

George Mason University

(in collaboration with C-SPAN, the University of Denver,
The Cable Center and Pace University)

Political Journalism 374-001

Fall Semester 2008

Thursday 1:30-4:15 p.m. (14 sessions)

328 and 455 Innovation Hall

Instructor: Steve Klein

(with Steve Scully and Chris Malone)



POLITICS & THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY

**A comprehensive course focusing on the 2008
presidential campaign & the presidency**

**Websites: http://www.C-SPAN.org/Distance_Learning/
<http://mason.gmu.edu/~sklein1/>
<http://webpage.pace.edu/cmalone/>**

“For most Americans the president is the focal point of public life. Almost every day, they see the president on television newscasts interpreting current events, meeting with foreign dignitaries, proposing policy, or grappling with national problems. This person appears to be in charge, and such recurrent images of an engaged leader are reassuring. But the reality of the presidency rests on a very different truth: presidents are seldom in command and usually must negotiate with others to achieve their goals.... Those who invented the presidency in 1787 did not expect the office to become the nation’s central political institution... Students of the presidency commonly divide the office’s developments into two major periods: traditional and modern. In the traditional era, presidential power was relatively limited, and Congress was the primary policymaker. The modern era, on the other hand, is typified by the presidential dominance in the policymaking process and a significant expansion of the president’s powers and resources.”

**Joseph A. Pika
Anthony Maltese
Co-Authors,
“The Politics of the Presidency”**

When the Framers sat down in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787 to draft the Constitution, they had little idea of how they were going to design the office of the presidency. With absolutely no precedent in history upon which to base the parameters of the office, they were nonetheless certain of a few things. First, the Framers wanted a chief executive independent from the other branches of government, especially the legislative branch. Second, they wanted a chief executive insulated from the passions of the people, thus ensuring the person chosen would not become a demagogue. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, they wanted a chief executive that would rise above what James Madison called the “mischief’s of faction,” thus giving voice to all the people rather than to the special interests that formed in society. The Framers then went about the task of designing a process of presidential selection that served all of these ends.

Yet, the process by which candidates are chosen today for the office of the presidency has changed in ways that were unimaginable to the Framers. In our current two-party system, contenders for the office of presidency must capture the nomination of their respective parties – the same institutions that George Washington warned would kindle “the animosity of one part against another.”

-- Dr. Christopher Malone, Pace University

EXCERPTS FROM THE U.S. Constitution**September 17, 1787**

Article. I.**Section. 1.**

All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section. 2.

The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

Section. 3.

The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.

Article. II.**Section. 1.**

The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same Term, be elected, as follows:

Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and

Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or Person holding an Office of Trust or Profit under the United States, shall be appointed an Elector. Section. 2.

The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States; he may require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any Subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices, and he shall have Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offences against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment.

He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States, whose Appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by Law: but the Congress may by Law vest the Appointment of such inferior Officers, as they think proper, in the President alone, in the Courts of Law, or in the Heads of Departments.

The President shall have Power to fill up all Vacancies that may happen during the Recess of the Senate, by granting commissions that shall expire at the End of their next Session.

Section. 3.

He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene both Houses, or either of them, and in Case of Disagreement between them, with Respect to the Time of Adjournment, he may adjourn them to such Time as he shall think proper; he shall receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers; he shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed, and shall Commission all the Officers of the United States.

Section. 4.

The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.

Welcome to the fall quarter!

Within the next 15 weeks, the American people will select our 44th president and a new Congress. During this historical presidential campaign, we will focus on the process and politics of this election, as well as the issues and duties facing our next president.

We will meet every Thursday beginning at 1:30 p.m. sharp in 328 Innovation Hall, moving upstairs to the GMU video studio in 455 Innovation Hall for collaborative meets with the students of Denver and Pace universities, as well as for two-way live video conferences with special guests. **Steve Scully**, political editor of C-SPAN, will be joining us from the C-SPAN studios in Washington, D.C.; Professor Chris Malone will join us from Pace University in Manhattan.

This fall marks the start of a new 3-year partnership with C-SPAN, the Cable Center and the University of Denver, bringing you the only class of its kind in the country. In addition, you will be connected to students at Pace University in New York City. Collectively, we will offer a dynamic, thought-provoking and challenging educational experience. Our primary focus will include the issues and political developments shaping the presidential race, the impact these events will have on the next administration, and a historical perspective on the evolution of the modern American presidency.

So welcome! Come prepared with insightful questions. Meet the course deadlines. Participate actively as we give you new insights into American politics. And at the conclusion of this class, you will take a more critical look at the way we elect our president.

