POLS 3316-W01: The American Presidency

Dr. David R Smith
Summer II 2017
Class Online Only
Office Hours: W 12-2pm Online and via email.
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Brief 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.

Format:
Participation is encouraged and expected. The class will be structured around online discussions, readings and engagement within Blackboard (Bb).

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

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

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 via discussion board(s), group assignments, and formal presentations, which will also contribute substantially to each student’s final grade.

Course assignments and grading structure:

20% of course grade: Participation- demonstrated by thoughtful class participation
Why is your participation weighted so heavily in the course? Each Tuesday and Thursday discussion discussion boards will be available on the appropriate topic noted in the syllabus.
10% of course grade: Individual assignment. They will be required to provide an analysis of their chosen president to the class, lasting no more than 8-10 slides, not including source materials. In this presentation the student will create a PowerPoint/Prezi presentation that discusses their president’s major domestic and foreign policy achievements and impact on the executive office as an institution.

Rubric available online in Blackboard for this component.

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 (Choose your book wisely):

65 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 12-15 pages double-spaced (minus back matter).

35 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

35% of course grade: Comprehensive Final Exam- Will include all material covered in the course.

Letter grades for the course will be assigned as

follows: A= 90.0 or above
B= 80.0 to 89.99
C= 70.0 to 79.99
D= 60.0 to 69.99
F= Below 59.99
Required Readings:

Book for Presidential Case Study: List at the end of the syllabus.

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

Week 1: 7/3-7/9  
Tuesday: Chapter 1 and Chapter 11  
Thursday: Chapter 4

Week 2: 7/10-7/16  
Tuesday: Chapter 2 and Chapter 5  
Thursday: Chapter 7

Week 3: 7/17-7/23  
Tuesday: Chapter 3 and Chapter 8  
Thursday: Chapter 9

Week 4: 7/24-7/30  
Tuesday: Chapter 6 and Chapter 10  
Friday: Presidential Case Study Papers due: Friday, July 28, 2017 by 11:59pm. Late Work will not be accepted. No excuses.

Week 5: 7/31-8/4  
Tuesday: Post presentations and discussions/interact with classmates.  
Final Exam: Opens Thursday, August 3, 2017 at 12:01am and will Close Friday, August 4, 2017 at 11:59pm.

**Methodology**  
In order to achieve the objectives of the course, class time will be split between class discussions of the readings and case discussions. You MUST do the reading before you come to class. Remember, a significant portion of your grade depends on class participation so it is to your benefit to read, think and participate.

**A Note on Confidentiality**  
A feeling of openness and trust among the participants will increase our ability to learn from each other. To foster the free exchange of experience, suggestions, and ideas, we ask that each of you treat the information shared by others as confidential.

**Student Responsibilities:**  
You are responsible for what goes on in class whether or not you attend. Do not ask me “did anything important go on in class today?" To ask that is an insult to yourself, your classmates and me. Why would I ever use your precious time and mind to discuss something unimportant?
DISABILITY SERVICES
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, Room #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.

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.

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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call (361) 825-3466.

GRADE APPEALS PROCESS
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that she or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.
Books for your Presidential Paper (Choose One):

*John Adams* by David McCullough

*Teams of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* by Doris Kearns Goodwin

*Theodore Rex* by Edmund Morris

*Truman* by David McCullough

*The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* by Edmund Morris

*Washington: A Life* by Ron Chernow

*The Passage of Power (The Years of Lyndon Johnson, #4)* by Robert A. Caro

*His Excellency: George Washington* by Joseph J. Ellis

*American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House* by Jon Meacham

*American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson* by Joseph J. Ellis

*Decision Points* by George W. Bush

*James Madison: A Biography* by Ralph Louis Ketcham

*Eisenhower: Soldier and President* by Stephen E. Ambrose

*Dark Horse: The Surprise Election and Political Murder of President James A. Garfield* by Kenneth D. Ackerman

*Tried by War: Abraham Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief* by James M. McPherson

*Profiles in Courage* by John F. Kennedy

You are welcome to select a different book, these are just some recommendations to get you started. The majority of these can be picked-up for minimal cost (Half Price Books or similar location in Corpus) or via Amazon.com.