

**BAYLOR UNIVERSITY**

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

PSC 3330 / AMS 3330  
The American Presidency  
TR 11:00-12:15, Draper 349  
Office Hours: xx:xx

*Spring 2014*  
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Course Description: This course provides an introduction to the study of the American presidency. Three different approaches to this subject will be introduced and we will examine the constitutional foundations of the office, its evolving development, and the recurrent challenges presidents face. While this course is unashamedly historical in its orientation and focus, prior detailed knowledge of American political history is not necessary for enrollment, as we will learn everything you need to know. Finally, attention will also be given to current events as they pertain to the presidency.

Course Objectives: The fundamental objective of the course is to gain the foundational knowledge and theoretical skills necessary to think critically about the presidency. Students will demonstrate an understanding of: 1) the three major approaches to presidential study; 2) the constitutional powers and limitations of the office; 3) the major developments within the evolution of the office; 4) the president as leader within political cycles; and 5) current events.

Class Requirements:

*Examinations:* There will be three exams in this course—two midterm exams and a comprehensive final exam. The format of exams may include multiple-choice and short answer questions (TBD before each test), but all will be of the in-class, closed-book variety.

*Exam Make-ups:* Not recommended but... those with university excused absences that can reasonably be expected to know they will miss an exam (for example: to play in a university athletic event) must schedule to take their make up by Jan 23, 2014. (The actual make-up date can come before or after the exam date based on how our schedules mesh). Those with university excused absences that cannot reasonably be expected to know they will miss an exam (for example: due to documented sickness) will be allowed to take a comprehensive make up exam, covering all of the course, *at the end of the course* IFF (if and only if) they provide a documented excuse and schedule a make-up within 48 hours of missing an exam. (The actual make-up date will be based on my schedule). If there is, for any reason, any danger that you will miss more than one exam you should not take this course, as *there is a limit of taking only one make-up exam*.

*Quizzes:* There will be multiple quizzes in this course. The format of quizzes will vary. There will be two 'big' quizzes that require you to regurgitate memorized facts, multiple 'pop' quizzes over previous lecture material, assigned readings, or current events (almost every week), and some possible 'attendance' quizzes that require you to be in class.

*Quiz Make-ups:* Big quizzes are the only kind that can be made up. The rules concerning make ups of exams govern in these situations. Announced and attendance quizzes cannot be made up. I will, however, drop the lowest pop quiz grade at the end of the semester.

*Projects:* There will be two short research projects assigned this semester. These should be fun. Details will be discussed in class and posted on BB. Late projects will be penalized one letter grade per day... starting the minute they are late!

*Participation:* Attendance is necessary to participate but not sufficient to ensure maximum credit in this realm. To participate fully, you will need to come to class and demonstrate you have read, understood, and thought critically about the day's readings as well as the week's topic of discussion. You will also need to stay up on current events for this course by reading from among various news sources. The following is a non-exclusive "starter list" of online options. Just make sure you're aware of each source's political leanings and read from both sides.

Center – Left

www.cnn.com  
www.nytimes.com  
www.politicsonline.com  
www.huffingtonpost.com

Center - Right

www.foxnews.com  
www.wallstreetjournal.com  
www.realclearpolitics.com  
www.nationalreview.com

drudgereport.com

*Grades:* Your grade in this course will be determined by the following...

Midterm exams	100 points (x 2)
Final exam	250 points
Big quizzes	20 points (x 2)
Other quizzes	2-6 points (undetermined #)
Projects	20 points (x 2)
Participation	20 points

In order to receive an A, you will need 90.00% of the total points possible, a B+ 88.50%, a B 80.00%, a C+ 78.50%, a C 70.00%, and a D 60.00%. Standard rounding procedures will be followed, ie: 89.95 = A; 89.94 = B+. Note: the number of total points possible in this course is undetermined at this time and left intentionally vague so as to create some uncertainty, hinder gaming of the system, and encourage maximum effort and attendance from students. This 'scheme' also better approximates conditions in real life, so it is good practice.

