

The American Presidency

Instructor: Alexandra G. Cockerham

T/TH 3:35-4:50 pm, Bellamy 005

Office Hours: TH 2:30-3:30 pm

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Course Description

Welcome to The American Presidency! This course will introduce students to the American presidential institution. Presidential power occupies a vexed position in the United States and in presidential democracies more generally. On one hand, the public expects the president to accomplish much more than their formal powers alone permit. However, at the same time, a president who takes too much control risks being seen as a tyrant. In this course we will primarily look at presidential leadership and the capacity of the chief executive to fulfill their responsibilities and exercise their powers. We will also look at constraints on the president's power and how he/she can overcome these limitations. While this course focuses on the US presidential institution, many topics from this course can be generalized to presidential democracies more broadly. Students will not only be exposed to current research on the US executive but will also briefly consider what we can learn by examining presidential institutions from a comparative perspective.

The course objectives are as follows. By the end of this course you will be able to: explain how the president interacts with each the bureaucracy, the legislature, and the judiciary; explain how the president is nominated and elected; understand the importance of the president's relationship with the public; explain the relationship between the president and his advisers; understand the general dynamics of presidential domestic and foreign policy making; explain the ways in which the president can overcome limits on his power; and apply many of the concepts from the American presidency to other presidential democracies.

Course Materials

The following books are required reading and are found at the FSU bookstore:

Edwards, George C. 2013. *Presidential Leadership: Politics and Policy Making*. Stamford: Cengage Learning.

Rudalevige, Andrew. 2002. *Managing the President's Program: Presidential Leadership and Legislative Policy Formulation*. Princeton University Press.

Select Readings on Blackboard

Grades

Final grades will be assessed through various measures of your performance in the course. The final grade will be made up of 100 points.

Table 1: Grades

| Task | Points |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Midterm | 20 |
| Final Exam | 30 |
| Homework | 30 |
| Participation | 20 |

Letter grades will be determined as follows:

Table 2: Letter Grades

| | | | |
|---------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Excellent | A 100-93 | A- 92-90 | |
| Above Average | B+ 89-87 | B 86-83 | B- 82-80 |
| Average | C+ 79-77 | C 76-73 | C- 72-70 |
| Below Average | D+ 69-67 | D 66-63 | D- 62-60 |
| Unacceptable | F < 60 | | |

Examinations

There will be two in class exams. The dates are scheduled in the syllabus. For each examination, students will be responsible for knowing the material covered in the course up to the point of the exam. The final exam will be cumulative. Exams will be based on the material covered in class as well as material from the assigned readings. Exams will consist of a mixture of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer questions.

Students are expected to be present for all exams at the beginning of the exam period. Absences or late arrivals for exams will only be excused for University approved reasons. All make-up exams will be administered directly after the final exam on the last day of class.

Homework

For homework students will be asked to write two paragraphs (at least eight sentences) every week about the assigned reading. The writing should summarize the major points from the weekly reading and provide insight into what the student learned that week. Students will also be required to write two multiple-choice questions relating to the assigned readings for the week. A hard copy of this assignment will be due at the beginning of class every Thursday. The lowest homework grade will be dropped.

Participation

Students are expected to attend every class. Throughout the semester, we will do 10 in class activities based on the readings and lecture material. These activities will be open-book and students will receive credit for their attendance as long as they are present and participate in the learning activity. Students will receive one point for their name and one point for the quality of the work. These activities will be conducted randomly throughout the semester. If a student misses class on the day the activity is conducted, they will lose one point from their participation grade.

Administrative Policy

Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible for planning ahead by checking the syllabus for upcoming readings and assignments. Students are responsible for all assigned readings. Keep in mind that not all reading material will be covered in class. Therefore it is imperative that students complete all readings and integrate them into the course as applicable. All readings are fair game for tests. In addition, all students are responsible for contributing to a positive learning environment. This means that students are expected to demonstrate respectful behavior to other students and the instructor. The instructor retains the right to ask a student to leave the classroom if the student is negatively contributing to the learning environment and the right to lower a student's grade. Students are expected to mute their electronic devices at the beginning of each class and keep their phones and laptops put away.

Extra Credit

There will be at least one extra credit question on the exams. There will be no other extra credit offered.

Late Work

All assignments are to be turned in on the announced due date. Late assignments will not be accepted without a University approved excuse. Late assignments with a university approved excuse are to be turned in within 48 hours of the originally designated due date.

