Political Science 100A: The American Presidency

Professor: Matt Childers
M, W, F: 3:00-3:50pm Robinson Building Complex Auditorium
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 12:00-2:00pm, SSB 448
mchilders@ucsd.edu

TAs:

- Rumman Chowdhury
  - ruchowdhury@ucsd.edu
  - Office Hours: Mondays, 11:30am-1:30pm, Gilder Lounge above Home Plate Sports Cafe
- Saul Cunow
  - scunow@ucsd.edu
  - Office Hours: 12-2pm in SSB 320

This course examines the President's role in American politics. Topics will include nomination and election politics, the president's relations with Congress and party leadership, presidential control of the bureaucracy, a president's international political role, and presidential psychology.

The first half of the course examines the president's role in government. Even though the president's authority in the federal government has grown since the founders wrote the Constitution, the president cannot enact legislation on his or her own. How do they work with Congress and what are their barriers to getting everything they want? How do presidents manage the federal bureaucracy and what makes them successful or unsuccessful in doing so?

The second part of the course explores how the White House interacts with the media, how presidents are evaluated, and the presidential election process.

Class will be held in the Hojel Hall of the Americas Auditorium on May 2, 2012. UCSD is hosting an event in the RBC Auditorium that day.

Required Texts:

- Barber, James David. 2009. *The Presidential Character.* New York: Pearson Longman. **(Barber)**
  - *Any edition will be fine, so please feel free to purchase other editions if they are cheaper*
- Nelson, Michael. 2010. *The Presidency and the Political System.* Washington, DC: CQ Press. **(Nelson)**
  - *I prefer that you use this edition, but previous editions are also OK as long as they have the assigned chapters.*
- Obama, Barack. 2004. *Dreams From My Father.* New York: Three Rivers Press. **(Obama)**

- Read Parts I & II

As is the case at every university, the bookstore's prices can produce sticker shock. Bookfinder.com and Addall.com are great sites to get the books for much less (their search results always include Amazon and half.com).

Readings from other sources will be available via e-reserves (reserves.ucsd.edu) by the week they are assigned. If they are not, please let me know ASAP.

Be sure to read *Dreams from My Father* Parts I & II. It is central to the final paper assignment. I assigned two chapters to read each week as a suggestion. You may read it at your own pace, but make sure to finish it early enough to prepare for the final paper (see below). From time to time, we will discuss the book in class.

Course Grading

Your grade for the course will be based on a midterm (50%) and a final paper (50%). The midterm will be an in-class exam and will require you to write an essay applying course concepts discussed until that point. The final paper will ask you to characterize President Obama according to Barber's model of presidential character (discussed below).

- In class midterm: 50%, Monday May 7th. **BRING A BLUE BOOK!!!!**
- Final paper: 50%

Final Paper

In this paper you will classify President Obama according to the coding scheme in Barber's *Presidential Character*. Is Obama an active-negative, a passive-negative, a passive-positive, or an active-positive president? Explain why based on what you learned from his book, *Dreams from My Father* and other readings from the course. **You must draw from Obama's book.**

Is Barber's model a useful one to predict presidential performance? Explain why or why not based on the president's record thus far. Consider the many institutional and strategic dilemmas that affect a president's performance in critiquing Barber's typology. Draw from course readings support your analysis.

The paper should be between 8-10 pages, double-spaced, 12-pt. font, with one-inch margins. Points will be deducted for deviating from these standards. Use either Chicago-style parenthetical citations or footnotes to cite your sources. STAPLE THE PAPER.

The paper is due by Wednesday, June 13th between 3-5:50pm in the classroom AND on turnitin.com. You must turn in a hard copy. E-mailed assignments will not be accepted under any circumstances. Those that are submitted after 5:50pm on the 13th will be docked 5% from the paper grade. This is a hard deadline. If you turn it in at 5:51pm, your paper is late and will have 5% docked from its score. Papers turned in Thursday will be docked 10%, those turned in Friday 20%. Papers turned in Saturday

will be docked 30%, Sunday 40%, and Monday 50%. Papers turned in after Monday the 18th will receive a zero.

I will create a link to submit the paper to turnitin.com on the course site at ted.ucsd.edu.

I take academic integrity seriously and any signs of plagiarism will result in a zero the assignment. I will also report you to the school administration. Any idea or statement that is not your own should be completely cited. No exceptions.

Buckley Waiver

If you would like to be able to pick up your final paper (and your midterm if you have not yet picked it up) in the accessible location where the Political Science Department usually leaves graded exams and papers after a quarter ends, please copy and paste this text to the back of your final paper. Fill it out and sign it. Otherwise, you will have to arrange a time with the instructor to pick up your materials.

"

I hereby authorize the UCSD Political Science Department to return all my graded papers and exams (including the final) for **POLI 100A, Spring Quarter 2012** by placing them in a location accessible to all students in the course (on 3rd floor of Social Sciences Building). I understand that the return of my examination as described above may result in disclosure of personally identifiable information, that is not public information as defined in UCSD PPM 160-2, and I hereby consent to the disclosure of such information.

