



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

McCourt School of Public Policy

The Press & the Presidency - 30885 - PPOL 600 – 01

Fall 2016

Instructor: Robert Traynham

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Office Hours: By Appointment and 30 minutes before class and 30 minutes after class.

Class Location: Walsh, Room 397

Class Time: Tuesday's 6:30 until 9 pm

Course Description:

This is a course that analyzes the intersection of the United States Presidency and the national press corps that covers the presidency. In short, it will dissect the facts and misconceptions of these institutions that rely on each other to inform the public and America's allies and foes around the world.

The presidency and the press are two unique and peculiar institutions. They are admired and respected, but also criticized and scrutinized by each other and the general public.

The national press corps that covers the presidency typically views the president with suspicion and the president typically views the press that covers him with the same amount of frustration.

This course studies, through close examination of "traditional media" and "new media" the historical and contemporary relationships between presidential communication, audiences, and the Executive Office Of The President. Students who are in the field of public policy will benefit greatly from this class as this course underscores that policymakers, whether elected or unelected, operate in a governmental system where policy impacts nearly every element of their daily activity.

This course will provide students with both the theory and real-world examples they need to understand and evaluate the impact of rhetoric on policymaking and the role of the press in this relationship.

Readings will include selections from the public policy and communications literatures.

While the Executive Branch of our government coexists with the legislative and judicial branches, it is no secret that the President dominates and oftentimes sways the news cycles with every movement and statement.

This course will analyze the communicative aspects of the American presidency and the communications styles of some American presidents that are classified as “great communicators”. We will also acquaint ourselves with the communication instruments used by presidents, the rhetoric that define the presidency, and we will apply the skills of rhetorical criticism.

Attendance Policy: With the exception of an illness, religious or University holiday, or unforeseen emergency, you are expected to attend every class. If you miss a class, you are expected to get a readout of the class discussion from one of your colleagues in class.

Late Assignment Policy: Assignments are due *by the due date and time provided*. Late assignments will be penalized **5%** for every day they are overdue. This includes weekends.

Disability: If you believe you have a disability, you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335 (202-687-8354). The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ASA) and University policies. For more information, go to <http://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/disability/>.

Important Academic Policies and Academic Integrity: McCourt School students are expected to uphold the academic policies set forth by Georgetown University and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Students should therefore familiarize themselves with all the rules, regulations, and procedures relevant to their pursuit of a Graduate School degree. The policies are located at: <http://grad.georgetown.edu/academics/policies/>

Provost's Policy Accommodating Students' Religious Observances: Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday (see below) or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes. The Office of the Provost, in consultation with Campus Ministry and the Registrar, will publish, before classes begin for a given term, a list of major religious holidays likely to affect Georgetown students. The Provost and the Main Campus Executive Faculty encourage faculty to accommodate students whose bona fide religious observances in other ways impede normal participation in a course. Students who cannot be accommodated should discuss the matter with an advising dean.

Statement on Sexual Misconduct: Please know that as a faculty member I am committed to supporting survivors of sexual misconduct, including relationship violence, sexual harassment and sexual assault. However, university policy also requires me to report any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role is to coordinate the University's response to sexual misconduct.

Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual

assault and other forms of sexual misconduct. These resources include:

Jen Schweer, MA, LPC
Associate Director of Health Education Services for Sexual Assault
Response and Prevention
(202) 687-0323
jls242@georgetown.edu

Erica Shirley, Trauma Specialist
Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS)
(202) 687-6985
els54@georgetown.edu

More information about campus resources and reporting sexual misconduct can be found at <http://sexualassault.georgetown.edu>.

Learning Objectives:

- This course will survey the American presidency and the press to ask these questions:
- How does the press keep the President accountable to the American people?
- How does the President use the press to inform the American people?
- Is there a balance of information power between the press and the President?
- How does the press both strengthen and constrain the chief executive?
- How does a President use the press for election and reelection?
- What lies ahead for the presidency and the press in this new information age?

- Does the press challenge the president to much or not enough?
- What happens when the press misinform the public and when the President is actually correct on policy?

Classes:

Classes will be a mixture of group discussion and lecture.