Academic Honor Policy

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless the instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly and properly cited. Students are responsible for policing themselves with respect to plagiarism. Any student engaging in academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, academic misrepresentation, etc.) will receive a zero for the relevant assignment and will be reported to the proper university officials for further action. See the FSU handbook for more information on this.

Academic Accommodations

If you anticipate needing any type of an academic accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please discuss this with the instructor within the first week of class. Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should: (1) Register with and

provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) and (2) Bring a letter to the instructor from the SDRC indicating you need academic accommodations. This should be done within the first week of class. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. If a student's accommodations change during the semester, the student will present an updated official letter from the SDRC outlining the specific modifications. See the FSU handbook for more information on this.

Syllabus Change Policy

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

Incomplete Grades

No incomplete grades will be given unless there is an agreement between the instructor and the student PRIOR TO the end of the course. The instructor retains the right to determine legitimate reasons for an incomplete grade.

Course Schedule

Table 3: Course Schedule

| Date | Topic | Reading Assignment |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| August 30 | First Day Administrative Activities | |
| September 1 | No class- Read | Edwards Chapter 1 pages 1-5 and Appendix C Article II; Federalist 69 on Bb |
| September 6 | The Origins of the US Presidential Institution and The Evolution of the Presidency | Edwards and Wayne Chapter 1 pages 5-17 |
| September 8 | The Nomination Process | Edwards and Wayne Chapter 2 and Homework 1 due |
| September 13 | The Nomination Process | Edwards and Wayne Chapter 2 |
| September 15 | The Presidential Election | Edwards and Wayne Chapter 3 and Homework 2 due |
| September 20 | The Presidential Election | Edwards and Wayne Chapter 3 |
| September 22 | The President and the Public | Edwards and Wayne Chapter 4 and Homework 3 due |
| September 27 | The President and the Public | Presidency Handbook Chapter on Going Public Bb |
| September 29 | The President and the Media | Edwards and Wayne Chapter 5 and Homework 4 due |
| October 4 | Presidents and their Advisers | Edwards and Wayne Chapter 6 |
| October 6 | Presidents and their Advisers | Rudalevige Chapters 2 and 3 and Homework 5 due |
| October 11 | Presidential Decision Making | Edwards and Wayne Chapter 7 |
| October 13 | The President and the Executive Branch | Edwards and Wayne Chapter 8 and Homework 6 due |
| October 18 | The President and the Executive Branch | Lewis, David E. 2010. The politics of presidential appointments: Political control and bureaucratic performance. Princeton University Press, Chapters 2 and 3 on Bb. |
| October 20 | Midterm Examination | Homework 7 due |
| October 25 | The President and Congress | Edwards and Wayne Chapter 9 |
| October 27 | The President and Congress | Rudalevige Chapter 6 and Cameron Chapter 1 on Bb and Homework 8 due |
| November 1 | The President and the Judiciary | Edwards and Wayne Chapter 10 |

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|--------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| November 3 | Domestic Policy Making | Edwards and Wayne Chapter 11 and Homework 9 due |
| November 8 | Domestic Policy Making | Light, Paul. 1999. The president's agenda: Domestic policy choice from Kennedy to Clinton. Johns Hopkins University Press, Chapters 1 and 2 on Bb |
| November 10 | Budgetary and Economic Policy | Edwards and Wayne Chapter 12 and Homework 10 due |
| November 15 | Making Foreign and Defense Policy Making | Edwards and Wayne Chapter 13 |
| November 17 | Executive Institutions | Golder and Golder Chapter TBD on Bb and HW 11 due |
| November 22 | Executive Institutions | Clark, Golder, and Golder Chapter TBD on Blackboard |
| November 24 | Happy Thanksgiving! | No class |
| November 29 | Unilateral Action and the President | Howell reading on Blackboard; Shugart and Carey 1998 reading on Bb |
| December 1 | The Executive from a Comparative Perspective | Wiesehomeier and Benoit 2009; Mainwarring and Shugart chapter TBD 1997; Samuels 2004; Huber 1996 (all on Bb) and Homework 12 due |
| December 6 | The Executive from a Comparative Perspective | Linz and Valenzuela 1994; Cheibub 2002; Tsebelis 1995; Golder 2006 (all on Bb) |
| December 8 | Final Exam Review | Homework 13 due |
