

POL336 – The U.S. Executive (3 credit hours)  
Fall 2007 – The University Center  
Dr. Mitzi Mahoney

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Office Hours for Huntsville:: TTh 8:00-11:00am, 1:50-2:30, by appointment  
Office Hours for The University Center: Tuesday 5:00pm-6:00pm, by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course explores the nature of the U.S. executive branch. We employ a number of approaches to analyze the evolving role of the president in the U.S. political system including historical, philosophical, legal/constitutional, institutional, behavioral, and rational approaches. In our class discussions and in the research paper, we will analyze presidencies by assessing the political resources available to presidents in meeting the demands of the office. The course is divided into the following sections. First, we will evaluate the philosophical, historical, and legal/constitutional setting in which the institution of the presidency emerged. Second, we will assess presidents' relationships with the public, interest groups, political parties, and the media. Third, we analyze the presidents' relations with his staff in the White House and executive branch agencies, with Congress, with the Judiciary, and with other governments (local and state governments, other countries, and international organizations). Throughout the semester we will analyze President Bush's performance.

**COURSE READINGS:**

Waterman, Richard. THE CHANGING AMERICAN PRESIDENCY: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON PRESIDENTIAL POWER, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. To order, go to: [www.atomicdog.com/printout/1814164607080](http://www.atomicdog.com/printout/1814164607080).

Campbell, Colin, Bert Rockman, and Andrew Rudalevige. THE GEORGE W. BUSH LEGACY. CQ Press, 2007.

Additional Readings: Readings will be posted on Blackboard.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

Exams: Exams consist of essay questions covering lectures, class discussions, and reading material. The exams are take home exams. Throughout the semester I will post exam questions with due dates. Students must write 6 take home exam questions for the semester. You will have some choice about which questions to answer but students must submit questions within a designated time frame.

Presidential Challenges Research Project: This research project requires students to explore the nature of the challenges facing an individual president and his ability to meet those challenges. Each student will choose a president and a policy domain, either domestic policy or foreign/military policy, to analyze. The project is divided into two sections.

The first part of the project, Challenges Presented, entails describing the challenges a particular president encounters during his term of office. Students will write a paper of about 5-7 pages describing the challenges their president encountered during his term/s of office in either domestic or foreign/military policy. This part of the project is due October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The second section of the project, Meeting the Challenges, entails an analysis of how the president met the challenges. Using Waterman's conceptualizations of presidential resources, students will analyze the extent to which the president possessed the political resources to meet the challenges. Students will report their analyses in a paper of about 15 pages. It will be due November 27th.

#### **COURSE EVALUATION:**

Exam Questions:		
Six questions, 10% each	60%	
Research Project:		
Presidential Challenges	10%	
Meeting the Challenges	30%	

#### **CLASSROOM POLICIES:**

Late Assignments: Assignments submitted after the due date will be penalized 10 points for every 24 hours late.

Academic Honesty Policy: Students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences. Academic dishonesty includes cheating on exams or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. **Any student found cheating on exams or plagiarizing another's work will be given an F for the course.**

University policies regarding Academic Honesty, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Religious Holidays, Instructor Evaluation, and the Classroom Rules of Conduct will be observed. These policies can be found [www.shsu.edu/syllabus/](http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/) and at [www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html](http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html).