Student ID#:

_____

Print Name:

_____

Signature:

_____

"

Extra Credit

If you submit your final paper by the last class on Friday, June 8th, you will get 3% extra credit for the course. It must be submitted IN CLASS and you must turn in a hard copy. WE WILL NOT ACCEPT E-MAILED ASSIGNMENTS. No exceptions.

A Note on E-mail

Please only use email for quick questions. We appreciate anyone who wants to clarify something from lectures or the readings, but if the question requires a discussion, please see one of us in office hours. There are a lot of people in the class and we will not be able to answer everyone quickly if email is used for online office hours.

Weekly Readings

You are expected to complete the readings in full each week and to keep up with current events in the news.

Week 1: Constitutional Presidency, Modern Presidency, Political Parties

- Tulis, Nelson Ch. 1 "Two Constitutional Presidencies"
- Federalist 69, 70, 73
    - http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/poldocs/fed-papers.pdf
- Marshall, William P. 2008. "Eleven Reasons Why Presidential Power Inevitably Expands and Why It Matters." *Boston University Law Review* 88(2): 505-522.
- Mllikis, "The Presidency and Political Parties", Nelson Ch. 11
- Obama, Chs. 1-2

Week 2: Presidential Psychology

- Barber
    - Ch.1: Presidential Character and How to Foresee It
    - Ch. 3: Active-Negative Presidents
    - Ch. 5: Passive Negative Presidents
    - Ch. 6: Passive-Positive Presidents
    - Ch. 8: Harry S. Truman and Active-Positive Combat
- Nelson, Michael. "Presidential Psychology", Nelson, Ch. 5
- Wayne, Stephen J. 2011. "Presidential Character and Judgment: Obama's Afghanistan and Health Care Decisions." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41(2): 291-306.

Week 3: Congress

- Nelson Ch. 14, "The President and Congress"
- Cameron, Charles. 2009. "The Presidential Veto." In *The Oxford Handbook of the American Presidency,* eds. William G. Howell and George C. Edwards. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 362-382.
- Groseclose, Tim and Nolan McCarty. 2001. "The Politics of Blame: Bargaining Before An Audience." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(1): 100-119.
- Kernell, Samuel. 1991. "Facing an Opposition Congress: The President's Strategic Circumstances." In *The Politics of Divided Government,* eds. Gary W. Cox and Samuel Kernell. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 87-112.
- Obama Chs. 3-4

Week 4: Controlling the Bureaucracy; Interest Groups

- Growth and Management of the Bureaucracy
    - Burke "Institutional Presidency", Nelson Ch. 12
    - Lewis and Moe "The Presidency and Bureaucracy: Levers of Presidential Control", Nelson Ch. 13
    - Heclo, Hugh. 1977. "Political Executives and the Washington Bureaucracy." *Political Science Quarterly* 92(3): 395-424.
- Quirk, "Presidential Competence" Nelson Ch. 4
- Obama Chs. 5-6

Week 5: Presidential Power

- **Wed. May 2nd Class is held in the Hojel Hall of the Americas Auditorium**
- Neustadt: Chs 2-5
- Kernell, Going Public Chs. 1, 2, 5
- Edwards, Strategic President Ch. 3
- Obama Chs. 7-8

Week 6: Midterm, Media

- **Midterm, Monday May 7th in class. BRING A BLUE BOOK!!!!!!**
- Nelson, Ch. 8: The Presidential Spectacle
- Nelson, Ch. 9: The Presidency and the Press
- Baum and Kernell: The End of the Golden Age
- Obama Chs. 9-10

Week 7: Evaluating Presidents

- Edwards III, George C., William Mitchell, and Reed Welch. 1995. "Explaining Presidential Approval: The Significance of Issue Salience." *American Journal of Political Science* 39(1): 108-134.
- JACOBSON, GARY C. 2011. "Legislative Success and Political Failure: The Public's Reaction to Barack Obama's Early Presidency." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41(2): 220-243.
- Jacobson, Gary C. 2010. "Partisan Polarization in Presidential Support: The Electoral Connection." *Congress & the Presidency: A Journal of Capital Studies* Spring 2003(30): 1–36.
- Obama Chs. 11-12

Week 8: Foreign Policy

- Polsky, "Presidency at War" Nelson Ch. 17
- Canes-Wrone, Howell, "Toward a Broader Understanding of the Presidency"
- PIOUS, RICHARD M. 2011. "Prerogative Power in the Obama Administration: Continuity and Change in the War on Terrorism." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41(2): 263-290.
- Obama Chs. 13-14

Week 9: Presidential Elections

- **Monday No Class (Memorial Day)**
- Popkin, *Reasoning Voter*
    - Chs. 3-5
- Edwards, "The Faulty Premises of the Electoral College," Nelson Ch. 7

Week 10: Presidential Primaries

- Nelson Chs. 6
    - Pious, "The Presidency and the Nominating Process: Politics and Power"
- Popkin, Chs 6, 8

Final Paper Due: Wednesday June 13, 2012 at 6pm.