td>
<td>The Legislative Program</td>
<td>Bush Tax Cut* Clinton deficit red.* Clinton Health* Obamacare*</td>
<td>Theory of Legislation (Leg entrep., Pivots, agendas)</td>
<td>Beckmann, Cameron, Cohen, Rudalevige</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10/23</td>
<td>Going Public</td>
<td>Bush Tax Cut* INF Treaty* Boosting Bork*</td>
<td>Outside Lobbying and Opinion Contests</td>
<td>Canes-Wrone Cameron &amp; Park Jacobs &amp; Shapiro</td>
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NO CLASS (Fall Break, week of 10/27)
1. INTRODUCTION

Limited resources, infinite expectations. The sources of presidential power. The power ratchet. Who is scored “great”? What this course is about.


Discussion Questions

- Is the president weak or strong? How could you tell?
- How does a president become powerful? How has this changed over time?
- How does a president become highly rated by historians?

Note: the reading for next week is heavy. So you may want to start this week.

2. THE POINT OF DEPARTURE: NEUSTADT’S CONCEPTION OF THE PRESIDENCY

Richard Neustadt’s conception of the presidency – the foundation of modern presidential studies. Skill and will. NOTE: The reading this week is heavy, start early!
**Required Reading**

U.S. Constitution, Article II.


**Required Case Study**

Barton Gellman, *Angler: The Cheney Vice President*. *Try to read as much as can from: 1) re-wiring the VP (Chapter 2), 2) 1st tax cut, economy, Chafee, Jeffords (pp. 67-80), 3) walking away from global warming (pp. 81-91), 4) OLC, FISA (pp. 131-154), 5) environment, science (195-213), 7) emails (pp. 188-190), 8) daily CIA briefing (pp. 244-246), 9) warrantless wiretaps (pp. 277-326), 10) an evaluation (pp. 388-395) (about 165 pages)

Optional but recommended: 91-99 (Energy task force, unitary executive), 174-193 (torture, Gitmo), 215-222 (intelligence and selling the war), 259-275 (budget review board, 2nd tax cut), 338-342 (trials for detainees).

**Discussion Questions**

- From Neustadt’s perspective, was George Bush well-suited for the presidency? Why or why not?
- How about Dick Cheney?
- How about Barack Obama?
- What advice would Neustadt have given George Bush at the beginning of his presidency? Would it have helped him? Would he have taken it? Could he have taken it?
- What goals does Neustadt assume the president wishes to meet? What goals are actually on display in *Angler*? Does this make any difference for Neustadt's framework? If yes, what would look different about the framework?

**Optional**


Fred Greenstein, *The Presidential Difference: Leadership Style from FDR to George W. Bush* (2004), Chapter 14 “. The bibliographic essay (pp. 282-301) is itself brilliant and invaluable.

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3. THE GAMES PRESIDENTS PLAY: DISCOVERING THE STRATEGIC PRESIDENCY

The rational choice revolution comes to presidential studies. Three mechanisms: Proposal power, veto power, strategic pre-commitment. A simple explication. The strategic context: polarization, divided party government, war, economic crises. The presidential power rachet.

**Required Reading**


**Required Case Study: The Cuban Missile Crisis**

View the film *Thirteen Days* (OK, its Hollywood and the Boston accents are terrible– but it is based on transcripts of recordings and memoirs and illustrates many genuine dilemmas of governing facing presidents.)

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.**

1. What prevents experts from giving fair and objective advice to the President? How can Presidents arrange advice-giving to get fair and objective advice from experts? Provide examples from the film.
2. When policy must be carried out by bureaucratic agents who may not understand the President's wishes or share his goals, how can he assure they execute his desires faithfully? What motivates bureaucratic agents? What can the president do to them? Provide examples.
3. What techniques can the President use to lead public opinion? When will these techniques be effective and when not? Can the President manipulate the press – when yes and when no? How is the media different today from the early 1960s? Provide examples.
4. How should the President deal with Congress in matters of national security? Can Congress keep secrets? Can Congress be effective in overseeing presidential power, especially during crises?
5. What sort of people occupy the policy-making jobs closest to the President? What is their background and experience? How effective are they likely to be? Provide examples.
6. Can the President conduct secret negotiations with foreign powers? Can he make secret deals and then lie about them in public? In other words, what limits does American democracy place on presidential foreign policy-making? Provide examples.
7. Do crises lead to a one-way ratchet of presidential power? Is public opinion and electoral competition sufficient to counter-balance a plebiscitary presidency?

**Optional**


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**4 TRANSITIONS/STRATEGY/ORGANIZING THE WHITE HOUSE**


**Required Reading**


Optional

Patricia Conley, *Presidential Mandates: How Elections Shape the National Agenda*, Chapter Four “Presidential Mandates Since 1828” pp. 51-76. When do presidents claim mandates?

