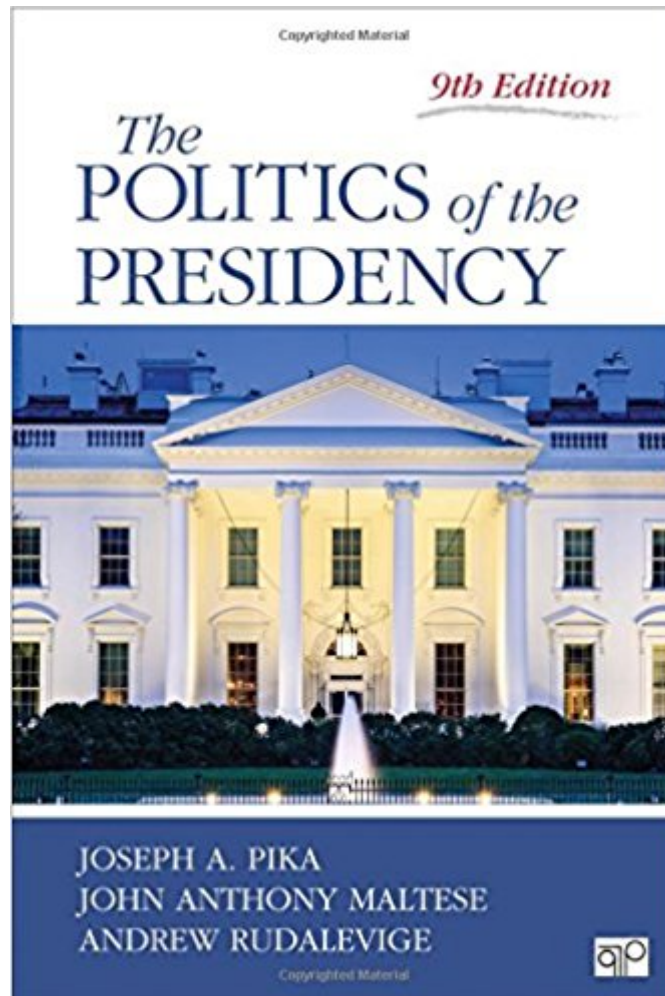




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# The Politics Of The Presidency (Ninth Edition)



## Synopsis

Never losing sight of the foundations of the office, the authors maintain a balance between historical context and contemporary scholarship on the executive. A solid foundation for any presidency course, the Ninth Edition features updated chapters, including thorough analysis of Obama's continuing challenges as a second-term president in an entrenched partisan environment.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"I use The Politics of the Presidency in my undergraduate presidency courses because the essential topics are thoroughly covered in a style that is both readable and interesting. The cases and examples are always well-chosen and up-to-date, and the special circumstances and challenges facing the current president can be easily compared to enduring presidential responsibilities such as domestic politics, economic policy, and national security." -- Bruce Buchanan "The authors' approach puts politics front and center in the study of the presidency. The Politics of the Presidency is clearly the work of senior scholars who have devoted many years to the study of the presidency and scholarship on the office. They know a lot about the office and convey what they know to students in a well-organized and well-written manner." -- Andrew Battista "The Politics of the Presidency is well-designed and -written, easy for students to comprehend, and all-around useful in laying out the key facets and concepts of the American presidency. It is deep in its material without being dense and approachable without sacrificing rigor. I have not seen a text on the American presidency that does a better job of laying clear the history, powers, and limitations of the modern

