POLS 3316.001: The American Presidency

Dr. David R Smith
Spring 2019
OCNR 258
Tuesday 4:20-6:50
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.

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
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:
1. Nelson. The Presidency and the Political System. 11th Ed.
2. Ellis and Nelson. Debating the Presidency: Conflicting Perspectives on the American Executive. 4th Ed.

The above listed books are sold as a bundle in the University Bookstore.

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

Class Schedule (subject to change with proper notice):

Week 1: The President
E&N: Debate 1 and Debate 2

Week 2: Elements of Presidential Power
E&N: Debate 9
N: Chapter 3 and Chapter 4

Week 3: Competence and Psychological President
E&N: Debate 8
N: Chapter 5 and Chapter 6

Week 4: Presidential Selection
E&N: Debate 13
N: Chapter 7 and Chapter 8
Book selection due for approval!

Week 5: Presidents and Politics
E&N: Debate 6
N: Chapter 9 and Chapter 10

Week 6: President, Parties, Interest Groups, Allies...
E&N: Debate 3
N: Chapter 11 and Chapter 12

Week 7: Presidents and Government
E&N: Debate 7
N: Chapter 13

Week 8: Congress, the President and Unilateral Power
E&N: Debate 12
N: Chapter 15 and Chapter 17

Week 9: Spring Break

Week 10: Buereaucracy, the President and the Courts
E&N: Debate 7
N: Chapter 14 and Chapter 16
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.

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 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.
**Dropping a Class**
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

**GRADE APPEALS PROCESS**
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he 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.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at: [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html).

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism**
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, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in (a zero (0) on the assignment at the very least).
Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

Definition: In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism is a violation of academic expectations, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes:

- Using the work of another as your own,
- Downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
- Using resource materials without correct documentation,
- Using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and proper citation.
- Turning in a researched project without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.

When you are confused about citation of quotes or ideas, please visit the Writing Center or me to get help. Information on MLA documentation rules and APA documentation rules is available at Purdue University’s OWL: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/, and from our local Writing Center at CASA.

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.
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. You are also welcome to check-out a book in the library that is a study of a President.