Presidency

- The presidency is hard for political scientists to study:
  - There were not many thus hard to generalize
  - Times have changed thus modern presidency is only since 1930's-- further diminishing numbers
  - We think of a president but presidency is the bureaucracy that surrounds the president—at a minimum the 3500 people he appoints
  - The sources on the presidency are voluminous—libraries, letters, notes, biographies and so on and assigning all of this in class is not a good idea if you want anyone to take the class

presidency

- In this lecture I hope to present in rough form what we do know about the presidency which I take to be the following:
  - The nature of presidential power
  - The institutionalization of the presidency
  - The basic structure of the institution
  - The theory of the two presidents
  - Random thoughts

presidency

- This part of the lecture comes from Richard Neustadt's Presidential Power and in this book Neustadt takes a number of examples where what the president says is done immediately e.g.
  - Truman's nationalizing the steel mills in the Korean war
  - Truman's firing of General Macarthur
  - Eisenhower's nationalizing the Arkansas guard in order to integrate the Little Rock school system
- He then analyzes what each case had in common to make it such that the president's words were translated into action

presidency

- The common factors were:
  - President had the constitutional authority to do what he wanted
  - It was clear that he had the authority
  - Those who were delegated to do the presidents command had the resources to do what the president wanted
  - In each case the president resorted to command as a last resort after many attempts to seek less dramatic results
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- Note that in each example it involved the president’s authority as commander as chief
- Running the steel mills, firing the general and converting the national guard all were constitutional and reasonably easy to do for those designated to do the deeds
- Truman had tried to deal with the general and the steel mill strike in a myriad of other ways and Ike had tried to deal with the integration issue with Governor Faubus for a long time—last resort

presidency

- It seems clear that under normal conditions one or more of these special conditions will be missing thus, president’s power is something other than command
  - Bush would like to just say here the budget—can’t do that its unconstitutional
  - President is constrained by the fact that normally these conditions are not present
  - Like for there to be peace in middle east unfortunately Arafat and Sharon do not take orders from president
- Exercise—try to find other examples of where the president commanded and the act was done
  - Maybe Clinton’s environmental regulations?
  - Some scholars argue presidential decrees are on this order

presidency

- The argument then is that the president is constrained from command and that power is the power to persuade
- Here it is crucial to understand that the president has to deal with various other actors:
  - The Congress------chief legislator
  - The bureaucracy-----executive officer
  - The military-----commander in chief
  - Other countries-----head of state
  - Presidential party-----head of party
- Note that each of these constituencies is associated with one of president’s hats

presidency

- Each of these constituencies has their own fish to fry
  - President telling John Dingle what to do
  - Bureaucrats and military there before and after president comes and goes
  - Heads of states have their own agenda
  - President trying to order the California Republican party to be pro-choice or pro-life
- In short president has to persuade these folks to do what he wants them to do.
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- Persuasion—the president has a professional reputation to uphold and the higher the president's reputation the greater his influence and ability to persuade
- The people who share governing with the president—the constituents above named—are constantly assessing the president's ability and will to get his agenda accomplished
  - Will and ability are the key variables here
  - Will is endogenous—president prioritizes, works, etc. to get the job done
  - Ability—is contingent on a large number of forces many exogenous to the president

presidency

- The exogenous factors are the state of the economy, foreign events, events over which the president has no control
- However, many factors, events, are subject to presidential effects and these are crucial for understanding presidential power
  - In order to maintain a high reputation the president has control over only the decisions made
    - Can not control the event but the response to the event e.g.
    - Nixon's handling of the protests over the Vietnam war brought him time for his policies to work whereas, his decisions in regard to opposition with regard to Watergate brought him to ruin

presidency

- Presidents may have a strong will to govern and persuade but no ability
  - LBJ never lacked the will to govern however, by 1967 the war, the reaction to his domestic legislation and the riots in cities had effectively left him without the ability to lead
- Presidents may have the ability to lead but not the will
  - Ike refused to decide in the recession of the late 1950's whether or not to have a balanced budget and that lack of will hurt his ability to govern
- Those who share governing with the president constantly evaluate his reputation and when it is high things get done when it is low policy is hard to come by
- Many factors go into the reputation
  - Public opinion, state of economy, peace or war and so on.