chief executive." -- Michael Julius

Joseph A. Pika is the James R. Soles professor emeritus of political science and international relations at the University of Delaware. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin and taught previously at SUNY at Buffalo. He is coauthor with Jason D. Mycoff of *Conflict & Compromise: Presidential and Congressional Leadership, 2001-2006* and coauthor with John Anthony Maltese and H. Phillips Shively of *Government Matters: American Democracy in Context*. He served for seven years on the Delaware State Board of Education, four years as president. John Anthony Maltese is the Albert B. Saye professor and associate dean of the University of Georgia's School of Public and International Affairs. He holds a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University. He is the author of *The Selling of Supreme Court Nominees* and *Spin Control: The White House Office of Communications and the Management of Presidential News*, and coauthor with Joseph A. Pika and H. Phillips Shively of *Government Matters: American Democracy in Context*. He is a Josiah Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professor and was named the Georgia Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). Professor Maltese also writes extensively about classical music, for which he won a Grammy Award from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. Andrew Rudalevige is the Thomas Brackett Reed professor of government at Bowdoin College and chair of the American Political Science Association's Presidents and Executive Politics section. He holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University and taught previously at Dickinson College and the University of East Anglia. His books include *Managing the President's Program*, *The New Imperial Presidency: Renewing Presidential Power after Watergate*, and, as co-editor, *The George W. Bush Legacy* and *The Obama Presidency: Appraisals and Prospects*. Prior to his academic career, he worked in state and local politics in Massachusetts.

Better than some text.

“The Politics of the Presidency” is an overview of what powers and responsibilities the president of the United States has, how he can exercise those powers, and how he has done so historically, with success or failure, by Joseph A. Pika, John Anthony Maltese, and Andrew Rudalevige, scholars of political science from three different universities. The authors understand the presidency as “essentially a political office” — that is, the chief executive must govern more through skilled political leadership than through the assertion

of constitutional prerogatives. A central theme is “the expectations the public has for [presidents] vastly exceed their capacity to meet those expectations. Bridging the gap is a full-time job.” The book takes us through different aspects of presidential power, how the president may exercise power, its limitations, and how this came to be, given the ambiguous nature of presidential authority in Article II of the United States Constitution. The authors begin by explaining why the Constitutional Convention decided that it wanted an executive and why the powers vested in him were deliberately vague. They explain the basic roles of the president, theories of presidential power in modern times, and what different presidents did to expand the power of that office. Most references in the book will be to presidents of the modern era, meaning Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the present day. In subsequent chapters, the authors offer many examples of the exercise of presidential power or its foiling; the emphasis is on more recent presidents — Barack Obama, George W. Bush, Bill Clinton. They sometimes go back to Nixon or even Eisenhower, but the general rule is that the more recent the presidential administration, the more coverage it gets, so the current Obama administration is often used as an example, and some references are made to the 2016 elections and campaigns in the chapter on Election Politics. The chapter on Election Politics dedicates much discussion to the history of presidential elections in the US, leading to the changes after 1968 that produced the current system of nominating candidates. A chapter on Public Politics offers an “analysis of enduring public attitudes toward the presidency” and the “permanent campaign that presidents wage between elections” these days. Again, we get some history of the evolution of the presidential image and how presidents personally appeal to the general public and mobilize interest groups and political parties in support of their agendas. Lest the character be subsumed by the office, there is a chapter on Presidential Character and Performance. It asks: How important are the president’s personality and emotional needs to policy? The authors look at James David Barber’s work on classifying presidents by their personalities and backgrounds. And this chapter introduces us to management styles. Legislative Politics is the subject of a chapter on the president’s dealings with Congress, which are fraught with institutional conflict due to their separate powers and different constituencies. The authors choose to analyze three cases of presidential fights with Congress from the most recent administrations. They examine both formal and informal presidential power in dealing with Congress. A chapter on Executive Politics asks how much the president can really control the federal bureaucracy. Is the president “chief executive” or a

“non-executive chief” This chapter includes a lot of information about the federal bureaucracy and what specific powers the president can exercise over it, including some discussion of the federal budget, the president’s cabinet, and the White House staff, topics that we will revisit in later chapters. A relatively brief chapter on Judicial Politics is followed by a chapter on The Politics of Domestic Policy. It emphasizes the complexity of domestic policy, considering the interest groups, agencies, and Congressional subcommittees involved. The authors look at how domestic policies have been formulated under different administrations. This is followed by chapters on The Politics of Economic Policy, The Politics of National Security Policy, comprised of foreign policy and military policy, which the authors judge to be the most important of the president’s policy roles. They look at the options a president has for implementing policy and difficulty in building consensus. The book wraps up with a chapter on The Challenges and Opportunities of a New President, which judges that the structure of the White House differs little between presidents and points out the constraints of legacy policies and partisanship and, again, the ambiguity of the president’s power.