*Case Study: Bill Clinton’s Train Wreck (transition)*

Elizabeth Drew, *On the Edge: The Clinton Presidency*, Chapters 1-6. An extremely important transition as it is taken as the model of how not to do it. As such it is a kind of touchstone.

*Case: Early Obama Administration (transition & strategy)*

*Confidence Men*, Chapter 7 “The B Team” (about the transition, picking economic advisors, first steps on stimulus).

Much of the same material is covered in Noam Scheiber *The Escape Artists*. You may be able to find other sources too.

*Case: Reagan (strategy)*


*Case: Clinton and the Gingrich Revolution (strategy)*


Cameron, *Veto Bargaining*, sections on Clinton, esp. welfare reform vetoes.

Optional

Bruce Miroff, “Domestic Policy-making: Politics and History,” pp. 278-302 in Nelson and Riley. This is an excellent summary of the entire book and well worth reading.

Mayhew on events as causes.


Burke, *Institutional Presidency*
Hess, *Organizing the Presidency*
Patterson, *The White House Staff*

5. OPINION LEADERSHIP

Leading public opinion. How, whether, and what voters learn from Presidents. The Zaller model. Does opinion leadership work in practice? When yes and when no? The media. The median and the President. Media bias.

**Required Reading**


**Optional**

Martha Joynt Kumar, *Managing the President’s Message: The White House Communications Operation* (2007). Pp xxii-xxxii (history); 1-32 (what the communications office does); 71-118 (how Bush did it); 158-161 (Bush table of organization).


George C. Edwards III, On Deaf Ears
Case Study 1: Talking up the Economy
Dan Wood, The Politics of Economic Leadership: The Causes and Consequences of Presidential Rhetoric (2007). Case study parts of the book. See if you can find video clips of some of the actual speeches referred to, and show in class. What was the media response?
Case Study 2: Beating the Drum for Foreign Policy: Reagan, Grenada, and Lebanon
See if you can find the speeches, TV and newspaper coverage.
Case Study 3: Shifting the Public's Attention to More Favorable Grounds: Bush and Terror
http://users.polisci.wisc.edu/kmayer/828/Druckman%20and%20Holmes%20PSQ.pdf
See if you can find the speeches, TV and newspaper coverage
Case Study 4: Carter's Energy (MEOW) Speech
Find the speech, polls, newspaper coverage

6. THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Formulating the President's legislative program. Presidential legislative activism. Measuring presidents' legislative success. Congressional agenda setting.

Required Reading
Charles Cameron and Jee-Kwang Park, “A Primer on the President’s Legislative Program,” in Presidential Leadership: The Vortex of Power, Bert Rockman and Richard Waterman (eds), Roxbury Press, 2007. What we know (except Cohen!), plus the burden sharing model.

Andrew Rudalevige, Managing the President’s Program. Chapter 5, pp. 86-112. Chapter 7, pp. 134-151. In house or out-house?

Case Study 1: Bush Tax Cut
Supplement with Barton Gelman, sections on the tax cut. Focus here should be on the tax cut as a centerpiece of domestic policy, less on the lobbying effort with Congress and the public per se.

Case Study 2: Clinton and Deficit Reduction
Woodward, The Agenda, chapters TBA (but especially 11, 12, 14, 15 …) (use the Index to get the key sections).
Supplement with: Elizabeth Drew, On the Edge. Again, use the Index.

Case Study 3: Obama and Financial Reform
Ron Suskind, Confidence Men, middle third of book.

Optional Reading
Stanley Kelly article on presidential bribes.
Roger Larocca The Presidential Agenda: Sources of Executive Influence in Congress, sections. The program as lobbying (darn clever but not easy reading).
Paul Light, The President’s Agenda.

7. GOING PUBLIC

How to connect opinion leadership with legislative strategy. The Canes-Wrone attention-focusing model. Going public in an opinion contest. The case of SC nominations. Evidence: how effective is the bully pulpit? Going local.

Required Reading

Optional

Case Study 1: Bush Tax Cut
Beckman, Pushing the Agenda *, outside lobbying for Bush tax cut, including the going local portion.
Again, supplement with Gelman, add video clips, news stories, CQ Weekly.

Case Study 2: Bush and Privatizing Social Security
Find speeches, newspaper coverage, public opinion polls

Case Study 3: (Value of Unexpected Information from a Biased Source): Reagan and the INF Treaty

Case Study 4: Boosting Bork
Martha Joynt Kumar, Managing the President’s Message, pp. 168-177 (In depth on Bork)
Note: use the Public Papers to read Reagan’s actual comments, see if you can find audio or visual clips. Find the subsequent media coverage, if any. Check the Bork case studies, e.g., Ethan Bronner’s book. Try to find opinion polls, any impact?

