

JACK MILLER CENTER

Theory Of *Executive Power*

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Theory of Executive Power

The Republican Executive in Theory and Practice

Dr. Chris West

Govt. 473

Georgetown University, Fall 2009

“There is an idea which is not without its advocates, that a vigorous executive is inconsistent with the genius of republican government.”

-Alexander Hamilton

Course Description

The purpose of this course of study is to introduce you to the theoretical foundations of the modern American presidency, the debates and problems associated with them, and their demonstration in the history and development of the American Chief Executive. We will explore the concept of the modern executive that developed prior to the American founding and examine how it was joined to liberal constitutionalism. And, as we study the greatest American presidents, we will endeavor to come to an understanding of how the modern republican executive both challenges and undergirds the project of American constitutional democracy, as well as how it has met the problems of partisanship and popular rhetoric.

Required Texts

- **Marc Landy and Sidney M. Milkis, *Presidential Greatness*, University Press of Kansas**
- **Jeffrey Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency*, Princeton University Press**
- **Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince***
- **Niccolo Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy***
- **Blackboard, electronic reserve and on-line content**

Evaluation and Grading

You will be required to write one short paper (5-7 pages) and one longer paper (8-10) pages, and to complete a final exam. Your attendance at lectures is also required.

Paper 1: 25% Paper 2: 35% Exam: 30% Attendance: 10%

Schedule of Classes and Readings

September 3: Introduction: The Form and the Matter of the American Republic

- **Peter Simpson, Aristotle’s Regime of the Americans**
<http://www.aristotelophile.com/Books/Articles/AristotleRegimeAmericans.pdf>;
the U.S. Constitution, (see Blackboard)

(September 8, 10: The Invention of the Modern Executive: Machiavelli and Hobbes

- Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*
- Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr, *Taming the Prince*, Ch.6-7 (e-reserve)

September 15, 17: Republican Leadership: The Prince, the nobles and the education of the people

- Niccolo Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, Bk I, chs. 6-12, 16-18, 55, 58;
- Bk II, Intro and chs. 1-2; Bk III, chs. 1, 40-41

September 22, 24: The Executive in the Modern Constitution

- John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, selections
- Nathan Tarcov, "A Non-Lockean' Locke and the Character of Liberalism," in *Liberalism Reconsidered*, ed. Douglas MacLean and Claudia Mills (e-reserve)
- Mansfield, *Taming the Prince*, Chapter 9 (e-reserve)

Partisanship, "Corruption" and the Enlightened Executive

- Henry St. John Lord Bolingbroke, *Idea of a Patriot King* (Blackboard)

Week 6: The American Executive: Federalist vs. Anti-Federalist

- The U.S. Constitution, Article 2 (Blackboard)
- Publius, *The Federalist*: 1, 67, 69-74 (B)
- An Old Whig V, Cato V (B)
- Luther Martin, "Genuine Information" (B)
- Patrick Henry, et al, *Virginia Ratifying Convention Debates*, 17-18 June, 1788 (B)

Week 7: A Parting of Ways: Hamilton and Madison after Publius

- The Letters of Pacificus and Helvidius, selected
- James Madison, *National Gazette* writings (selected): "Consolidation," "Parties," "Public Opinion"

Week 8: Presidents against Party?

- George Washington, Farewell Address
- Thomas Jefferson, First Inaugural
- Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System* (selected)
- Landy and Milkis, *Presidential Greatness*, Ch.1-2

Week 9: The Jeffersonian Paradox

- Landy and Milkis, Ch.3
- Thomas Jefferson, Letter to John C. Breckenridge, 12Aug 1803
- Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Justice William Johnson, June 1823

Week 10: The President as Democratic Partisan: The Road Not Taken

- Landy and Milkis, Ch.4
- John Quincy Adams, "Inaugural Address"
- Andrew Jackson, "Bank Veto Message," "Veto of the Maysville Road"

Week 11: Abraham Lincoln: The Lion and the Fox

- Landy and Milkis, Ch. 5
- Brian Danoff, "Lincoln, Machiavelli and American Political Thought," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 2000

- “Gettysburg Address,”
- “The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions:”

Address Before the Young Men’s Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois, January 27, 1838

- “Second Inaugural Address”

Week 12: The Progressive Turn: Modern Rhetorical Leadership

- Jeffrey Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency*
- Terri Bimes and Stephen Skowronek, “Woodrow Wilson’s Critique of Popular Leadership: Reassessing the Modern-Traditional Divide,” in Richard Ellis, ed., *Speaking to the People*
- Theodore Roosevelt, *Autobiography* (selections: “Stewardship”)

Week 13: State Power and the End of American Innocence

- Herbert Croly, “The Promise of American Life” (selected)
- H.L. Mencken, “TR: An Autopsy”
- Henry Adams, “The Virgin and the Dynamo”
- Bertrand deJouvenel, “The Principate”

Week 14: The New Deal Persuasion: FDR and Beyond

- Neustadt, *Presidential Power* (selections)
- Landy and Milkis, Ch. 6

Week 15: Conclusions

- Mansfield, *Taming the Prince*, Ch.11, “The Form and the End”
- Landy and Milkis, Ch.7: “The Modern Presidency and the Absence of Greatness”