Some primary web sites for news, research and information:

www.c-span.org

www.CampaignNetwork.org

www.realclearpolitics.com

www.politico.com

www.msnbc.com

www.usatoday.com

www.cbsnews.com

www.abcnews.com

www.foxnews.com

www.cnn.com

www.washingtonpost.com

www.nytimes.com

www.drudgereport.com

www.washtimes.com

www.MediaMatters.org

<http://thepage.time.com/>

George Mason University

Steve Klein teaches in and is coordinator of the Electronic Journalism Program and oversees the Journalism concentration in the Communication Department of George Mason University, located approximately 20 miles west of Washington, D.C. in Fairfax, Va.

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University of Denver

Steven L. Scully is the Amos B. Hostetter, Jr. Chair at the Cable Center in partnership with the University of Denver's School of Communication and the Office of the Provost.

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Mary Anna McOwen is the University of Denver teaching assistant for the 2008-09 academic year. She is available to assist with any issues or concerns you have regarding this course and its content.

E-mail address: Mary.McOwen@du.edu

Heather Danskin is the Washington-based teaching assistant/production assistant for this academic year. She will be assisting in the D.C.-based editorial and technical elements of the class.

E-mail address: Hdanskin@c-span.org

Pace University

Dr. Christopher Malone is an assistant professor at Pace University's Department of Political Science. In partnership with the Cable Center, the University of Denver and C-SPAN, Dr. Malone and his students will participate in classroom discussion and interaction with our guests.

Phone: 212.346.1146 or 914.773.3428
E-mail: cmalone@pace.edu

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

OUR CONTRACT

This syllabus represents an agreement (or contract) between the student and the instructor. By remaining enrolled in this course, each student is accepting the policies and guidelines covered in this syllabus. Therefore, please read it carefully and refer to it often.

NOTE: I have written this syllabus using Associated Press Style (please note that Comm303/Writing Across Media is the pre-requisite for this course unless excused by the instructor; that course lays a foundation in AP Style). Please notice the differences in AP Style from MLA and APA, with which you may be more familiar.

KEY DATES

Communication Day: Tuesday, Sept. 2, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.,
Dewberry Hall, Johnson Center.

Last day to add: Tuesday Sept. 9

Last day to drop with no academic liability: Sept. 26

For more information, go to: <http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/>

IMPORTANT NOTE: Students who do not confirm their registration by attending the first class meeting are subject to being dropped at the discretion of the department and instructor. If you miss the first class, you must contact me with your intention to remain registered or you can be dropped for a waitlisted student. Students must not assume that the department will automatically initiate a drop for not attending class. Students who register for courses that they do not attend are themselves responsible for dropping the class.

Please let me know if you spot a typo or error in this syllabus. Yes, it's true: Even instructors make mistakes!

ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION

With only 14 sessions this semester, your attendance is critical to the success of this class AND your final grade. This course is intended to be interesting, informative and interactive, but it WILL NOT work if you don't participate. Only two books are required reading for this semester. You will, however, be responsible for the content in these books. Additional reading material will also be distributed throughout the semester to supplement the text and provide you with background on classroom discussions. You are required to be prepared for each class AND each guest.

Let me be very clear about this:

Unexcused absences WILL lower your grade.

ASSIGNMENTS

BLOG PARTICIPATION

Each student is responsible for at least one blog entry (extra credit for additional entries) weekly from the second week of class through the week of Nov. 10 (a minimum of 12 entries). Entries are due no later than 30 minutes before the next class; posting earlier is encouraged. Entries must include at least one embedded link (easy to do in Blogger). All names must be boldfaced. Entries should be written using Associated Press Style.

The blog is located at: <http://gmupoljournal.blogspot.com/>

POINTS: 12

GUEST QUESTION PARTICIPATION

Each student is responsible for submitting at least one well-written and researched question for each guest speaker at the beginning of each class session. Question must be typewritten and double-spaced to receive credit. Questions should be succinct, thoughtful and respectful. Questions should exclude bias and opinion. We will review questions in the first half hour of class.

POINTS: 10

REPORTING on VIDEO CONFERENCES

Each student must write three stories over the course of the semester based on the video conferences. Stories should be well written, two-pages, double-spaced and typewritten utilizing Associated Press Style. Each story should include quotes from the videoconference and a quote from at least one of your classmates, a Pace or Denver student, or one of the instructors (or an outside source appropriate to the story). Students should strive to write a compelling lead, focusing on the news from the videoconference (the news is NOT that the person spoke but rather WHAT the person said). No quote leads; no first person other than quoted material. Each story should include a nut graph putting the videoconference in context; we will review this in class.

Stories are due in class:

- Thursday Sept. 25
- Thursday Oct. 16
- Thursday Nov. 20

POINTS: 15 each, 45 total

BOOK REVIEW:

"Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln,"
by Doris Kearns Goodwin

Each student must write a well-written, two-page, double-spaced and typewritten REVIEW of "Team of Rivals" utilizing Associated Press Style.

