

The Graduate School
of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Legislative Affairs
The American Presidency

LGAF 6219.LH
Legislative Affairs
3 Credits
Spring 2015

Thursday, 6 – 8:00pm
Hall of States

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor

Matthew Dallek, Ph.D.

Contact Information

Mdallek@gwu.edu

202-302-1794

Communication

The best way to reach me is email. You can also make an appointment to meet with me before or after class or during office hours.

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 at the basement of the Marvin Center 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

Attendance is mandatory for this class. Any individual unable attend class should email me prior to the beginning of that class. Repeated absences will be considered in your final grade.

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

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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

This course will teach you about how the presidency functions within our system of government, and it will put you in a series of simulated environments so you can learn the skills needed to serve as a senior presidential aide and understand how to think politically about the major challenges facing any president and the executive branch. The course will also examine the president's relationship with Congress, various bureaucracies, the media, and other institutions, and it will explore how presidents and their aides do (and do not) use the tools at their disposal to make democracy work.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Students will understand the historic development of the presidency and how the president interacts with and seeks to influence the other branches of government.
3. Students will understand the relationship between the presidency and the American public, as well as the checks imposed on the president under our modern political system.
4. Students will learn about how the White House seeks to impose its will on the executive branch bureaucracy.
5. Students will gain a perspective on the role of personality in the conduct of the presidency.
6. At the end of the course, students should be better prepared to work at a senior level in any administration, and to engage with the executive branch as a staff member on Capitol Hill.
8. Students will understand the role played by the president as commander-in-chief and global leader.

Course Requirements

1. Students will be required to write a series of short applied assignments including a presidential speech, strategy memo, press release, veto message to Congress, tweets and Facebook posts, and a script for a campaign ad. Students must submit their essays before that week's classes. (80% of final grade)
2. Students will be required to participate in class discussion on a weekly basis. Students should come to class having done all of the readings and prepared to engage with the topics under discussion. All class meetings are required. If you need to miss a class, please email me with as much advance warning as possible. Acceptable excuses include family and medical emergencies. Students who accumulate more than two unexcused absences may fail the course. (20% of the final grade)

Evaluation and Grading
Written Assignments: 80%
Attendance and Participation: 20%

Evaluation and Grading

Simulations:

Simulation I:

July 2016: Jeb Bush and Hillary Clinton have secured their party's presidential nominations. You will be asked to write a press release in class based on one of two scenarios provided to you in class.

Simulation II:

President Obama has just announced that the United States has used a drone strike to kill an American citizen, who was an alleged terrorist fighting with ISIS on the battlefield in Iraq. The strike, however, has also killed some civilians including children, and footage of the attack has gone viral on Youtube, causing outrage across the United States. The ACLU and Sen. Rand Paul are criticizing the president for using drones to kill an American, while some conservative Republicans are faulting him for not using drones and other military assets more aggressively to target terrorists in Iraq and Syria, as the wars there continue to spin out of control.

Option A: Write a press release (half-page), a Facebook announcement about a rally being held in support of the White House, and at least two Tweets that seek to mollify the critics and defend the president's action as consistent with American values and national security principles.

Option B: Write a press release (half-page), a Facebook announcement about a rally in support of your cause, and at least two Tweets that offer not just a critique (from either the ACLU or the GOP's vantage point) of the president's actions but also an alternative path that you argue is more consistent with national values and interests. Your statements should offer a serious effort to win support from reasonable people on all sides of the issue without sacrificing the support of your core supporters.

Other Written and Oral Assignments

In addition to these simulations, you must write: 1) a script for a 30-second campaign ad for a candidate who has or is likely to announce his or her decision to run for the presidency in 2016; 2) a two-page strategy memo on how a president should launch a campaign in defense of a controversial policy of your choosing; and 3) a presidential veto message on a bill that could pass Congress in 2015; and 4) deliver on the final day of class an in-class speech for a president of your choosing on an issue about which you're passionate. The speech should be given during the president's first year in office in 2017.