Assignment/Grades Breakdown:

Four Messaging Memos	40% (10% Each)
Class Participation	20%
Final Exam	40%
Total:	100%

Assignment Breakdown:

Messaging Memo: Over the course of the semester, you will be required to write 4 messaging memos to a fictional person either in the White House or to your editor at the news outlet that you work for (this will be explained in greater detail in class). The objective of the memo would be for you to be a senior advisor in the West Wing of the White House or a News Editor at a news outlet where you will be writing a communications memo about the President's policies and how they are being communicated to the American people. More detailed instructions will be explained in a separate document.

Class Participation:

It's important that you be an active participant in the class discussions. Since a portion of the class is designed around group discussion, me seeing you participate in the conversation, through thought provoking questions, experiential insight and offering context through the readings will be a significant contributor your class participation grade.

Final Exam:

The final exam will be a culmination of the readings and class discussions. You will be given three essay questions to choose from and be required to answer two. The questions will be drawn from specific readings that you will know in advance. Your answers should be in essay format that clearly demonstrates your command of the learning objectives that are described above. They should also include course discussion extensively.

Required Readings:

The Presidency and the Press from Washington to Reagan by: John Tebbel and Sarah Miles Watts

-and-

“Contemporary Reading Packet” that will be handed out in class (no charge to you)

Class Schedule (subject to change, with notice)

9/6/16 -- Course Overview – Review of Syllabus

9/13/16 – The History of the Press in the United States; and the rise of the Presidency and the birth of Democracy and free speech.

Required Readings Due This Week: *A History of the Presidency – Presidents and the press.* (Contemporary Reading Packet) & Part One: Foundations of Tebbel and Watts.

9/20/16 – The relationship between newspapers, the Presidency and the birth of the editorial. Required Readings Due This Week: Viewing of President and The Press Speech by JFK (shown in class) & Part Two: The Rise of Manipulation of Tebbel and Watts.

9/27/16 – The relationship between radio, the presidency and the sound bite. Required Readings Due This Week: *The Atlantic* Nixon Is Gone But His Media Strategy Lives On (Contemporary Reading Packet)

10/4/16 – The relationship between television and the Presidency. No Readings Due.

10/11/16 – The Art of the Press Conference. Required Readings Due This Week: Columbia Journalism Review: The President and The Press (Contemporary Reading Packet)

10/18/16 – The Honeymoon, The First 100 Days, and then the adversarial relationship. Required Readings Due This Week: Part Three: The Power of the Presidency. Tebbel and Watts.

10/25/16 – Turning the relationship upside down – the rise of Digital Media
No Readings Due.

11/1/16 – Shaping Public Policy Through Rhetoric Required Readings Due This Week: Part Four: The Aftermath of Power. Tebbel and Watts.

11/8/16 – Election Day – Topic and Readings To Be Announced.

11/15/16 – Recap of Election – Analysis of Victory and Concession Speeches – Readings to Be Announced via Listerv

11/22/16 Shaping Public Policy Through Stagecraft Required

Readings Due This Week: Part Five: The Imperial Presidency.
Tebbel and Watts.

11/29/16 -- Manipulation Required Readings Due This Week: Part Six: The Presidency Triumphant. Tebbel and Watts.

12/7/16 – Final Exam In Class

Suggested Readings – Not Required – But Helpful

- [The Constitution, Article II](#)
- [Washington's Farewell Address](#)
- [Thomas Jefferson 1801 inaugural](#)
- [Jackson bank veto message](#)
- [Lincoln letter to Albert Hodges on presidential prerogative](#)
- [Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and second inaugural](#)
- [Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson on presidential power](#)
- [FDR 1933 inaugural address](#)
- [Eisenhower 1961 farewell address](#)
- [FDR's "Map Speech," February 23, 1942](#), (click tab on right for audio)
- [Nixon memo to Haldeman, December 4, 1970](#)
- [Reagan, 1983 "Evil Empire" speech in Orlando: both the manuscript \(see link here\) and the video/transcript](#)
- [Reid Cherlin, "The Presidency and the Press," *Rolling Stone*, August 4, 2014.](#)

- [David B. Cohen, Karen M. Hult, and Charles E. Walcott, "The Chicago Clan: The Chiefs of Staff in the Obama White House," *Social Science Quarterly* 93 \(December 2012\): 1101-1126.](#)