The story is due before the class of Thursday Oct. 30.

POINTS: 10

BOOK REVIEW or POLITICAL ACTIVISM

Students have two options:

1. **Volunteer/intern** with the local McCain or Obama campaigns (or for any local political campaign cleared by the instructor). Students may write a well-written, 2-to-4 pages, double-spaced, typewritten paper/story utilizing Associated Press Style, or they may create a blog that follows their involvement and experience on a regular (at least weekly basis). **Due by** Thursday Nov. 13.
2. **Write** a well-written, two-page, double-spaced, typewritten REVIEW utilizing Associated Press Style on **one** of the following books (or one cleared in advance by the instructor):
 - "The Way to Win: Taking the White House in 2008," Mark Halperin and John F. Harris, 480 pages (Random House, 2006).
 - "Running Alone: Presidential Leadership from JFK to Bush II – Why It Has Failed and How We Can Fix It," James MacGregor Burns, 272 pages (Basic Books, 2006).
 - "Crashing the Gate: Netroots, Grassroots and the Rise of People-Powered Politics," Jerome Armstrong and Markos Moulitsas, 216 pages (Chelsea Green Publishing, 2006).
 - "We the Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People, for the People," Dan Gilmour, 299 pages (O'Reilly, 2004).
 - "Words That Work: It's Not What You Say, It's What People Hear," Frank Luntz, 324 pages (Hyperion, 2007).
 - "How the Republicans Stole Religion: Why the Religious Right is Wrong about Faith & Politics and What We Can Do to Make It Right," Bill Press, 288 pages (Three Leaves, 2006).

The REVIEW is due before the class of Thursday Nov. 13.

POINTS: 10

FINAL EXAM

The final exam will include a series of short essay questions based on the content, guests, classroom discussion and material from the entire semester. There are no make-ups offered for this exam. You must take the test during the designated time unless excused in advance by the instructor.

EXAM DATE: Thursday, Dec. 4 during the final class session.

POINTS: 15

GRADING SUMMARY

- **Blog participation:** 12 points (1 point each)
 - **Guest question preparation:** 10 points (1 point each)
 - **Book reviews/activism:** 10 points
 - **Reporting stories (3):** 45 points (15 points each)
 - **DKG book review/analysis:** 10 points
 - **Final exam:** 15 points
- TOTAL: 102 points**

KEY DATES

- **Blog entries** are due before class of the following week (preferably earlier) beginning for Thursday Sept. 11.
- **Guest questions** are due at the beginning of each class with a scheduled speaker, beginning with **Matt Felling** on Thursday Sept. 4.
- **Video conference story #1** (Thursday Sept. 25)
- **Video conference story #2** (Thursday Oct. 16)
- **Book review** of "Team of Rivals" (Thursday Oct. 30)
- **Book review** of your choice (Thursday Nov. 13); or
- **Political activism report** (Thursday Nov. 13)
- **Video conference story #3** (Thursday Nov. 20)
- **Final exam** (Thursday Dec. 4)

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. "The Politics of the Presidency," Joseph A. Pika and John Anthony Maltese, 550 pages (CQ Press, 2008).
2. "Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln," Doris Kearns Goodwin, 916 pages (Simon & Schuster, 2005).
3. "The Associated Press Stylebook & Briefing on Media Law," Darrell Christian, Sally Jacobson and David Minthorn (The Associated Press, 2008 or any edition).

CLASS SCHEDULE

NOTE: Additional guests will be announced during the fall semester.

Class #1: Aug. 25

1:30-4:15 p.m. in 328 Innovation Hall: Class introductions; review of the syllabus; class logistics; a look at the Democratic National Convention.

2:45-2:55 p.m.: We will normally try to take a break at this time. However, students **MUST** be in their seats in the GMU video studio by 3 p.m. sharp or they will not be admitted.

Class #2: Sept. 4

1:30-2:45 p.m. in 328 Innovation Hall: Update and review; asking effective questions; how to write a nut graph; a look at the Republican National Convention.

2:45-2:55 p.m.: Break.

3 p.m. SHARP to 4:15 in 328 Innovation Hall: Our guest speaker is **Matt Felling**, political commentator and radio talk show host who is about to embark on a new career as a CBS anchor in Anchorage, Alaska on Sept. 15.

NOTE: Blog entries are due no later than 30 minutes before class the following week (Thursday Sept. 11).

NOTE: Guest questions (typed and double-spaced) are due for every guest at the start of class (1:30 p.m.).

Class #3: Sept. 11

1:30-2 p.m. in 328 Innovation Hall: Update and review; how to cover a video conference and write effective stories with guest instructor **Steve Taylor**, a former ABC Radio White House correspondent.

