Rollins College

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Syllabus for Presidency

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/richard_skinner/27/
POLITICAL SCIENCE 343: THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY

In this course, you will come to understand how the presidency functions within our system of separated powers. We will begin by examining the evolution of the presidency over American history, tracing it from the Constitution, through a long period of weakness in the 19th century, and into its rapid growth in power during the 20th and 21st century. We will then look at the presidency’s relationship with the public, interest groups, and political parties. The presidency is both a highly personal institution and an institutionalized personality; we will examine how personalities of presidents shape their administrations, and how the Executive Office of the Presidency provides institutional memory. The latter part of the course will be devoted to the presidency’s relationship with other institutions of the federal government, including Congress, the judiciary, and the bureaucracy; and how they work together (or do not) to make policy.

This is a writing-intensive course with a major research paper at its heart. The paper must involve significant research on your part; it must also state a clear thesis and support it with relevant information. I also recommend that you acknowledge likely opposing arguments and develop a coherent argument against them.

COURSE GRADE:
Midterm: 25%
Final Exam: 25%
Bibliography 5%
Rough draft 10%
Research Paper: 25%
Attendance and Participation: 10%

RESEARCH PAPER: Students must write a 10-to-15 page research paper about the American presidency. I expect to hear from you frequently about your progress. Please cite all of your sources, using a commonly used system such as that used by the Modern Language Association, by the American Political Science Association, or that found in The Chicago Manual of Style.

Topic due January 19. Simply inform me (preferably by e-mail) what topic you will study. I must approve your topic. When choosing a topic, I recommend that you consult with me early and often.

Prospectus due January 26. Your prospectus should be 1-2 pages long and explain why you have chosen this topic, why it is important, and how you intend to conduct your research.

Bibliography due February 23. Your bibliography should list those works you intend to use in writing your research paper. Explain the importance of each work and how it fits into your overall project. I expect that you will list at least 5-6 books or articles.
Rough draft due **March 23.**

Research paper due **April 25.**

**ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION:** I expect that you attend every class and do all the assigned reading. I also expect that you participate in class discussion and all other activities.

**LATE POLICY:** Assignments are due at 5 PM on the day listed in the syllabus. After that, late papers will be penalized one-third of a letter per day. If you foresee a serious problem with submitting an assignment on time, please notify me well in advance.

**BOOKS:**


All other readings will be on Blackboard.

**Assignments:**

January 11-13: The Presidency in a System of Separated Powers ; The Presidency in Context  
Pika and Maltese, ch. 1  
Nelson, chs. 1 & 3  
Federalist 69-72

Rudalveige, Parts I  
Milkis and Nelson, chs. 1-7

Rudalveige, Part II  
Milkis and Nelson, chs. 8-11
February 8-15: The Evolution of the Presidency – The Modern Presidency in Transition
Rudalveige, Parts III and IV
Milkis and Nelson, chs. 12-16

February 17-22: The Presidency and the Public
Pika and Maltese, ch. 3
Nelson, chs. 8-9

February 24 – March 3: The Presidency, Political Parties and Interest Groups
Nelson, chs. 10-11

**MIDTERM: February 22**

March 15-17: Presidential Elections
Pika and Maltese, ch. 2
Nelson, chs. 6-7

March 22-24: The Personal Presidency; The White House Staff
Pika and Maltese, ch. 4
Nelson, chs. 4, 5, 12 & 18

March 29-31: The President as CEO; The President and the Courts
Pika and Maltese, ch. 6 & 7
Nelson, chs. 13, 15-16
Rudalveige, Part V

March 29-31: The President and Congress
Pika and Maltese, ch. 5
Nelson, ch. 14

April 12-14: The President and Foreign Policy
Pika and Maltese, chs. 10-11
Rudalveige, Parts VI and VII
Nelson, ch. 17

April 19-21: The President and Domestic Policy
Pika and Maltese, chs. 8-9

April 26: Assessing the System
Rudalveige, Part VIII
Nelson, ch. 2