OVERVIEW

Politics constitute the (often conflictual) processes through which societies translate their values into policy outcomes. In the United States, the presidency and the bureaucracy fulfill important roles in this translation process. Although the President’s role is prescribed by the Constitution, the document, with notable exceptions such as the veto, is largely vague about the office’s functions and powers. This vagueness allows for changes the power presidents wield vis-à-vis Congress, with increasing presidential power as the general trend over the last century. In this class, we will study the electoral, personal, institutional and political aspects of the presidency, focusing on elections, the personality of presidents, resources available to the President, the rules under which presidents operate, the political considerations that influence presidential decisions, and presidential interaction with other branches of government.

We will also focus on the executive bureaucracy, a major policy-making arm of the U.S. government, over which the President and Congress compete for control. The bureaucracy receives no democratic authority to make policy from the Constitution. Therefore, it must receive authority from laws passed by Congress and signed by the President. One reason that the President and Congress give authority to the bureaucracy is due to policy complexity. Specifically, they lack, and the bureaucracy has, the technical expertise necessary to make complex policy decisions requiring scientific knowledge about difficult subjects, e.g., air and water pollution. In this context, we will study the process through which agencies make decisions, the methods through which the President, Congress, and interest groups try to shape bureaucratic decisions, the motivations of bureaucrats when doing their jobs, the process through which agencies implement policy, and the effect that the separation of powers system has on the quality of policy outcomes.

TEXTS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

The following books are required and are available in the bookstore:

*Bureaucracy and Democracy: Accountability and Performance* by William T. Gormley, Jr., and Steven J. Balla.
NOTE: There are required readings for this course that are not in these texts. These readings are available to you through the library’s electronic reserves service. To access these reserve readings, itemized below as “ER,” go to the library’s web site at http://www.library.kent.edu, select the link for “Electronic Reserves,” select “Electronic Reserves: Documents and Course Materials,” and type in the course number, “pol 30120.” I will provide you with the password for the course.

I also encourage you to consult The Elements of Style by William Strunk and E.B. White for advice on writing your papers and exams. You should deeply value writing as an essential craft that allows you communicate ideas and demonstrate knowledge. Some students possess greater knowledge and a greater store of creative ideas than they can communicate to me in their papers and exams because they have trouble writing effectively. Since your grade is based on what you reveal about your knowledge because (1) it is the only way I have of judging what you know on examinations and papers and because (2) your professional success after college will be greatly affected by your ability to communicate your expertise to colleagues and superiors, clear and effective writing is essential for this course. By following Strunk and White’s advice, you will improve your writing. Also see On Writing Well by William Zinsser.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To assess your comprehension of the course material, I have assigned three examinations and one paper (see the schedule below for dates). The first examination will be on Part I of the course, “Presidential Elections;” the second examination will be on Part II, “The Personal, Institutional, and Political Presidency,” the third examination will be heavily weighted on Part III, “The Executive Bureaucracy,” but will require you to incorporate knowledge about the subject matter from the entire course as well. I will provide review sheets for each of the exams.

You will turn the paper assignment for this course in twice. I will hand the paper assignment out separately from this syllabus. However, some guidelines concerning the assignment’s due dates are as follows:

(1) The first time you turn your paper in, I will provide constructive criticism which you must take into consideration when writing a second draft—if I give you 100% on your first draft, however, I will also give you 100% for you second draft even though you will not have to do it.

(2) When you turn the second draft in, you must also turn in the first draft and a memo detailing the changes that you made to the first draft, specifying how the changes you made responded to my comments and improved the paper.

(3) You will receive two grades on the assignment. The grade you receive on the first draft will count 5% toward your final grade; your grade on the second draft will count 20% toward your final grade.

Some words on attendance. Although you do not lose points for not attending, it is smart to attend because, if you don’t, you will probably not do well on the exams. Additionally, since participation is worth 5% of your grade, and since you cannot participate if you do not attend, it
is a good idea to attend. The bottom line is that if you miss a few classes it’s not going to hurt you as long as you get the notes from these classes. However, if you miss class regularly, you will sink yourself in this course.

Some words on note-taking. It is important to take comprehensive class notes. If you have questions about the quality of your notes, or on how to improve them, please bring them to my office hours, so that I can evaluate your notes, and if necessary, make suggestions on how to improve them. Hopefully, focusing on taking quality notes in this class will improve your performance in your other classes as well: it is hard to think of a skill more critical to your success in intermediate undergraduate coursework than effective note-taking.

Your final letter grade for this course will be weighted as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
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<td>Exam 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Draft of Paper</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Draft of Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**DETERMINATION OF GRADES**

A = 93-100%; A-=90-92; B+=87-89; B = 83-86%; B-=80-82; C+=77-79; C=73-76; C-=70-72; D+=67-69; D=63-67; D-=60-62; F=59 and below.