2-2:45 p.m. in 455 Innovation Hall (the GMU-TV video studio): Meet and interact with Professor **Steve Scully's** University of Denver and Professor **Chris Malone's** Pace classes.

2:45-2:55 p.m.: Break if necessary.

3-4:15 p.m. in 455 Innovation Hall (the GMU video studio):

Lecture Topic: Campaign 2008 and the American Presidency: An Overview

Lecture Topic: Campaign '08: Branding, Advertising and Polling

Scheduled Guest: **Thom Mozloom**, The M Network

(<http://www.TheMNetwork.com/>).

Class #4: Sept. 18

NOTE: All classes begin in 328 Innovation Hall. Videoconference questions are due at this time.

Generally we will move upstairs to 455 Innovation Hall (the GMU video studio) at 2 p.m. for a collaborative class with the Denver and Pace university students.

Videoconferences begin at 3 p.m. SHARP (unless otherwise noted). Because these sessions are taped for airing on C-SPAN3 at 5 p.m. Friday (TV and streamed online), students **MUST** be seated by 3 p.m. or will not be admitted.

Reading Assignment: Chapters 1-4, "Politics of the Presidency"

Lecture Topic: State of the Race 2008.

Scheduled Guest: **Tucker Carlson**, MSNBC political analyst.

NOTE: Tucker Carlson will be joining us from The Cable Center in Denver (most guests will appear with **Steve Scully** in the C-SPAN studios in Washington, D.C.).

Class #5: Sept. 25

NOTE: All classes begin in 328 Innovation Hall. Videoconference questions are due at this time.

Generally we will move upstairs to 455 Innovation Hall (the GMU video studio) at 2 p.m. for a collaborative class with the Denver and Pace university students.

Videoconferences begin at 3 p.m. SHARP (unless otherwise noted). Because these sessions are taped for airing on C-SPAN3 at 5 p.m. Friday (TV and streamed online), students **MUST** be seated by 3 p.m. or will not be admitted.

Reading Assignment: Chapters 5-7, "Politics of the Presidency"

Lecture Topic: Race in America – From the Civil War and Martin Luther King to Barack Obama and Campaign '08

Scheduled Guest: **Tavis Smiley**, author and talk show host

(<http://www.tavisitalks.com/>)

NOTE: Edinboro University students from Edinboro, Penn., will be joining us for the lecture/discussion with **Tavis Smiley**.

Class #6: Oct. 2

Reading Assignment: Chapters 8-9, "Politics of the Presidency"

NOTE: Today's class will be taught from the site of the Vice Presidential Debate at Washington University in St. Louis, Mo. Our videoconference session will run from 2-2:30 p.m.

Other class details will follow.

Class #7: Oct. 9

Reading Assignment: Chapters 10-11, "Politics of the Presidency"

NOTE: Combined class in 328 Innovation Hall with guest instructor **Steve Farnsworth's** Politics and the Media class (due to Yom Kippur).

Scheduled Guest: Joseph A. Pika, co-Author, "The Politics of the Presidency," 2-3 p.m., in 455 Innovation Hall.

Lecture Topic: The 1968 Election of Richard Nixon

Scheduled Guest: **Pat Buchanan** (former speechwriter, Nixon and Reagan administrations, former 1992 and '96 presidential candidate, MSNBC political analyst), 3-4 p.m., 455 Innovation Hall.

Class #8: Oct. 16

Lecture Topic: Pentagon Papers, Watergate and the Nixon Legacy on the American Presidency.

Scheduled Guest: James Rosen, Washington correspondent, Fox News Channel and author of "Strong Man: John Mitchell & the Secrets of Watergate," 455 Innovation Hall.

Class #9: Oct. 23

Lecture Topic: The Election of Bill Clinton in 1992

Scheduled Guest: Dee Dee Myers, White House Press Secretary, Clinton Administration (1993-94) and author, "Why Women Should Rule the World," 455 Innovation Hall.

Class #10: Oct. 30

Lecture Topic: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln

Scheduled Guest: Doris Kearns Goodwin, author, "Team of Rivals;" also, author of: "No Ordinary Time: Franklin & Eleanor Roosevelt;" "The Home Front in World War II;" "Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream;" "The Fitzgerald's and the Kennedy's"

NOTE: Doris Kearns Goodwin will be joining us from Boston

Class #11: Nov. 6

Lecture Topic: Road to the White House: The Winner, the Loser and Our 44th President.

Scheduled Guest: Benjamin Bradlee, Vice President & Former Executive Editor, the Washington Post, 455 Innovation Hall.

Classes #12-13: Nov. 13 & 20

TBA

NOTE: There is no class on Thursday Nov. 27 (Happy Thanksgiving!).

Class #14: Dec. 4
Final Exam, 1:30 p.m.
Course evaluation.