The American Presidency

Course Description
This course focuses on the American Presidency as an institution and the personalities and relevant historical situations related to the modern presidents. As such, the course explains why presidents act in particular ways and attempts to develop and explain generalizations about the Executive office, while placing it in a proper historical context. This is not a course strictly on the peculiarities, personality traits, and personal histories of individual presidents, but it will undertake considerable historical analysis in order to build context around the evolving institutional presidency. The course considers both foreign and domestic policy.

Learning Objectives
By the end of the semester the course will have met these objectives:

- Students will gain an understanding of the historical development of the presidency as an institution
- Students will grasp the importance of the president's role in foreign policymaking
- Students will comprehend the connection between the presidency and domestic policy
- Students will understand the interactions between the executive, legislative, judicial, and administrative branches of government

Major Course Requirements

10% of course grade: Participation- demonstrated by thoughtful class participation and attendance.

20% of course grade: Group assignment students will be assigned to work in groups of three. They will be required to present on a topic of their choosing relevant to the class material. In this presentation the group will create a PowerPoint presentation and submit a research paper of no less than 10 pages and using at least ten scholarly sources. The grade will be weighted equally across both components of the assignment to include: the quality of work in the written component as well as the thoroughness of the material presented in class, the organization of the presentation, clarity, and poise of the presenters.

35% of course grade: Presidential Case Study (major writing assignment)- each student will write a paper representing an in-depth analysis of a president's domestic and foreign policy and how they affected the evolution of the executive office. This assignment constitutes a serious
research paper. It should not be the Wikipedia version of a president's stay in office. I will grade the paper on the following 100 point scale:

50 points for content: The paper should be clearly written, thorough, analytical and representative of a university paper in an upper-division class. It must show both a historical and institutional understanding of the president and the challenges he faced, their strengths and weakness, and their contribution to the office. The paper must be a minimum of 12 pages (minus back matter).

40 points for research and scholarly sourcing: The paper must include a minimum of 12 scholarly sources (i.e. from peer reviewed journals found in the online databases through the TAMUCC library) and use these sources in appropriate ways, such as adding nuance and detail to the paper and backing for claims made throughout-paraphrase Wikipedia material if you must, but do not cite it.

10 points for grammar and style: The paper must use APSA style appropriate for a research paper in political science and be written in a clear and interesting manner (other sources available online as well): (http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocAPSA.html

*The paper will be due in class by Tuesday, November 22. Penalty for lateness is 10 points per day.

35% of course grade: Comprehensive Exam- Will include all material covered in the course. The exam will be distributed on 12/3 and is due by the official university final exam date via the Blackboard dropbox

Letter grades for the course will be assigned as follows:

A= 89.50 or above
B= 79.50 to 89.49
C= 69.50 to 79.49
D= 59.50 to 69.49
F= Below 59.5

Required Readings:


4. Additional online readings as assigned
The following make for excellent reading on the presidency, but are not required in this course:


*This book is not on the presidency, but on a presidential aspirant; a great read.*

**Format**
Participation is encouraged and expected. The class will be structured around instructor-led lectures and substantive student participation.

Attendance policy:
You should attend every class. Poor attendance will hurt your participation grade considerably.

Method of evaluating outcomes:
The instructor will gauge student learning primarily through formal testing via essay exams and a major writing assignment. Formal testing will be supported through a series of less-formal means including: thoughtful reading of the material by students demonstrated by class participation, instructor-student interaction in class, group assignments, and formal presentations, which will also contribute substantially to each student’s final grade.

**Class Schedule** (subject to change with proper notice):

Week 1 (26): Introduction to class, explain assignments, use of library, assign groups
*Read chapters 1-2 in Nelson*

Week 2: The evolving powers of the institutional presidency
(31): Lecture on the changing nature of presidential power
(2): Discussion topic- In what way did your president most significantly advance to power of the executive branch?
*Read chapters 3-5 in Nelson*

Week 3: The personal Presidency and the power of persuasion (public opinion)
*Labor Day/no class(7): Lecture on "going public" and presidential rhetoric
(9): Discussion topic- What was the focus of your president's campaign (issues, message, etc)?
*Read chapters 8-9 in Nelson*

Week 4: Presidential elections and campaigns
(14): Lecture on the nature of modern presidential campaigning
(16): Documentary, *So Goes the Nation*
*Read chapters 6-7 in Nelson

Week 5: The president and Congress
(21): Lecture on the relationship between the executive and legislative branches
(23): Documentary, A Perfect Candidate
*Read chapter 14 in Nelson

Week 6: The President and the Judiciary/Bureaucracy
(28): Lecture on the relationship between the executive and judicial branch
(30): President and the Bureaucracy
*read chapter 15 in Nelson

Week 7: American Foreign Policy
(5): Lecture on International Relations
(7): Research Day- Instead of holding class during this session, I will reserve the time in my office (and the office hours that follow) to assist students with any questions concerning their final paper.
*Read chapter 13 in Nelson

Week 8: American Foreign Policy Cont.
(12): Lecture on the goals of American foreign policy
(14): Discussion topic- What was your president's greatest foreign policy achievement?
* Read chapters 1-8 in Lind

Week 10: The Expanded Executive Office
(19): The president goes it alone?
(21): Discussion topic- What was your president's greatest foreign policy failure?
* Read chapters 9-14 in Lind

Week 11: FDR: A case study in the evolving institutional presidency
(26): Lecture on the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt
(28): Documentary, The Presidents-FDR
Finish watching the documentary online: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/presidents/video/fdr_01.html#v102

Week 12: Presidential Power and Regime Change
(2): Class discussion over the Kinzer book-attendance required.
(4): Research Day- Instead of holding class during this session, I will reserve the time in my office (and the office hours that follow) to assist students with their final paper.
*Homework- watch, The Presidents-LBJ online at PBS American Experience (click each yellow star about the window in the center of the screen to advance to movie:
Week 13: Presentations  
(9): Groups 1-2  
(11): Groups 3-4  
*Read chapters 10-11 in Nelson

Week 14: Presentations  
(16): Groups 5-7 and comprehensive exam distributed in class  
(18): Groups 8-10

Week 15: Thanksgiving  
(23): Documentary, Anytown, USA and due date for major writing assignment  
(25) *No class on Wednesday

Week 16: Wrapping up and final class discussion  
(30): Last day of class and final presentations (groups 11-12)

*The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the course schedule or material due to instructional needs throughout the semester.

Grade Appeals  
Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website http://cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html .  
For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

Disabilities Accommodations  
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Statement of Academic Continuity
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Academic Honesty:**
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, forgery, or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) If unsure of what honesty entails or if for more information regarding the penalties for academic dishonesty, please refer to the University Catalog. Instances of plagiarism will be handled on an individual basis, but generally speaking the first offense will result in a zero for the assignment; subsequent plagiarism will result in failing the course and/or reporting chronic plagiarism to the university administration for disciplinary action. Reuse of previous work, even if that work is original, is known as academic recycling; such work is not accepted in this course and instances of recycling will receive the same treatment as plagiarism.

**Academic Advising**
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

**Student Responsibilities:**
TURN OFF CELL PHONES!!!
Pay attention during class. Private conversations, sleeping, and reading non-class related material will not be tolerated.
Learn something! Participate in class discussions.