Course Description

Exercising political leadership is about carefully accumulating political capital and then spending it on initiatives that the policy maker decides are worthwhile or in the best interests of the community they serve. Those who accumulate political capital without spending it often have long and unproductive careers while those who spend capital without replenishing their account find themselves out of office. This course will focus on chief executives (presidents, governors, county executives and mayors). It will explore how these actors accumulate and spend political capital and it will examine the art of politics from the point of view of the practitioner.

Grading

I believe in measuring steady, consistent work throughout the semester rather than bursts of brilliance. Most jobs require the skills of a marathoner rather than a sprinter. So, there will be no mid-term and no final exam.

Instead, there will be lots of class participation, four short papers every few weeks and a term paper.

Your grade will be assigned as follows:

Quarterly papers: 40%
Class participation: 30%
Final paper: 30%

Political Capital Balance Sheets

I will ask you to submit a paper of 1,000 to 2,000 words (two to four pages, single spaced) that we’ll call “The Political Capital Balance Sheets.” In these papers you will discuss the political capital balance of President Obama, Vice President Biden, Speaker Boehner, Governor Walker, Dane County Executive Parisi and Madison Mayor Soglin. In your first paper I would like you to create your own index to measure political capital,
assign a number of 0 to 100 (with 0 being no political capital in the bank and 100 being the maximum possible) to each leader and, most importantly, explain how you arrived at that number using concepts from your readings and our class discussions. You can work off Kimberly Casey’s matrices or adapt your own. For each subsequent paper you will be asked to adjust your balance sheets and explain what has happened in the intervening weeks to move the balances up or down. You may also want to change your indexes and explain why.

**Class Participation**

We learn from each other. Especially as an adjunct professor (not a trained academic), my role is to guide the discussion more than it is to lecture. It is important that you share your insights with your colleagues, that you advance a point of view, defend it, adjust it to good counter points made by others and generally get in the spirit of a vigorous, friendly and rigorous open discussion.

**Final Paper**

A final paper will be due on May 6th. We will also use that class for you to present your papers and to discuss them in class. The paper should be around ten pages single-spaced (about 5,000 words) but I will not be stickler on length. It’s quality that counts.

The assignment will be to take two executive political leaders (living or dead; national, state or local) and contrast their styles and approaches to the job, evaluate how they accumulated and used political capital and discuss which was more effective at achieving their goals.

**Topics, Reading & Guests By Week**

The grid below is a work in progress. Some guest speakers have not yet confirmed and readings will be added and may be rearranged.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 28</td>
<td>Housekeeping: what this class is about, expectations, grading, etc. What is political capital?</td>
<td>Casey, Kimberly L., 2008. Defining Political Capital: A Reconsideration of Bourdieu's Interconvertibility Theory. Available at Learn@UW</td>
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<td>Cieslewicz Essay 1. What is political capital?</td>
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<td>February 4</td>
<td>Different kinds of executives.</td>
<td>Bennister, Mark &amp; Ben Worthy. 2012. Getting It, Spending It, Losing It: Exploring Political Capital. Available at Learn@UW</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Author/Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guest: Governor Tony Earl (2:30 – 3:30)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>FIRST POLITICAL CAPITAL BALANCE SHEET DUE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Guest: Dane County Executive Joe Parisi (3:30 – 4:30)</td>
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<td>February 25</td>
<td>Who do these people think they are: executives &amp; legislative bodies.</td>
<td>Steyvers, Kristof and Herwig Reynaert and Tony Vlcke, 2012. ‘Army of One or Join the Club’? Comparing Local Political Leadership in Europe, pp. 227 – 244 in Helms, Ludger (ed.) <em>Comparative Political Leadership</em>. Basingstoke. Palgrave Macmillan. Available at Learn@UW</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 11</td>
<td>Who’s in the kitchen:</td>
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executives & their inner circles.

Guest: Janet Piraino, my former chief of staff

March 18  Shaping the debate through media.  
Guest: Rachel Strauch-Nelson, Communications Director for Madison Public Schools

FINAL PAPER SUBJECTS CHOSEN

March 25  Spring Break
Enjoy!

April 1  PC and the politics of persuasion.
THIRD POLITICAL CAPITAL BALANCE SHEET DUE


April 8  Abraham Lincoln: The most transactional president.


April 15  Teddy Roosevelt: Losing the moment to keep political capital


April 22  FDR: Replenishing political capital.


April 29  Bill Clinton:

Readings to be assigned from Harris, John F. 2005.


Recharging the account during and after office.

FOURTH POLITICAL CAPITAL BALANCE SHEET DUE

| May 6 | Final paper presentations |

**Class Structure**

2:30 – 3:00 Leadership in the news; observations on leadership from the week gone by

3:00 – 4:00 Lecture or guest

4:00 – 4:30 Discussion