

PRESIDENTIAL DECISION MAKING AMERICA'S CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN THE OVAL OFFICE

**With IOP Fellow John Bridgeland
Mondays 4 – 5:30 pm
Room L166 IOP**

This Study Group will examine how the President of the United States makes decisions on domestic policy. The Study Group will feature recent case studies on a range of topics that illustrate how decisions are made. The Study Group also will examine what roles are played by the President's Departments and Agencies, Congress, interest groups, and sometimes even the courts. Students will learn about presidential power and presidential weakness. The Study Group will give students insights as to whether they might like to work in the White House.

The Study Group also will spearhead a service initiative that engages more colleges and universities in making institutional changes in their policies and practices to support a culture of community, national and public service.*

Schedule Overview

September 27	Overview of Presidential Decision Making
October 4	What's God Got to Do with the American Experiment: The Role of Religion in the Public Square
October 12	Election Reform in the Aftermath of the Florida Recount: From Chads to Change
October 18	Building a Culture of Service from Kennedy to Bush: From Peace Corps to USA Freedom Corps
October 28	Responding to the New Threats: Homeland Security in the Aftermath of September 11, 2001
November 1	Revenge of the Nerds: Budget Wonks as Kings
November 8	Congress and the President: Divided and Unified Government
November 15:	Spin City: The Daily Voice of the President

November 22

Life in the West Wing: Personal Reflection

***Note:** Separate planning sessions will be held on the college campus service project that the student liaisons will help lead. Most planning sessions will be held on Mondays.

Monday, September 27: Overview of Presidential Decision Making

IOP Fellow: *John Bridgeland* was the first Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council under President Bush, and the first Assistant to the President and Director of USA Freedom Corps, the President's national and community service initiative after September 11, 2001.

As the powers and responsibilities of the Presidency have grown, so have the number of decisions he is called upon to make. How has the Presidency evolved from an administrative Presidency to an agenda-setting Presidency? What decisions actually come before the President in the first place? What is the process by which he receives information and makes decisions? Who is invited in the Oval Office to make their case? What are the competing considerations? And what happens after a Presidential decision is made? In the first session, we also will review the case studies and guests who will join us and solicit input from students on any additional subjects they would like to cover.

We also will discuss the college service initiative and the timing of planning sessions to implement it.

Monday, October 4: What's God Got to Do with the American Experiment: The Role of Religion in the Public Square

Guest: *John DiIulio, Jr.*, Former Assistant to the President, founding Director of the White House Office of Faith Based & Community Initiatives, and co-author with Harvard's own James Q. Wilson of the leading textbook on American Government

The role of religion in public life has been the source of heated debate since our founding. While government funding of religion itself is prohibited, faith-based institutions seek and find federal funds through hundreds of programs to help mentor children of prisoners, treat the addicted, shelter the homeless and much more. When they do so, they often find an unlevel playing field compared to their secular counterparts who fare much better. The President made faith-based initiatives a cornerstone of his compassionate conservatism agenda by creating the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. Come here from the person who invented the initiative in the first place, who served as the Office's first Director, and has written books and commentary on faith and the Presidency.

Tuesday, October 12: Election Reform in the Aftermath of the Florida Recount: From Chads to Change

Guest: *Phillip Zelikow*, Former Executive Director, Bipartisan Commission on Federal Election Reform. Dr. Zelikow is also Executive Director of the 9/11 Commission and will offer reflections on his work there.

Visions of Florida officials holding up ballots with hanging chads to determine how someone had voted in the 2000 Presidential Election are forever burned in our memory. Only a few times in history has a presidential election been decided in favor of a candidate who wins the Electoral College without winning the popular vote. And in no time in history has a case before the U.S. Supreme Court played such a central role in resolving the disputes over a contested presidential election. The calls for election reform in the aftermath of the Florida recount were loud and clear, but a consensus on what should be done had not emerged. Along comes the Bipartisan Commission on Federal Election Reform, co-chaired by former President Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford, and ably led by Executive Director Phil Zelikow, with nearly unanimous recommendations. Commission reports often gather dust on a shelf, but the Zelikow Commissions had led profound influence on Presidential decision making and the reforms have become law. What role can Commissions play in Presidential decision making?

