

GVPT 479H: SEMINAR IN AMERICAN POLITICS

POLITICAL AMBITION: THE PURSUIT AND USE OF POLITICAL POWER IN THE U.S.

Fall 2017
T/Th 11AM-12:15PM
Tydings 0102

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Office Location: 3140N TYD
Office Hours: T-Th 3:30PM-4:30PM
W 12:30-1:30, and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Americans are very skeptical of politicians and their ambitions. Nevertheless, democratic theorists—including the framers of the American constitution—have long envisioned an important role for political ambition in the proper functioning of democratic government. This course will examine the following topics:

- **Who** pursues political office? We will examine patterns in candidate emergence, party recruitment, and success at winning office. What motivates people to seek political office? We will assess the importance of financial remuneration, ideological goals, social/psychological influences, and opportunities for success as inducements for careers in politics. Have the mix of motivations changed over time? How does a potential candidate's race, gender, and social class shape decisions to run and prospects for winning?
- **How** do officeholders build and consolidate power once in office? We will examine the different pathways to political influence. What resources, personal attributes, and strategies enable officeholders to become political leaders and successful policy entrepreneurs. How do different political and institutional contexts shape the opportunities for gaining influence?
- How should we **assess** the effects of political ambition? Do the ambitions of politicians promote effective government? Why are Americans so suspicious of ambition as a motivation for political engagement and leadership? Why have political theorists viewed political ambition as necessary to democracy? Do the decisions of ambitious politicians provide voters with meaningful democratic choices?

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- John Lewis, *Walking With the Wind*
- David Maraniss, *First in His Class*
- Robert Caro, *Master of the Senate*
- Henry Waxman with Joshua Green, *The Waxman Report*
- Selected readings available on the McKeldin Library's electronic course reserves

The books listed above are available for purchase at the University of Maryland College Park Bookstore and at the Maryland Book Exchange. Selected readings on electronic course reserves can be accessed from the course's website on CANVAS (www.elms.umd.edu) at the link "Course Reserves."

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Midterm Exam:	25%
Term paper (20-30 pages):	25%
Presentation	10%
Participation	10%
Final Exam	30%

EXAMINATIONS

Exams will be short answer (identification) and essays. Students will be provided with a review sheet beforehand that will assist them in preparation.

TERM PAPER (20-25 PAGES)

Students will choose a U.S. politician (either past or current) and analyze their rise to power. What appears to have motivated them to seek office? What methods did they use to gain office initially? Once there, what techniques did they employ to gain and consolidate power? The conclusion should reflect on the significance of this politician's ascent and assess his or her contribution to American policymaking.

The expectation is that students will do substantial outside research in preparation for this paper. They should consult with a librarian to make use of all available university resources. Students will be required to identify the subject of their paper within the first three weeks of the course.

Papers should be double-spaced and word processed in 12 point Times New Roman font, with one inch margins. A cover page should list the student's name, the date, the title of the paper, and the honor pledge.

PRESENTATIONS AND TERM PAPERS

Students will give a presentation on the political leader they've selected as the topic of their research paper. Presentations will be approximately 10 minutes in length and will be followed by a brief Q&A period.

PARTICIPATION:

Students will receive a grade based on their participation. Students are expected to attend and to come ready to discuss any readings on the syllabus specified for that day's session.

COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

ABSENCES:

Attendance is required. The following penalties apply based on the number of unexcused absences documented in a student's record.

0-2 recorded absences	no penalty on participation grade
3+ recorded absences	10 points subtracted from participation grade for each unexcused absence.

READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Reading assignments are specified on a calendar on this syllabus. It is important that students do the assigned reading *before class* in order to participate actively in discussion.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic honesty is taken very seriously in this course. Any incidents of cheating or academic dishonesty will be reported to the University Honor Council and will result in failure in the course.

Students are expected to carefully observe rules of appropriate citation and documentation. A word about plagiarism: According to the MLA Handbook (New York: MLA, 1988), to plagiarize includes two activities: (1) repeating "as your own someone else's sentences, more or less verbatim" and (2) "paraphrasing another person's argument as your own, and presenting another's line of thinking as though it were your own."

DEADLINES AND MAKE UP POLICIES

The term paper is due at the beginning of class on the specified due date. Late papers will be penalized a grade for each day the paper is late. Any papers turned in after the beginning of class will be penalized as late.

A make-up exam will only be given if justified by a written excuse accompanied by appropriate documentation. The following are legitimate reasons for requesting a make up exam: illness (self or dependent), religious observance, participation in university sponsored activities, or compelling circumstances beyond a student's control.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students with disabilities who are registered with Disability Support Services (301-314-7682) are encouraged to meet with the instructor early in the semester to arrange appropriate academic accommodations.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Exams will be rescheduled for the next class meeting if the university is officially closed because of inclement weather. Similarly, any assignments due should be turned in at the next class meeting. Official closures and delays are announced on the campus website (<http://www.umd.edu/>) and snow phone line (301-405-SNOW), as well as local radio and TV stations.