The grading breakdown and due dates are as follows:

Class Participation: 20%
Script for Campaign Ad: 10% (Jan. 29)
Simulation I: 10% (Feb. 5)

Strategy Memo: 20% (Feb. 19)
Veto Message: 15% (Feb. 26)
Simulation II: 20% (March 26)
In-Class Speech: 5% (April 23)

Assignments should be double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font. All assignments are due before the start of class (please email them to me).

Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

Grade	Grading Standard
A 94-100	Your work is outstanding and ready for submission in a professional environment. Your material, effort, research, and writing demonstrate superior work.
A- 90-93	Represents solid work with minor errors. Overall, excellent work.
B+ 87-89	Very good. Represents well-written material, research, and presentation, but needs some minor work.
B 83-86	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.
B- 80-82	You've completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all of the requirements.
C+ 77-79	Needs improvement in content and in effort. Shows some motivation and concern.
C 73-76	Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. Shows minimal motivation and concern.
C- 70-72 (lowest grade to pass)	Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.
F Below 70	Unacceptable performance or inability to submit the assignment.

Required Text and Learning Materials

Michael Allen, Blinking Red

All other course readings and videos can be found under Electronic Reserves on the Course Blackboard page.

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.

Introduction

Jan. 15

Week 1

Topic and Content Covered:

Introductions
Review of course
President Obama's approach to the White House
Dinners with President Obama
Guest Speaker: Robert Dallek

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

Discussing how presidents approach the job
Learning how history shapes the conduct of the presidency

Reading Due Today: None

Assignment(s) Due Today: None

Part I: Presidential Campaigns and Elections

Launching Your Campaign

Jan. 22

Week 2

Topic and Content Covered:

Early Steps in Organizing a Viable Presidential Campaign
Assembling Your Campaign Team
Raising Money
Laying a Ground Operation
Positioning the candidate in the primaries

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

Understand how to mount a legitimate campaign for president

Reading Due Today:

David Plouffe, *The Audacity to Win*, Intro., Chapter 1

Debating Campaign Strategies

Jan. 29

Week 3

Topic and Content Covered:

Framing, Message, and Strategy

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

Enrich your understanding of how to build a narrative for a presidential candidate

Identify the core message of the campaign and the rationale for the candidate

Reading Due Today:

Howard Dean, You Have the Power, Intro.

Marco Rubio, Speech

LBJ Daisy Ad

Reagan Bear in the Woods

Bush Willie Horton

Kerry Wind-Surfing (2004)

Assignment Due:

Script for Campaign Ad

Victory and Defeat

Feb. 5

Week 4

Topic and Content Covered:

Winning and Losing the White House

What it takes to prevail

Why Candidates Lose

Message vs. Candidate vs. Fundamentals vs. Advisors

Managing Campaign Crises

Assignment Due (in Class): Simulation I involving a Bush and Clinton presidential match-up

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

Deepen your understanding of why candidates win and lose presidential primaries and general elections.

Learn Crisis Management and communication during a presidential campaign

Readings:

Richard Ben Cramer, *What It Takes*

Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel and John Zaller. 2008. "The Invisible Primary in Presidential Nominations, 1980-2004." In William G. Mayer, ed. *The Making of the Presidential Candidates 2008*. Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham, MD.

Lara Brown. "The Presidency and the Nominating Process: Aspirants, Parties and Selections." In Nelson.

Part II The Politics of Presidential Agendas

Presidential Mandates? Setting and implementing presidential agendas

Feb. 12

Week 5

Topic and Content Covered:

Legislative and Political Opportunity in the Oval Office

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

Understand the idea of White House agenda-setting
Familiarize yourself with How to get things done in the White House
Political Strategies to implement a president's policy agenda
Understand how the Bush White House Implemented Intelligence Reform

Reading Due Today:

Michael Allen, *Blinking Red*

Possible Guest Visit from Michael Allen, former Senior White House aide on intelligence and homeland security for President George W. Bush; former Staff Director for House Select Committee on Intelligence

Making Democracy Work from the White House

Feb. 19

Week 6

Topic and Content Covered:

Legislative Compromises
The Art of Making Democracy Work from the White House

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

Understanding and begin assessing issues and circumstances using a 360 approach

The need to See and Speak 360°, appealing to the legitimate motivations of both sides of ideological divide in order advance your proposals.

