

**PS 101, "The Presidency and
The Executive Branch"**

Fall, 2020

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PS 101, "The Presidency and the Executive Branch," focuses on the role of presidents in the formulation of domestic and foreign policy. Other topics include presidential elections, styles of leadership, personality and character, relations with Congress, and control of the bureaucracy. Course requirements are a midterm (30 percent), a research paper (30 percent), and a final (40 percent). For purposes of the examinations, you are responsible for all readings, all lectures, and all classroom discussions.

Although this is not a class on current events, I will use current events to illustrate enduring issues in our political system. We'll closely follow the presidential race between now and November and will periodically discuss what's going on. Please keep up with the news on the election to maximize the value of our discussions. The course begins with a book on the 2016 election and it will provide background and context for understanding the 2020 campaign.

The readings move across time and while some focus on a particular president, others look at many presidents in the context of a particular aspect of the office. There may be some very short, journalistic readings added to this reading list as we go through the semester. The books listed below are required reading and are available for purchase at the Tufts bookstore. You should also be able to find them easily at online retailers if you prefer that option. The bookstore may have used or rental copies. Finally, I've placed the books on e-reserve at Tisch (and they should be available on the Canvas site under "Reading Lists" when school starts). If you're planning to rely on reserve copies, please know that some publishers only allow the University to let one student at a time read the work.

John Sides, Michael Tessler, and Lynn Vavreck, *Identity Crisis*

George C. Edwards III, *Predicting the Presidency*

Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time*

Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals*

Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*

Philip Rucker and Carol Leonnig, *A Very Stable Genius*

Please note that readings aside from the books are in the Canvas site under the Module "Course Readings."

Let me add here a few words on the unique circumstances for this fall, 2020 version of PS 101. In many ways the course will be the same as before. The readings this term are the same as they would be if we were meeting in person. The research paper as well will be no different. The content of my lectures will follow what I would do in a classroom. What is different, of course, is the interactive nature of discussions that we'll hold. No one believes that Zoom is an adequate substitute for the classroom. Nevertheless, we will have some discussion and there will

be days when we spend the whole class period talking about one of our books. Overall, I can promise you that you will learn a lot about the American presidency over the course of the next three months.

The paper referenced above requires you to select one of the swing states in this year's presidential election and then analyze the outcome there. I will be distributing a memorandum to you all that goes into detail of what you need to do in this paper; you'll receive this shortly after school begins. At our class meeting on Sept. 23rd, Elliot Brandow of the Tisch Library will lead the class and will identify resources that you might find particularly helpful in researching your paper. You don't need to do anything now but if you know the state you're going to choose, you can start following what's going on there.

Due to the dangers of COVID, I will not be holding in-person office hours. Instead, I will be available to you by phone or video chat. The good news is that I'll be more accessible because my office hours will be any time that you want them to be (save the times when I teach.) You just need to email me with a request to meet and offer up some times that would be good for you and we'll set something up. Please don't be shy! Beyond talking about the course, I'm happy to talk with you about majoring in political science, Tufts-in-Washington, pre-law, other grad schools, and anything else that is on your mind. I'd like to meet all of you so just a chat to introduce yourself would be welcomed by me.

I will tell you well ahead of time the date for when we will have a class discussion on each of the books. Here is the first date: On September 21st we will discuss *Identity Crisis* and the Jacobson article; you must be prepared to answer questions I'll pose about these two readings on this date. We will discuss Article II of the Constitution when I lecture about the Constitution and that will be sometime in September so please read it early on. Per the papers and the research paper, be advised that worked turned in late will be penalized.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

SEPT. 9: INTRODUCTION

SEPT. 14: Sides, Tessler, and Vavreck, *Identity Crisis*, Chaps. 1-5
Article II of the Constitution and Amendments XII, XX, XXII, and XXV (Canvas; note that text in the contrasting color has been superseded by constitutional amendments)

SEPT. 21: Sides, Tessler, and Vavreck, *Identity Crisis*, Chaps. 6-9
Jacobson, "Extreme Referendum: Donald Trump and the 2018 Midterm Elections" (Canvas)

SEPT. 23: Session on online resources for paper with Tisch librarian, Elliot Brandow

SEPT. 28: No class (Yom Kippur)

SEPT 30: Greenstein, *Hidden-Hand Presidency*

OCT. 5: Edwards, *Predicting the Presidency*, Chaps. 1-4

OCT. 12: Edwards, *Predicting the Presidency*, Chaps. 5-10

OCT. 14: Midterm posted; due by 5:00 pm on Oct. 20th.

OCT. 19: Neustadt and May, *Thinking in Time*, Chaps. 1-8

OCT 26: Neustadt and May, *Thinking in Time*, Chaps. 9-14

NOV. 2: Election (day before and day after) discussions

NOV. 9: Rucker and Leonnig, *A Very Stable Genius*, Prologue and Chaps. 1-11

NOV. 16: Rucker and Leonnig, *A Very Stable Genius*, Chaps. 12-21

NOV. 23: Research paper due by 5:00 pm on Nov. 23rd

NOV. 30: Goodwin, *Team of Rivals*, Chaps.10-15

DEC. 7: Goodwin, *Team of Rivals*, Chaps. 16-21

Final Essay posted; due by 5:00 pm on Dec. 15th