

Syllabus, The Presidency, PSC 8150-001 (graduate), Fall 2006

028 Bartley, 7:30–9:30 PM, Tuesdays

Prof. David Barrett, office: 262 St. Augustine Center, (610) 519-4128

You are always welcome to be in touch. My email address is: david.barrett@villanova.edu Office hours: 1:30--2:30 Mondays and 5:00--6:00 Tuesdays, or by appointment, or just stop by; unless I'm unusually busy, I'll talk to you then. I'm in my office 5-6 days per week, typically from late morning to early evening, sometimes late at night!

The course will include, most of all, discussions of readings, but also brief lectures by the professor and presentations by students. Plan to be at all class meetings. Absences, except in the case of emergencies, will result in a lower grade.

Required readings: I cannot stress too much the importance of careful reading! We will read: (1) Michael Nelson (ed.), The Evolving Presidency, 2nd ed.; (2) James Pfiffner, The Character Factor; (3) Nelson Polsby and Aaron Wildavsky, Presidential Elections, 11th ed.; (4) David M. Barrett, Uncertain Warriors: Lyndon Johnson and His Vietnam Advisers; (5) Richard Reeves, President Kennedy: Profile of Power; (6) Jeffrey Tulis, The Rhetorical Presidency. We will also read assigned articles in the Washington Post (at www.washingtonpost.com). Access to its website is free, but a brief registration is required.

Requirements and grading: A 25-page **research paper** will count for 40% of your course grade. I will distribute a separate memo on this and presentations (see below) next week. **Class participation** counts for 25% of your grade; if you wish to earn an "A" in this category, plan on joining discussions, raising questions, etc. at every meeting. A 10-minute **presentation** to the class about your research (or any topic relevant to the course) will count for 10% of the grade. Finally, I give weekly **quizzes** which will count for 25% of your course grade. [Note: missed quizzes are graded F, unless made up.] These will cover readings assigned for each class. In lieu of the quizzes, there is no final examination.

Schedule of readings:

August 29--First class. R(eadings): The Constitution.

September 5--Weekly quizzes begin. R: Tulis, ch. 1-3; Nelson, ch. 1 (to the middle of p. 6 only), 2-3. Choose dates for presentations.

12--R: Tulis, ch. 4-6 (only through the middle of p. 161); Nelson, ch. 5, 6.

19--R: Pfiffner, Preface (only through middle of p. xiii), ch. 1-4 ; Nelson, ch. 13, 14, 17.

26 --R: Pfiffner, ch. 5-7; Polsby, ch. 1; Nelson, ch. 19.

October 3--R: Polsby ch. 2-4; Nelson, ch. 25, 27.

(Fall Break)

17-- R: Polsby, ch. 5-6; Reeves, read untitled 1-page piece that begins, "John F. Kennedy's favorite book...", plus Introduction, and ch. 1-4.

24-- R: Reeves, ch. 5-18; Nelson, ch. 32, 36.

31-- R: Reeves, ch. 19-34; Nelson, ch. 38.

November 7--R: Reeves, ch. 35-46; Nelson, ch. 41.

14-- R: Reeves, ch. 47-56; Nelson, ch. 42.

21-- R: Barrett, Preface (only to the middle of p. x), ch. 1-2; Nelson, ch. 46.

28 -- R: Barrett, 3-4; Nelson, ch. 47.

December 5-- R: Barrett, ch. 5 and Afterword; Nelson, ch. 50.

Grade Appendix

95-100	A	78-80	C+	Below 70	F
90-94	A-	75-77	C		
88-89	B+	73-74	C-		
84-87	B	72	D+		
81-83	B-	70-71	D		

To: Students in graduate seminar, "The Presidency"

From: Prof. Barrett Re: Research paper and presentation

(1) There are innumerable possible topics for your research paper, considering the long history and importance of the presidency, not to mention the Congress and other political institutions and officeholders (in the U. S. and various countries) with which a president must deal. Choose a topic that you would enjoy researching and writing about and for which you can find sufficient sources in our library or elsewhere. I am happy to consult with you about potential topics. I will be lecturing about the presidency and theories which claim to explain presidential behavior, change, success, and failure. These plus our readings will give you a context in which to think about your paper topic.

After you have chosen your topic, researched it, and thought about it carefully, please give me a one-page abstract summarizing it.

I expect you to put whatever your topic is into a proper context of history. Remember, though, that this is a political science course, not a history course. Empirical political science attempts to explain a political phenomenon, in part by looking at the pattern or context in which that phenomenon exists. Theories are derived from those patterns or contexts to explain why particular events or phenomena occur. (For example, the Vietnam War occurred in a certain context of Vietnamese history, American history, world history, and—importantly—presidential history. A paper attempting to explain presidential behavior in relation to that war would draw on the historical and theoretical literature dealing with those topics.) I expect you to explain why something happens or happened the way that it did. Since political science sometimes also attempts to make predictions about the future, based on past phenomena, you may (as an option) wish to make predictions about the future based on what the "past" and theories derived from that past teach us.

The paper should use one of the standard citation formats used in the academic world. I assume you are familiar with these; if not, use articles in academic journals as your model. (As a model, you might look at Political Science Quarterly, which is in our library.) The paper should be journal article length (e.g., about 25 pages). Your sources should be diverse! Do not rely solely on books, or magazines, or government documents, or journal articles, but rather a combination of types of sources. *The first thing I look at when reading a paper is its bibliography*; take this as a hint regarding the importance I place on students finding and using good and diverse sources. I particularly value and require the usage of "primary sources" and academic journal articles, which I will discuss with you today.

It can almost go without saying that the paper should be well-written, clean, and clearly formatted, without spelling or other errors. Clarity in writing is very important to me.

You may wish to look through bibliographies of the books we are reading, or wander past the shelves of books in the library on presidents, the presidency, American politics and government, etc. to help you choose a topic. By the time you turn in your abstract, you should have done lots of reading on your topic!

Due dates: abstract: our October 17 class; paper: Monday, December 11, 6:00 p.m, at my office or under my office door. You, of course, may turn in your paper sooner.

(2) Your presentation can be on any substantive topic relating to the presidency. It should be about 10 minutes long. You may wish to tell us something about an aspect of your research findings in preparation for the paper. You do not need to turn in any materials to me for the presentation. I will grade you on the presentation, itself. Do not read to us or read at us; do not speak in a monotone; talk to us and look at us. As long as the presentation is intelligent, informative, interesting, and delivered in a clear fashion, you will earn a good grade.

Please inform me of your topic at least a week before your presentation.