Instructor
Dr. Richard M. Skinner

Contact Information
Phone Number: (571)-212-8117
Email Address: richardmcgrathskinner@gmail.com

Communication:
E-mail is usually the best way to reach me. Except under exceptional circumstances, students can expect a reply within 24 hours. I am also available to meet students personally by appointment.

Blackboard Site
A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site throughout the semester, as Blackboard will be the primary venue for outside classroom communications between the instructors and the students. Students can access the course site at https://blackboard.gwu.edu. Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or helpdesk.gwu.edu.

Academic Integrity
All members of the university community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. Students have a special responsibility to acquaint themselves with, and make use of, all proper procedures for doing research, writing papers, and taking exams. Members of the community will be presumed to be familiar with the proper academic procedures and will be held responsible for applying them. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with such procedures will be considered academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is defined as “cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels. The University Code of Academic Integrity can be found at http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html.

Support for Students with Disabilities
GW’s Disability Support Services (DSS) provides and coordinates accommodations and other services for students with a wide variety of disabilities, as well as those temporarily disabled by injury or illness.
Accommodations are available through DSS to facilitate academic access for students with disabilities. Please notify your instructor if you require accommodations. Additional information is available at www.gwu.edu/~dss.

In the Event of an Emergency or Crisis during Class
If we experience some an emergency during class time, we will try to stay at this location until we hear that we can move about safely. If we have to leave here, we will meet in the courtyard of the Hall of the States in order to account for everyone and to make certain that everyone is safe. Please refer to Campus Advisories for the latest information on the University’s operating status: http://www.campusadvisories.gwu.edu/.

Attendance Policy
Students are expected to attend all classes, having completed all the readings, and prepared to engage in discussion. Given that we will be meeting only once a week, and that class discussion is central to this course, I will consider more than two unexcused absences to be grounds for failure.

Course Evaluation
At the end of the semester, students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the course through GW’s online course evaluation system. It is very important that you take the time to complete an evaluation. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the semester by contacting any/all of the following:

Dr. Steven Billet
Director, Legislative Affairs Program
sbillet@gwu.edu | 202-994-1149

Dr. Jack Prostko
Associate Dean for Learning and Faculty Development
College of Professional Studies
jackp@gwu.edu | 202-994-3592

Suzanne Farrand
Director of Academic Administration, GSPM
sfarrand@gwu.edu | 202-994-9309
THE COURSE

Legislative Affairs Program Objectives
Upon completion of the Master’s degree in Legislative Affairs, students will:
1. Gain both theoretical and practical knowledge related to the U.S. Congress, general issues in the legislative arena, and how to effectively advance legislation;
2. Hone their oral and written communication skills in both theoretical and technical aspects of legislative affairs;
3. Be able to conduct cutting-edge research and engage in effective problem solving by learning critical thinking skills;
4. Learn how to work effectively with others, the value of collaborative work, and will understand ethical issues involved in the legislative arena.

Course Description and Overview

In this course, you will come to understand how the presidency functions within our system of separated powers. We will begin by examining the evolution of the presidency over American history, tracing it from the Constitution, through a long period of weakness in the 19th century, and into its rapid growth in power during the 20th and 21st century. The presidency is both a highly personal institution and an institutionalized personality; we will examine how personalities of presidents shape their administrations, and how the Executive Office of the Presidency provides institutional memory. We also then look at the presidency’s relationship with the public and political parties. The course will also examine the presidency’s relationship with other institutions of the federal government, including Congress and the bureaucracy; and how they work together (or do not) to make policy.

Course Learning Objectives
1. Students will understand the historic development of the presidency.
2. Students will understand the relationship between the presidency and the other branches of government.
3. Students will understand the relationship between the presidency and the American public.
4. Students will understand the relationship between the presidency and the rest of the executive branch.
5. Students will understand the role played by presidential personality.
6. Students will understand the institutional presidency.
7. Students will understand the relationship between the presidency and political parties.
8. Students will understand the role played by the president as world leader.

Course Requirements
1. Students will be required to write six short essays (1-3 pages, double-spaced) that will be constructed in the form of memoranda to President Barack Obama, a historical president, or a fictional president. Each essay will discuss that week’s readings, and explain their broader significance to the presidency. Students should feel free to make recommendations to their president. While students should summarize the readings, they should also offer their own
analysis of the issues covered in the assignments. Each essay will account for 10% of the student’s final grade. Students must submit their essays before that week’s classes. No late essays will be accepted. Students may not submit an essay for the same week when they lead class discussion.

2. Students will be responsible for leading discussion in one week’s class. Students should be prepared not only to review that week’s assignment, but also to express their own opinions of the reading, and to offer questions for further discussion by their classmates. (10% of the final grade).

3. Students will also be responsible for completing a final examination. This examination will be comprehensive, and will be predominately essay-based. (20% of the final grade).

4. Students will be responsible for attending all class meetings. If you must miss a class, please inform me at least 24 hours in advance. Acceptable excuses include family and medical emergencies. Students who accumulate more than two unexcused absences may fail the course. During class periods, students are expected to listen attentively and to discuss vigorously. (10% of the final grade).