SCHEDULE OF DISCUSSION TOPICS & ASSIGNMENTS

PART ONE: THE PURSUIT OF POLITICAL POWER

- 08/29 (T): Introduction to the course
- 08/31 (Th): **Class canceled**
- 09/05 (T): Motivations: Living “for” politics vs. Living “off” politics
READ: selection from Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation” (Under “files” on Canvas)
- 09/7 (Th): Motivations: ideological
Morris P. Fiorina, “Parties, Participation and Representation in America: Old Theories Face New Realities” (Canvas)
Danielle M. Thomsen, “Ideological Moderates Won’t Run” *Journal of Politics* 76 (July 2014): 786-797.
(<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1017/S0022381614000243>)
- 09/12 (T): Motivations: rational opportunity seeking
READ: Gary Jacobson and Samuel Kernell *Strategy and Choice in Congressional Elections*, chapters 3 and 5 (Canvas)
David W. Rohde “Risk-Bearing and Progressive Ambition.” *American Journal of Political Science* 23 (Feb. 1979) 1-26.
(<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2110769>)
- 09/14 (Th): Motivations: psychological / sociological
READ: Lawless and Fox, *Running From Office*, chapters 2 & 3
Harold Dwight Lasswell, *Power and Personality*, chapter 3 (Canvas)
Judge, Timothy A. et al, “Personality and Leadership: A Qualitative and Quantitative Review,” *Journal of applied Psychology* 87 (2002): 765-80.
(<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=pdh&AN=2002-15406-013&site=ehost-live>)
- 09/19 (T): Motivation: women in politics
READ: Jennifer Lawless, “Female Candidates and Legislators,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 18 (May 2015): 349-366.
(DOI: 10.1146/annurev-polisci-020614-094613)
Kanthak, Kristin, and Jonathan Woon. “Women Don’t Run? Election Aversion and Candidate Entry.” *American Journal of Political Science* 59 (July 2015): 595–612.
(www.jstor.org/stable/24583085)
- 09/21 (Th): Case studies in motivations
READ: David Maraniss, *First in His Class*, pp. 1-224
DUE: STATEMENT OF PAPER TOPIC AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 09/26 (T): Topic continued
READ: David Maraniss, *First in His Class*, pp. 225-338
- 09/28 (Th): Topic continued
READ: David Maraniss, *First in His Class*, pp. 338-464
- 10/03 (T): Topic continued
READ: John Lewis, *Walking with the Wind*, pp. 3-111
- 10/05 (Th): Topic continued
READ: John Lewis, *Walking with the Wind*, pp. 115-362
- 10/10 (T): Topic continued
READ: John Lewis, *Walking with the Wind*, pp. 363-479
- 10/12 (Th): **MIDTERM EXAMINATION**

PART TWO: Building and Using Political Power

- 10/17 (T): Paths to Washington Influence
READ: Meg Greenfield, "The Good Child, the Head Kid, the Prodigy, and the Protégé" (Canvas)
- 10/19 (Th): Case Study in legislative influence: LBJ
READ: Robert Caro, *Master of the Senate*, chapters 4-14
- 10/24 (T): Topic continued
READ: Robert Caro, *Master of the Senate*, chapters 15-21
- 10/26 (Th): **Class canceled**
- 10/31 (T): Topic continued
READ: Robert Caro, *Master of the Senate*, chapters 22-29, skip 28
- 11/02 (Th): Topic continued
READ: Robert Caro, *Master of the Senate*, chapters 30-41
- 11/07 (T): Case Study in legislative influence: Henry Waxman
READ: *The Waxman Report*, 1-142
- 11/09 (Th): Topic continued
READ: *The Waxman Report*, 145-224

PART THREE: The Role of Ambition in Democratic Politics

- 11/14 (T): Framers' attitudes toward political ambition
READ: Douglass Adair "Fame and the Founding Fathers" (Canvas)
 Federalist #51 (<http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa51.htm>)

Abraham Lincoln, "The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions:
Address Before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield,
Illinois," 1838 (<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=157>)

- 11/16 (Th): **Class canceled**
- 11/21 (T): Public attitudes toward political ambition
READ: John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, *Stealth Democracy*,
chapters 5-6 (Canvas)
- 11/23 (Th): **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**
- 11/28 (T): **GROUP 1 PRESENTATIONS & TERM PAPERS DUE**
- 11/30 (Th) **GROUP 2 PRESENTATIONS & TERM PAPERS DUE**
- 12/05 (T): **GROUP 3 PRESENTATIONS & TERM PAPERS DUE**
- 12/07 (Th): **GROUP 4 PRESENTATIONS & TERM PAPERS DUE**
- 12/13 (W): **FINAL EXAM, 8:00am-10:00am, regular classroom**