

TEXTBOOK: Wilson 14th Edition, Chapter 10 (pp. 222-224), Chapter 14 (pp. 338-378), Chapter 15 (pp. 379-406)

OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 Outline and Describe the different stages in a Presidential Campaign
- 4.2 Assess concerns regarding presidential elections and proposed reforms..
- 4.3 Describe the constitutional foundations of presidential power.
- 4.4 Discuss the formal and informal powers of the President
- 4.5 Evaluate the controversies surrounding presidents' assertion of additional executive powers
- 4.6 Outline the functions of the White House staff, the cabinet, and the Vice President.
- 4.7 Identify the sources of presidential-congressional conflict and the tools presidents use to influence Congress
- 4.8 Discuss the recruitment, retention, and demographic profiles of federal bureaucrats.
- 4.9 Outline the constitutional roots of the federal bureaucracy
- 4.10 Identify the four types of federal organizations.
- 4.11 Review congressional measures to control the bureaucracy and evaluate their effectiveness.
- 4.12 Describe the evolution of journalism in United States political history.
- 4.13 Discuss "media bias" and assess the impact of this bias on the electorate.

OUTLINE

A President, chosen by the people and with powers derived from a written constitution, has less power than does a prime minister. Separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches, the distinguishing feature of the political system in the United States, means that the president must compete with Congress in setting policy and even in managing executive agencies. Though the president seemingly controls a vast executive branch apparatus, only a small proportion of executive branch personnel are presidential appointees or nominees. Even these may not be under presidential control.

Presidential power, though still limited, has grown from its constitutional origins as a result of congressional delegation, the increased importance of foreign affairs, and public expectations. But while the presidential office has more power today, the president also faces higher expectations. As a result, presidential effectiveness depends on the nature of the issues to be confronted and the support gained from informal sources of power such as the power to persuade. Public opinion and congressional support are extremely important. Each president must conserve power (and energy and time), concentrating these scarce resources to deal with a few matters of major importance. Virtually every president since Franklin D. Roosevelt has tried to gain better control of the executive branch—by reorganizing, by appointing White House aides, by creating specialized staff agencies—but no president has been satisfied with the results.

In dealing with Congress, the president may be able to rely somewhat on party loyalty. Presidents whose party controls Congress tend to have more of their proposals approved. But such loyalty is insufficient. Every president must also cajole, award favors, and threaten vetoes to influence legislation. Most presidents discover that their plans are at the mercy of unexpected crises.

Bureaucracy is characteristic of almost all aspects of modern life, not just the government. The power of a bureaucracy should be measured by its discretionary authority. Four factors are particularly influential in the United States. Here, government bureaucracies (1) must answer to competing sources of political authority, (2) must function in a constitutional system that fragments power, (3) are asked to achieve vague and competing goals, and (4) lack incentive systems that value efficiency.

The role of journalists in a democratic society poses an inevitable dilemma: If they are to serve well as information gatherers, gatekeepers, scorekeepers, and watchdogs, they must be free of government controls. But to the extent that they are free of such controls, they are also free to act in their own political or economic interests. In the United States, a competitive press largely free of government controls has contributed to a substantial diversity of opinion and a general (though not unanimous) commitment to the goal of fairness in news reporting. The national media are in general more liberal than the local media, but the extent to which a reporter's beliefs affect reporting varies greatly with the kind of story—routine, feature, or insider.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to give the student a preview of the major questions to be asked throughout the textbook and to introduce key terms. After reading and reviewing the material in this chapter the student should be able to do each of the following:

- What are the resources and the constraints that confront presidents and prime ministers?
- When might presidential power begin to be limited? When would it be expanded?
- Under what circumstances might Congress challenge a popular president?
- Why do presidents rely more on the White House staff more than their cabinets?
- Why would a president's personality have much to do with the staffing method (circular, pyramidal or ad hoc)?
- What does the peaceful and orderly transfer of power from one president to the next have to do with legitimacy?

- Why would the president sign legislation with which he disagrees rather than simply veto such laws?
- What kinds of veto strategies would you recommend to a president whose party controlled Congress? Whose party was in the minority?
- Should the president be granted absolute executive privilege?
- What are the factors in the success of vice presidents succeeding “their” presidents in office?
- Is it a strength or a weakness of the presidential system that its chief executive is so difficult to remove?
- Why wasn’t the transition to the presidency of George W. Bush more contentious? What might this say about the American political system and American political culture—both positive and negative?
- Why is a crisis often required to produce major policy changes? Is our system is excessively biased against change?
- To what extent does patronage continue to influence political appointments in the federal and state governments?
- How do you measure the power of a bureaucracy?
- Why do the large, complex organizations in our society not have elected rather than appointed officials?
- How can the twin goals of competence and neutrality be balanced more effectively?
- Could Congress adequately supervise the exercise of delegated authority by bureaucrats without a legislative veto?
- Does a popular press pander to the lowest common denominator of interest and taste?
- How does localism and decentralization of the United States news media contribute to the promotion of democracy?
- If most reporters hold liberal views, why hasn’t the American public become more liberal over the years?
- What are some recent examples of the media’s role as watchdog?

VOCABULARY

DIVIDED GOVERNMENT
UNIFIED GOVERNMENT
GRIDLOCK
ELECTORAL COLLEGE
SHARED POWERS
SOLE POWERS
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
TREATY POWER
APPOINTMENTS
PRESIDENTIAL PROGRAM
PYRAMID STRUCTURE
CIRCULAR STRUCTURE
AD HOC STRUCTURE
CABINET
WHITE HOUSE STAFF
BULLY PULPIT

EXECUTIVE PRIVILEGE
SIGNING STATEMENTS
VETO POWER
POCKET VETO
LINE ITEM VETO
SUCCESSION
IMPEACHMENT
11th AMENDMENT
12th AMENDMENT
22nd AMENDMENT
25th AMENDMENT
PARDONS
BUREAUCRACY
DEPARTMENT
INDEPENDENT AGENCY
CIVIL SERVICE

SPOILS SYSTEM
MERIT SYSTEM
HATCH ACT
DISCRETION
ENTITLEMENT
OVERSIGHT
OMB
MASS MEDIA
SELECTIVE EXPOSURE
SELECTIVE PERCEPTION
BIAS

Court Cases:
United States v Nixon
Clinton v Jones
New York City v Clinton