“The Politics of the Presidency” tackles an essential topic: How the president gets things done and why he often cannot. It’s a lot easier to understand policy successes, failures, compromises, how they came up with the policy in the first place, and why meaningful change to the bureaucracy is a pipe dream, if you understand how the system works. I learned some things I didn’t know. This book is in its ninth edition. It strives to be current. The authors emphasize the most recent presidential administrations in their examples. They go easy on the presidents. The authors are not out to criticize or condone any particular policy or method of making policy. That would distract from their mission to explain the president’s responsibilities and limitations. Every president has different policies, context, and ways of using staff. The authors sometimes point out strengths and weaknesses in management style. This isn’t the breeziest read, but the information is critical to understanding our political system. It would be great for high school students looking forward to voting in their first election.

In this election year "The Politics of the Presidency" is a valuable resource. It is important to understand that it is a study of presidential politics through a study of the 44th president, Barack Obama. This case study looks at the history of the Presidency and the very partisan aspects of the office today. Presidential character and performance is discussed, along with domestic policies, the politics of elections, and is a valuable resource that can be of great help in introducing the subject to

students of any age. The book is full of charts and statistics, photographs, and has extensive notes for each chapter. One of the most misunderstood branches of government is the judicial and there is an excellent treatment of how the federal judiciary works and functions. Those who dislike President Obama will probably conclude that this book's authors are apologists for the president because they make some complimentary statements about his character, but don't be confused, as this book is an excellent source of information. Good to review in this contentious election year

This isn't strictly a history textbook which is good because it's pretty early to be able to examine the Obama presidency from a historical perspective. Instead, the book breaks down the way the presidency is changing by examining the Obama administration, in terms of law, tax policy, health policy, economic initiatives, and so on. In a way, it's like aiming at a moving target because it was written while Obama was still in office and a lot can happen in the space of a year. But it's still valuable to see how, for instance, the power of the presidency is increasing, despite Congress's efforts to block many actions they disagree with. The power of the congress seems to be more in enacting laws rather than in preventing them and when they don't act to pass laws, they seem to cede some of their power to the president. As valuable as the book seems to be, it will be out of date almost as soon as it is released, things are changing that quickly in politics these days.

Joseph Pika, John Maltese, and Andrew Rudalevige are in love, and the object of their unabashed adoration is our 44th president, Barack Hussein Obama junior. This book presents various aspects of the presidency in terms of how great Obama is at them ("no drama Obama'," "steely determination," "Obama aspired to bring a new spirit of bipartisanship," "Obama is a fast learner on policy matters," "Obama's patience and negotiating skills," etc etc), and aggressively defends Obama's policies against His critics. In case you thought this paragon of all things political was without fault though, Joe, John, and Andy point out that on one occasion, "the president's measured approach to problem solving" meant "the concern arose whether 'his temperament is SO even that he sometimes fails to convey... passion..."The book isn't exclusively focused on Obama, though, and trumpets Democrats generally (Congressional Democrats... generated a bipartisan, bicameral proposal... a tiny team of White House aides led by Bush chief of staff... meeting secretly in a bunker under the east wing," "George W. Bush's problem was with his own party's moderates," "nary a Republican vote," etc etc.) True believers may be distressed to discover that of 24 pictures in the book, only 9 are of Obama, but the others include His aides defending his policies (the rest are of His predecessors, the White House, and the moving van bringing His things to the White House.)

Anyway, the photographs of B.O. are sure to please His adorers: Obama quietly beginning to sing "Amazing Grace"! Obama working cooperatively with Democratic congressional majorities! Obama explaining economic issues to his cabinet! Obama giving a boy health insurance! Obama! Isn't he just DREAMY?

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