I reserve the right to curve grades to help you.

**DISABILITY POLICY**

University policy 3342-3-18 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through Student Disability Services (contact 330-672-3391 or visit [www.registrar.kent.edu/disability/default.htm](http://www.registrar.kent.edu/disability/default.htm) for more information on registration procedures).

**COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

We may have a guest speaker for one class; therefore, I reserve the right to modify this schedule to make room for this speaker.

Aug. 29 Introduction

Part I—Presidential Elections

Aug. 31 Voters
ER: Alvarez and Brehm, “Predispositions”
Pika and Maltese, Ch. 2 (Read this chapter for Part I—there is no need to have it read by any particular day)

Sept. 2  Voters
Polsby & Wildavsky, Ch. 1

Sept. 5  Labor Day—NO CLASS

Sept. 7, 9  Voting “Blocs”:
Polsby & Wildavsky, Ch. 2; ER: Mellow, “Voting Behavior: The 2004 Election and the Roots of Republican Success”; ER: Harris, “In Ohio, Building a Political Echo”; ER: Gerhart, “Ground War”;

Sept. 12  Rules of the Game
Polsby & Wildavsky, Ch. 3; ER: “Mindful of Florida's Clout, Conferees Drop Cuba Travel From Transportation Bill”; ER: Farhi, “Toledo Tube War: 14,273 Ads and Counting”

Sept. 14, 16  The Primaries
Polsby & Wildavsky, Ch. 4
Handouts

Sept. 19, 21, 23  The General Election
Polsby & Wildavsky, Ch. 5; ER: Farhi, “Parties Square Off In a Database Duel”; ER: Minn. GOP Asks Activists to Report on Neighbors’ Politics”; ER: Kurtz, “Spin the Battle”; ER: Balz, “Democrats Forming Parallel Campaign”

Sept. 26  Wrap up & Review

Sept. 28  EXAMINATION ON PART I

Part II—The Personal, Institutional, and Political Presidency

Sept. 30  Presidential Authority
Pika and Maltese, Ch. 1
ER: Article I & Article II of the Constitution of the United States

Oct. 3, 5, 7  Administrative Capacity of the Presidency

Oct. 10, 12  Presidential Personality and Implications for Governance
Pika and Maltese, Ch. 4; ER: Allen, “Management Style Shows Weaknesses”

Oct. 14, 17  The Presidential Agenda
Pika and Maltese, Ch. 8-9

Oct. 19 Communicating the President’s Message
Pika and Maltese, Ch. 3; ER: Milbank, “Bush Court’s Regional Media”; ER: Kurtz, “Administration Paid Commentator”

Oct. 21, 24 Congressional-Presidential Policy-Making
26 Pika and Maltese, Ch. 5; ER: Cooper, “From Congressional to Presidential Preeminence...”

Oct. 28, 31 The President and the Judicial Branch
Pika and Maltese, Ch. 7

Nov. 2 Wrap up & Review

Nov. 4 EXAMINATION ON PART II

Part III—The Executive Bureaucracy

Nov. 7 Overview: Structure and Function
Gormley and Balla, Ch. 1

Nov. 9 Bureaucrats
Gormley and Balla, Ch. 2; ER: Wilson, “People”

Nov. 11 Veteran’s Day—NO CLASS

Nov. 14, 16 Bureaucratic Policy-Making I
ER: Kerwin, “The Substance of Rules”; ER: “EPA Eases Clean Air Rule on Power Plants”

Nov. 18, 21 Congress and the Bureaucracy
Gormley and Balla, Ch. 3; ER: Aberbach, “The Committee Intelligence System”
The FIRST DRAFT OF THE PAPER IS DUE on Nov. 18.

Nov. 23, 25 Thanksgiving Break—NO CLASS

Nov. 28 The President and the Bureaucracy
Pika and Maltese, Ch. 6; Gormley and Balla, Ch. 3;

Nov. 30 Interest Groups and the Bureaucracy
Gormley and Balla, Ch. 4;

Dec. 2 Bureaucratic Autonomy
ER: Grunwald, “Engineers of Power”
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 5</td>
<td>Bureaucratic Policy-Making II: Policy Networks</td>
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<td>Gormley and Balla, Ch. 5; <strong>ER:</strong> Boo, “Forest Haven is Gone. . .”</td>
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<td>Dec. 7</td>
<td>Bureaucratic Performance</td>
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<td>Gormley and Balla, Ch. 6-7</td>
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<td>Dec. 9</td>
<td>Wrap up &amp; Review; The <strong>FINAL DRAFT OF THE PAPER IS DUE.</strong></td>
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<td>Dec. 16</td>
<td><strong>FINAL EXAMINATION;</strong> 10:15am-12:30pm</td>
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