Optional Reading
Jeffrey Cohen, Going Local: Presidential Leadership in the Post-Broadcast Age (2010)

8. EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS: POLITICIZING THE BUREAUCRACY

History of the civil service. The spoils state. Importance of politicization to the president. How to (and how not to) politicize an agency. Presidential patronage. Strategic allocation of SES personnel. The culture of in-and-outers. The consequences for bureaucratic capacity.

Required Reading
David Lewis, The Politics of Presidential Appointments *, pages 11-74
Required Case: The Sad History of FEMA
Dave Lewis, Politics of Presidential Appointments, Chapter 6 (pp. 141-171).

Case Study 1: Bush and the Terror Presidency*
Jack Goldsmith, The Terror Presidency: Law and Judgment Inside the Bush Administration *
Parts of Gelman, Angler (the parts that go with Goldsmith) *

Case Study 2: Bush and the EPA*
Barton Gellman, Angler: The Cheney Vice President. 1) Walking away from global warming (pp. 81-91), 2) environment, science (195-213). 3) Energy task force, unitary executive, 91-99.*

Case Study 3: Ronald Reagan and Anne Gorsuch at the EPA
http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Mutually+assured+corruption%3B+the+Justice+Department +and+Anne...a04080006
Contemporary news accounts (incl. CQ).

Case Study 4: Appointing Ambassadors
Gary Hollibaugh, Jr “Political Determinants of Ambassadorial Appointments”
Supplement with some illustrative examples

Case Study 5: The Obamacare Rollout
The role of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in the webpage rollout. Various sources. Role of political appointees.

Optional Reading
http://jpart.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/17/1/19
http://people.clemson.edu/~pwarren/?page_id=3
Hugh Heclo, A Government of Strangers (sections)
9. APPOINTMENTS TO THE SUPREME COURT


Cameron and Lauren Mattioli, “Presidential Selection of Supreme Court Nominees,” manuscript Princeton University.
Cameron, “The Vetting Operation”

Optional
Cameron, Park, and Deborah Beim, “Shaping the Supreme Court through Appointments: The Impact of a New Justice,” Minnesota Law Review.

Case Study 1: Selection of Rehnquist*
John W. Dean, The Rehnquist Choice (2001). Focuses on the executive (incl. eye witness).* Try to listen to the tapes that Dean quotes from.

Case Study 2: The Battle over Bork*
Mark Gittenstein, Matters of Principle (focuses on the Judiciary Committee – eye witness). (1992)
Michael Pertschuk, The People Rising (focuses on interest groups – eye witness) (1989)

Optional

10. CENTRAL CLEARANCE

Growth of the administrative state. The history of centralization. Growth of WH staff and functions. OMB, OIRA. How OIRA works. Political auditing. Coordination. The NSC.

Required
http://www.ccdemuth.com/uploads/9/7/6/2/9762112/demuth_oira_at_thirty.pdf (OIRA head under Reagan, outspoken conservative)

Cass Sunstein, “OIRA Myths and Realities,” Harvard Law Review 126: 1838-1878 (). (Sunstein was the administrator of OIRA during the first Obama Administration.)  

Case Study
Also see materials at: http://www.thecre.com/ombpapers/centralrev.html

Optional
http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL32397.pdf

11.EXECUTIVE ORDERS AND DIRECT ACTION

Presidents and unilateral action. Executive orders. G.W. Bush's experiments with the “unitary executive.”

Required
Andrew Rudalevige, “Executive Orders -- and MisDirection,” Washington Post August 5 2014,  
http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/conference/detail/5471

Optional:
Harold Relyea, Presidential Directives: Background and Overview, CRS Report 98-611  
http://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/98-611.pdf
Case Study: The First Executive Orders in an Administration
Research this topic – read over several administrations.

Case Study: The Last Executive Orders in an Administration
Research this topic – read over several administrations.

Case Study: Presidential Memoranda

Optional

12. THE POWER RATCHET AND CONSTITUTIONAL STABILITY

Has the presidential power ratchet killed the Madisonian system? Do we need a new constitutional order, or a new way to understand the present one? Should we try to repair Madison's system? If we don’t, what will happen next? Where does it all lead?

Eric Posner and Adrian Vermuele, The Executive Unbound, selections.
Jack Goldsmith, Power and Constraint, selections.

Case Studies
The Torture Memos

Warrantless wire taps

Drones

Bush vs. Lincoln/Wilson/FDR

Charles Cameron
Princeton NJ
Thursday, September 11, 2014
Version 2.1