Policies:

*Attendance Policy:* I expect that every student will come to every class on time, actively participate in course discussions, and demonstrate that he/she has completed and reflected upon the assigned readings. According to Baylor University policy, a student who misses more than 25% of the classes in a course must receive an F. Additionally, to counteract the perverse incentives this policy creates -- to miss the most classes possible without failing -- every absence after your third can, at my discretion, result in a deduction of one and a half (1.50) percentage points from your final grade. Finally, tardiness is rude. Repeat offenders may be counted absent.

*Honor Code:* Students in this course will abide by the Baylor Honor Code. This includes, but is not limited to, the requirement for academic integrity. Plagiarism, cheating, and any other form of academic dishonesty are serious offenses and, at a minimum, constitute grounds for failure of the course.

*Cell Phones and Laptops:* Please turn off your cell phone and other gadgetry before the class begins. Please do not bring your laptop to class unless you have a documented need for it (see me about this).

*Email:* e-mail is a courtesy and not a substitute for attending the course or for a discussion during office hours. However I will, from time to time, need to send the class announcements via email. You are responsible for getting my e-mails, so set up your accounts properly. If you have questions or issues you need to discuss, I am reasonably available via e-mail but prefer you to come to my office hours. Please practice proper writing etiquette in your communications via this medium.

Reading Materials: Books are available at the bookstore or your favorite on-line source. Additional readings are on Blackboard (BB).

Milkis, Sidney M. and Michael Nelson 2007. *The American Presidency: Origins and Development, 1776-2007*. 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Washington D.C.: CQ Press. = M&N

Skowronek, Stephen 2011 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). *Presidential Leadership in Political Time: Reprise and Reappraisal*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas. = SS

**Course Schedule and Readings:**

(You are responsible for the following material by the date listed.)

**Week One:** Jan 15 & 17 ~ **Intro and Constitutional Convention (M&N chpt 1)**

Big Quiz #1 prep: memorize the order of all the presidents by name, party, & date.

**Week Two:** Jan 22 & 24 ~ **The Constitutional Presidency (M&N chpt 2; look on BB for “Week 2: Primary Readings”)**

Launch Presidential Project #1 (on the 24<sup>th</sup>)

**Week Three:** Jan 29 & 31 ~ **The Federalists (M&N chpt 3)**

Big Quiz #1 (on the 31<sup>st</sup>)

**Week Four:** Feb 5 & 7 ~ **The Jeffersonians (M&N chpt 4)**

**Week Five:** Feb 12 & 14 ~ **The Jacksonians (M&N chpt 5)**

**Week Six:** Feb 19 ~ **Midterm #1**

Feb 21 ~ **Lincoln (M&N chpt 6)**

**Week Seven:** Feb 26 & 28 ~ **Lincoln and the Third Party System (M&N chpt 6 & 7)**

Presidential Project #1 due (on the 26<sup>th</sup>)

**Week Eight:** Mar 5 and 7 ~ **The Early Progressive Era (M&N chpt 8 & 9)**

**Week Nine:** Spring Break

**Week Ten:** Mar 19 and 21 ~ **Political Time and The System of 1896 (SS chpt 2; reading BB)**

(Also, study table 3.1 pp 85 and Launch Presidential Project #2 (on the 21<sup>st</sup>))

**Week Eleven:** Mar 26 & 28 ~ **The New Deal (I) (M&N chpt 10 & 11)**

**Week Twelve:** Apr 2 ~ **The New Deal (II) (M&N chpt 12)**

Apr 4 ~ **Midterm #2**

**Week Thirteen:** Apr 9 & 11 ~ **The Reagan Revolution (I) (M&N chpt 13 and SS chpt 3)**

Big Quiz #2 prep: memorize the presidents by place in political time.

**Week Fourteen:** Apr 16 ~ **The Reagan Revolution (II) (M&N chpt 14 and SS chpt 3)**

April 18 ~ **Diadeloso** (no class)

**Week Fifteen:** Apr 23 & 25 ~ **The Age of Obama? (I) (M&N chpt 15 and SS chpt 4)**

Presidential Project #2 due (on the 23<sup>th</sup>);

Big Quiz #2 (on the 25<sup>th</sup>)

**Week Sixteen: Apr 30 & May 2 ~ The Age of Obama? (II) (SS chpt 6)**