Bill Clinton Welfare Reform
George W. Bush No Child Left Behind
Barack Obama Expiration of Bush Tax Cuts

Readings

James Fallows. "Obama, Explained." The Atlantic. March 2012.

Stephen J. Wayne. "Presidential Character and Judgment: President Obama's Afghanistan and Health Care Decisions." In Pfiffner and Davidson.

James P. Pfiffner. "Decision Making in the Obama White House." In Pfiffner and Davidson.

Assignment Due Today:

Strategy Memo

Managing relations with Congress, the Media, and Outside Groups

Feb. 26

(Possible Visit with White House reporter for the Washington Post and tour of the news room)

Week 7

Topic and Content Covered:

Learning about the constraints on Executive Power
Understand how the Executive seeks to overcome the limits imposed on it—the role of "checks and balances" in contemporary politics

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

Understanding the constraints on the White House in order to overcome them.

Reading Due Today:

Obama's "Pen and Phone" SOTU

Bill Clinton "End of Big Government"

George W. Bush—Winning Support for the War in Iraq

Assignment Due:

Veto Message

Congressional Oversight of the Executive Branch

March 5

Week 8

Topic and Content Covered:

The "Torture Report" and Its Critics
Benghazi Hearings

Readings

Barbara Sinclair. "The President and the Congressional Party Leadership in a Hyperpartisan Era." 2013.

Uses (and misuses) of "The Bully Pulpit"

March 12

Week 9

Topic and Content Covered

Presidential Communication Challenges

Can a president still deliver a great speech? Do presidential speeches matter? How so?

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

Understand the power of the bully pulpit, as well as its limits and pitfalls.

Reading Due Today:

Bill Clinton's Oklahoma City Speech

George W. Bush's Unveiling of Clinton's portrait

President Bush, Sept. 20, 2001, Joint-Session Address

Robert Schlesinger, Jr., White House Ghosts, Ch. 12, "The Troika"

March 19—Spring Break, No Class

Part III Commander in Chief

Foreign Policy Crisis-Management

March 26

Week 10

Topic and Content Covered:

Crisis Management from the White House

Making tough decisions on foreign policy

Why Obama decided not to use force in Syria

Why he decided to use force in Lebanon and against ISIS

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

How Presidents use the diplomatic and military tools to lead the world and forge a foreign policy

Understanding the politics of a White House National Security Strategy

The competing pressures on the president in making foreign policy

Reading Due Today:
Leon Panetta, Intro
Robert Gates, Intro.
Hillary Clinton, Intro, Ch. 1

Assignment Due Today:
Simulation II

The National Security Council: Implementing Foreign Policy
April 2
Week 11

Assignment(s) Due Today:

Presidential Leadership in Wartime
April 9
Week 12

Topic and Content Covered:

Discussion of how presidents lead the country and the military in wartime
Interactions with Congress and congressional oversight
War Powers Resolution
Team-Making Decision Exercise

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:
To understand how presidents manage the pressures of wartime Washington

Readings:
Peter Baker, Days of Fire: Bush and Cheney in the White House, Chs. 7, 17

Rogue Regimes and Presidential Power
April 16
Week 13
Team Decision-Making Exercise – Devising a Strategy for a Rogue Regime

Topic and Content Covered:

Team Decision-Making Exercise Winning Public Support for your strategy
Team Decision-Making Exercise Accepting responsibility for your actions

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

Explained by the above exercise

Reading Due Today: None

Assignment(s) Due Today: None

Wrapping Up— in-Class Presidential Speech

April 23

Week 14

In-Class Speech

Deliver a presidential speech and receive feedback from classmates

Topic and Content Covered:

Final oral presentation by entire class

Course evaluation

Learning Objective(s) Addressed:

Synthesize course elements into final oral presentation

Reading Due Today: None

Assignment(s) Due Today: Final written presentation due April 23, 2014

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Unless explicitly allowed by the instructor, course materials, class discussions, and examinations are created for and expected to be used by class participants only. The recording and rebroadcasting of such material, by any means, is forbidden.