Monday, October 18: Building a Culture of Service from Kennedy to Bush: From Peace Corps to USE Freedom Corps

Guest: *Harris Wofford*, Former Special Assistant to President Kennedy on Civil Rights and the Peace Corps, Former CEO of the Corporation for National & Community Service, Former U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania, and Former Co-Chair of America's Promise

President Kennedy uttered his famous "Ask Not" in his 1961 Inaugural Address, and announced a new Peace Corps to send Americans to the huts and villages around the globe to promote peace and prosperity. By 1966, 15,000 Americans were serving and over the life of the program, more than 170,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have been invited by 136 host countries to work on issues such as AIDS education, information technology, and environmental conservation. In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, President Bush asked every American to give two years over their lifetimes in service to their country and created the USA Freedom Corps, what social scientists are calling the most comprehensive civic engagement initiative since FDR's Civilian Conservation Corps. What are these service initiatives and why were they created by two Presidents? What were the policy considerations in creating them and some of the alternatives that were rejected? What policies will foster a culture of service for decades to come? What is your role in the culture of service? Come listen to a top aide to President Kennedy, co-founder of the Peace Corps with Sargent Shriver, former U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania, and leader to the national and community service movement talk about the culture of service.

Thursday, October 28: Responding to the New Threats: Homeland Security in the aftermath of September 11, 2001

Guest: *Admiral Steve Abbot*, Former Acting Assistant to the President for Homeland Security, and Commanding Officer of the USS Theodore Roosevelt during Operation Desert Storm

The creation of the Department of Homeland Security is the largest restructuring of the federal government since the 1940s, consolidating more than 100 different agencies and divisions. In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, the Executive Office of the President also was transformed and had significantly expanded responsibilities to secure the homeland. What was the White House response? How did the President address the new threats? Come learn from a highly decorated war veteran, a commander of U.S. Fleets, and a person who was given frontline responsibilities to advise the President on homeland security during this trying time.

Monday, November 1: Revenge of the Nerds: Budget Wonks as Kings

Guest: *James Capretta*, White House Office of Management and Budget

Hidden deep and wide in the Old Executive Office Building next to the White House is a staff of hundreds of policy wonks who inform the policymaking process. They also presume the President's budget for submission to Congress. How do fiscal considerations affect the President's decision making and what role does the Office Management and Budget play in shaping Executive Branch policy? What does the growth of OMB say about the growth in the domestic power of the Presidency?

Monday, November 8: Congress and the President: Divided and Unified Government

Guest: *Nicolas Calio*, Former Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs for both President George H.W. Bush and President George W. Bush

President Bush campaigned on an aggressive domestic agenda – education reform, tax relief, and a broad-based compassion agenda. Success or failure of Washington is often judged by legislative victories. How has the Administration fared? What is the interplay between the President and the Congress? Does divided or Unified Government play a strong role in whether or not the President succeeds? Interact with the man who served as top legislative advisor to both President Bush 41 and 43.

Monday, November 15: Spin City: The Daily Voice of the President

Guest: *Ari Fleischer*, Former Assistant to the President & Press Secretary

The President's Press Secretary is the most visible and constant voice of the President. In an age of instant media messages, internet access and dozens of channels; how have

advancements in communications technology shaped the Presidency and how decisions are made? What is the role of the President's Press Secretary? Come listen to the President's first Press Secretary talk about the press, the Presidency and message restraint.

Monday, November 22: Life in the West Wing: Personal Reflections

The "West Wing" is better known as a TV show. But what is life actually like in the real West Wing. We will take a more personal look at the workplace of the President and those who serve him. We also will discuss careers in government, interests of those in the class, and talk about how to get an interesting job in the Executive Branch.