

# 7. Presidency

**Breakout Sessions**

**POLS 1101**

**8:40am-9:35am Baldwin 322**

**& 9:55am-10:50am Journalism 509**

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# The Presidential Power

- *The origin of Presidency power was the result of desire for a strong, centralized leadership.*
- **Why does the presidential power always tend to expand?**
  - Ambiguities of the Constitution -> **the inherent powers**
  - High public expectations (claiming public support; **legitimacy**)
  - The growth of formal powers based on political and economic contexts
  - Low coordination cost
    - Appointments
    - Signing statements
    - Executive orders
    - Veto power
    - Presidential memorandum
    - Proclamation
    - Emergency power
    - .....

**unilateral powers**

# The Presidential Power (cont`d)

- *Boundary: Trump v. the United States (2024)*
  - **Group discussion outline**
    - Key ideas of this case
    - What problem is presidential immunity trying to solve (**goal** / advantage)?
    - What is the biggest **danger** of expanding immunity?
    - Where **should** the boundary be: protect all official acts, protect only core constitutional powers, or allow prosecution whenever the act has a private/self-serving purpose?
  - Who should have the final say on whether an act is protected—courts, Congress (impeachment), or voters? Why?
  - What potential impacts does this decision have on **citizens' (or your) attitudes**?

# The Executive Branch Establishment

- **The Executive Office of the President (EOP)**
  - **The White House Office**
  - National Security Council (NSC)
  - The Council of Economic Advisers & the National Economic Council
  - The Office of Management and Budget
  - Staffs organized around specialties – e.g. the legislative liaison staff
- EOP provides **flexibility** for the presidential power.
  - **If you were the president, would you prefer relying on a small circle of close advisers, or listening widely to input from different departments?**
    - Economic Policy
    - Diplomatic Events / Foreign Affairs
    - Natural Disaster
    - Social Movements and Public Opinion Pressure
    - Domestic Reform (e.g. Health care)

# Presidential Leadership (1): Personality

- **James David Barber, *The Presidential Character***

- A president's **character, worldview, and style**—shaped long before they enter the White House—provide important clues about how they will behave once in office.
- **A two-dimensional framework**
  - **Active vs. Passive** → the amount of energy the president invests in the job (highly engaged and driven vs. more hands-off and reactive).
  - **Positive vs. Negative** → the president's underlying attitude toward politics and the office (optimistic and enthusiastic vs. resentful or anxious).

Type	Description	Strengths / Weaknesses	Examples (Barber's view)
Active-Positive	High energy, sees politics as rewarding and enjoyable.	Pragmatic, flexible, resilient; but can be overly ambitious.	FDR, JFK, Truman, Clinton
Active-Negative	High energy, but driven by hostility, compulsiveness, or inner conflict.	Strong work ethic, but rigid, aggressive, and often frustrated.	Wilson, LBJ, Nixon
Passive-Positive	Low energy, but optimistic and eager to be liked.	Friendly and compliant; but tends to avoid hard decisions, overly reliant on others.	Harding, Reagan
Passive-Negative	Low energy and little enjoyment in politics; sees duty as a burden.	Honest, dutiful, avoids conflict; but often disengaged and reactive.	Washington, Eisenhower

# Presidential Leadership (1): Personality (cont'd)

- **Why *The Presidential Character* Matters**

- Barber's framework was one of the first attempts to **systematically link psychology with presidential performance**.
- It helped explain why presidents facing similar institutional constraints behaved so differently.

- **Some questions**

- **Does personality matter more than institutions, contexts, ...?**
- **Could we use Barber's framework to anticipate the performance of modern presidents?**
- **What are the advantages & weaknesses of categorizing "complex" leaders to a few simple psychological types?**

# Presidential Leadership (2): Power to Persuade

- Presidential power is the power to persuade.
  - Divided Government -> Gridlock

Aspect	Presidential Lobbying	Congressional (Legislative) Lobbying
Main Goal	Persuade members of Congress to support or block major national policies, budgets, or legislation.	Convince fellow legislators to vote for or against specific bills, amendments, or procedural motions.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- One-on-one meetings at the White House or Capitol Hill</li><li>- Personal calls, invitations, dinners with legislators</li><li>- Using the <i>bully pulpit</i> to appeal directly to the public and pressure Congress</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Persuasion in committees, caucus meetings, or informal settings</li><li>- Vote trading (<i>logrolling</i>): “You support my bill, I’ll support yours”</li><li>- Sharing technical data, district benefits, or policy details</li></ul>
Sources of Influence	Institutional authority, national mandate, media visibility, and the symbolic power of the presidency	Seniority, personal relationships, party leadership positions, committee assignments
Scope	Often tied to large-scale, high-profile issues (healthcare reform, war powers, tax policy)	More routine and frequent, covering a wide range of everyday legislative issues
Style	Relies on presidential prestige and ability to mobilize public opinion	Relies on peer-to-peer bargaining, coalition building, and reciprocity

# Presidential Leadership (3): “Going Public”

- The president is elected by the people in a nationwide election (so in theory they should be unifying national leaders). However, the public regards them as **partisan leaders** in practice, requiring them to appeal to their constituents.
- However, in presidential elections, candidates often **deliberately blur or soften their policy positions** to appeal to a broader electorate.
  - **In which policy areas ambiguity might be helpful? In which areas it is harmful?**
    - **Policy proximity**: how directly and frequently citizens experience a policy in their lives, which shapes their perceived importance of the policy.
    - **Policy visibility**: how easily citizens can notice a policy and attribute it to government action



# Next week...

- Read materials on **Bureaucracy** before class, and that will be helpful to participate in peer discussions.
- Midterm Review 2
- Feel free to email me if you have any questions!
- ENJOY YOUR WEEKEND!