presidency

- Again the president either does not fully or partially control these events and all we can analyze is the decisions over which the president does have control
- In sum, you should think of the president's power as the power to make decisions subject to negotiation, bargaining, cajoling, and otherwise trying to convince others to do as he wishes them to do
  - Getting the president's way entails lots of activities but maintaining a high professional reputation is paramount
  - Strategies for getting what the president wants differ and will be covered in the policy section of the course
- Institutionalization of the presidency
  - Here I mean that whether or not a president chooses to be active they must deal with the constituencies set out above in a fairly structured way
• A common dimension on which presidents are evaluated is the active passive dimension where presidents are supposed to have choice
  – Teddy Roosevelt—the president can do whatever the constitution does not prohibit
  – Taft thought the president could only do what the constitution said explicitly
• Institutionalization means that the modern president has fewer options here
• The modern president is expected to
  – Adjust policy to contemporary needs
  – Galvanize the bureaucracy to implement policy
  – Reflect the nation's values and beliefs

• The president must do this within the constraints of electoral coalitions which are not aligned on contemporary issues and in a weak party context
• The modern presidency begins with Franklin Roosevelt
  – His presidency began in the Great Depression and he was as close to being a charismatic president as we have had in the past century
  – His presidency initiated
    • Chief legislator
    • Popularity = public opinion leader
    • More government involvement in economy
    • Increased federal expenditures and increased bureaucracy

• The result of these changes in the government were
  – Every president no matter how active or passive had to perform the duties of being chief legislator, agenda setter, and focal point for the country's hopes and aspirations
    • Relations with the five constituencies—party, military, etc., became necessary to do the job
    • It was necessary to have advisors across a broader part of the policy arena—economists, family experts, etc.
  – Roosevelt did most of this in an informal fashion
    • Kitchen cabinets informal advisors like Tugwell and Moley who worked for the president informally—no official position
  – When Truman came to the office he did not have Roosevelt's flair or base

• Truman turned Roosevelt's informal arrangements into formal arrangements
  • The Council of Economic Advisors
  • The National Security Council and so
  – This institutionalized the presidency—turned Roosevelt's charismatic or informal advisors into formal organizations with routinized appointments and duties
• Eisenhower's presidency was a real test of these arrangements
  – The Republicans had been out of power for 20 years and many in the party wanted to turn back the New Deal and the stronger presidency
  – Eisenhower turned back this threat and his acceptance of these arrangements meant that since both parties agreed to it they would be permanent
presidency

- Since Ike there have been modifications but no fundamental change
  - Kennedy’s use of television and the media set a new standard
  - Elections became more media and less party oriented
  - Journalists after Watergate became more investigatory
  - Private lives came into play post Nixon and Watergate

- Even presidents like Reagan who want to cut back the government have to lead in this fashion thus the idea of the institutionalized presidency

presidency

- Over time there have been many attempts to reorganize the presidency and most have tried to deal with the problem of loyalty versus constituency
  - By this I mean the president has to have cabinet members loyal to his agenda and if members pursue a policy interest they might not be loyal
    - Example most president’s do not care much about agricultural policy but secretaries of agriculture get “captured” by farm interests
  - Most reforms have thus centered on the notion of an inner cabinet and an outer cabinet where the outer cabinet are those likely to be captured and the inner the positions most important thus loyalty paramount

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- The inner cabinet is composed of secretaries:
  - State—Defense—Attorney General—Treasury
These are the chief domestic and foreign policy operatives of the U.S. government and it is here that the president wants loyalty
  - JFK and Nixon appointed to Attorney General their campaign managers
  - Clearly the person responsible for seeing to it that the law is followed objectively differs from hiring campaign managers (loyalty versus the job or constituents)
  - Haig ran into trouble with Reagan because he was too independent
  - Stockman got into trouble because he revealed flaws in the Reagan budget

presidency

- The outer cabinet are those posts that are tied to a constituency
  - Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Education etc.
- These posts can be captured and president’s have tended to pay less attention to these posts
- We now turn to the two presidencies
  - Here the idea is that presidents have a hard time getting policy change domestically due to all the interest groups monitoring and affected by the policies
  - Thus they turn to foreign affairs where the level of interest group activity is lower
    - Nixon in China
    - Bush in Gulf
    - Carter in Middle East
    - Clinton in Middle East