**Evaluation and Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Learning Objective(s) Addressed</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short Essays</td>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Leadership</td>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade*</th>
<th>Grading Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Your work is outstanding and ready for submission in a professional environment. Your material, effort, research, and writing demonstrate superior work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Represents solid work with minor errors. Overall, excellent work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very good. Represents well-written material, research, and presentation, but needs some minor work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfactory work, but needs reworking and more effort. Note that although not a failing grade, at the graduate level, anything below a “B” is viewed as unacceptable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You’ve completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all of the requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Needs improvement in content and in effort. Shows some motivation and concern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. Shows minimal motivation and concern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72 (lowest grade to pass)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unacceptable performance, or inability to submit the assignment.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Please note that you may be penalized for late submission of assignment(s).

**Required Text and Learning Materials**


Tentative Course Calendar*  
*The instructor reserves the right to alter course content and/or adjust the pace to accommodate class progress. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar.

Week 1: January 14

Topic and Content Covered: Administrative Meeting

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students will understand the historic development of the presidency.

Reading Due Today: None

Assignment(s) Due Today: None

Week 2: January 21

Topic and Content Covered: Origins of the Presidency

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students will understand the historic development of the presidency.

Reading Due Today:
Federalist Papers 69-73

Assignment(s) Due Today: Short Essay, Discussion Leadership.

Week 3: January 28

Topic and Content Covered: Thinking About the Presidency

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students will understand the historic development of the presidency. Students will understand the institutional presidency. Students will understand the relationship
between the presidency and the rest of the executive branch. Students will understand the relationship between the presidency and the other branches of government.

Reading Due Today:
Edwards, ch. 1.


Assignment(s) Due Today: Short Essay, Discussion Leadership

**Week 4: February 4**

Topic and Content Covered: The Growth of the Presidency

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students will understand the historic development of the presidency.

Reading Due Today:
Andrew Rudalevige. “A New Imperial Presidency?” In Pfiffner and Davidson.


Marc Landy and Sidney Milkis, “The Presidency in History: Leading from the Eye of the Storm.” In Nelson.


Assignment(s) Due Today: Short Essay, Discussion Leadership.

**Week 5: February 11**

Topic and Content Covered: The Personal Presidency

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students will understand the role played by presidential personality.

Reading Due Today:
Gergen, Preface and chs. 1-4

Thomas Cronin and Michael Genovese, “‘If Men Were Angels...’ Presidential Leadership and Accountability.” In Pfiffner and Davidson.
Paul Quirk, “Presidential Competence.” In Nelson.


Assignment(s) Due Today: Short Essay, Discussion Leadership.

**Week 6: February 18**

Topic and Content Covered: The Personal Presidency, Continued

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students will understand the role played by presidential personality.

Reading Due Today:
Gergen, chs. 5-10 204 pages


Stephen J. Wayne. “Presidential Character and Judgment: President Obama’s Afghanistan and Health Care Decisions.” In Pfiffner and Davidson.

Assignment(s) Due Today: Short Essay, Discussion Leadership.

**Week 7: February 25**

Topic and Content Covered: Presidential Nominations

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students will understand the relationship between the presidency and political parties.

Reading Due Today:


Assignment(s) Due Today: Short Essay, Discussion Leadership.
**Week 8: March 4**
Topic and Content Covered: Presidential Elections

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students will understand the relationship between the presidency and political parties.

Reading Due Today:


Assignment(s) Due Today: Short Essay, Discussion Leadership.

**Week 9: March 18**
Topic and Content Covered: Presidents and Their Parties

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students will understand the relationship between the presidency and political parties.

Reading Due Today:
Brendan Doherty. “The President as Party-BUILDER.” In *The Rise of the President’s Permanent Campaign*.


Assignment(s) Due Today: Short Essay, Discussion Leadership
**Week 10: March 25**

Topic and Content Covered: Presidents as Legislators

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students will understand the relationship between the presidency and the other branches of government.

Reading Due Today:

Edwards, chs. 4-6.


Sarah A. Binder. “The Disappearing Political Center.” In Pfiffner and Davidson.

Assignment(s) Due Today:

**Week 11: April 1**

Topic and Content Covered: Presidents and Public Opinion

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students will understand the relationship between the presidency and the American public.

Reading Due Today:

Edwards, chs. 2-3.


Assignment(s) Due Today: Short Essay, Discussion Leadership.

**Week 12: April 8**

Topic and Content Covered: The Presidency and the Executive Branch

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students will understand the relationship between the presidency and the rest of the executive branch.

Reading Due Today:

Andrew Rudalveige, “The President and the Cabinet.”


Assignment(s) Due Today: Short Essay, Discussion Leadership.

**Week 13: April 15**

Topic and Content Covered: The Presidential Branch

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students will understand the institutional presidency.

Reading Due Today:


Assignment(s) Due Today: Short Essay, Discussion Leadership
Week 14: April 22

Topic and Content Covered: The Presidency and Foreign Policy

Learning Objective(s) Addressed: Students will understand the role played by the president as world leader.

Reading Due Today:

Louis Fisher. “President Obama’s War in Libya.” In Pfiffer and Davidson.


Richard Pious. “Prerogative Power and the War on Terrorism.” In Pfiffner and Davidson.

Assignment(s) Due Today: Short Essay, Discussion Leadership.

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