POLS 3308-010: The American President, Spring 2019  TTH: 12:30-1:45 P.M., RAS 110

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Office: RAS 223  Office Hours: TTH, 11 A.M.-Noon and 2-5 P.M.; Wed., 1-3 P.M.; or by appointment.

Course Description: This is a course on the American presidency and presidential politics. We will start with an overview of the institution and examination of how the office has changed over time. Attention will also be given to the different types of presidential power and how individual presidents have approached their role as Chief Executive. The dynamic relationships between the White House and the other two branches of government, the federal bureaucracy, the public, and the press will also be discussed.

Student learning objectives (SLOs):
Critical Thinking (CT1): Promote students’ ability to think critically about politics, the roles and authority of government institutions and officials, and the dynamic nature of the American political system. Thinking critically means more than simply memorizing information, it is the ability to gather, analyze, and synthesize information that is factual and relevant to a question, issue, or event.

Communication (CS1 & CS2): Students will develop the ability to express their knowledge and understanding of concepts through effective written and oral communication.

Social Responsibility (SR2 & SR3): Gain an understanding of the contexts that shape and influence the federal government’s actions and decisions on public policy. The study of the American political system allows for a greater appreciation of civic responsibility and ability to engage others in civil discourse.

Personal Responsibility (PR1): Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to understand and evaluate political choices and outcomes.

Required Text: Pika, Maltese, and Rudalevige, The Politics of the Presidency, Ninth Edition. Bring your textbook to every class. If needed, an older edition will be placed on Course Reserve and accessible at Porter Henderson Library’s front desk.

Angelo State policies: As outlined in ASU’s student handbook, students are responsible for regular and punctual attendance at all scheduled classes. The university reserves the right to deal with individual cases of non-attendance. The handbook also outlines the university’s Academic Honor Code, the parameters of academic integrity, and students’ responsibilities.

Decisions on Incompletes will be made after consulting with the Office of Student Affairs.

Blackboard: This course has a Blackboard site where you can obtain a copy of the syllabus and your grades. When necessary, I will post announcements or send emails about any changes to the course schedule.

Lecture outline, assignments, and exams: Depending on the pace of class discussion or unforeseen events (weather related cancellations, illness, etc.), the course outline is subject to change. Exam dates will only be changed in the event the university closes due to weather conditions.

If you miss class, it is your responsibility to contact me about the material that was discussed and make arrangements to acquire a copy of a classmate’s lecture notes because I no longer provide students with copies of my lecture slides or movies.

Policies on examinations: Prior to an exam all students will be required to turn off all cell phones and computers, and place all belongings under their seat. Anyone caught cheating will immediately forfeit their exam and receive and automatic “F” for the assignment.

It is your responsibility to contact me is you miss an exam due to a university-related event or illness to schedule a make-up exam. Make-up exams must be taken within the two weeks following the original exam date. Failure to schedule a make-up exam within this time frame will results in an automatic “F” for that exam.

The course schedule is subject to change pending the Political Science Department’s anticipated trip to Austin. If necessary, adjustments will be announced in class after travel plans are finalized.
Excuses: The professor is the sole judge of all excuses. No excuse will be accepted after the fact or for students’ personal convenience. In the case of an emergency or extended absence, notification from the Office of Student Affairs will be required.

Accommodations: Any student who needs accommodations due to a disability, participation in university-related activities, religious observances, family matters, or other life events should contact the Office of Student Affairs as soon as possible so they can assist you with making arrangements and notifying professors. The office is located in the Houston Harte University Center, Room 112, and additional information can be found on ASU’s website.

Class Etiquette and Student Conduct: Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Anyone caught plagiarizing or cheating on an assignment will receive an F for that assignment.

- Computers will permitted in class but if it appears that devices are being used for purposes other than taking notes, I reserve the right to prohibit their use by anyone.
- Anyone habitually engaging in disruptive or distracting behavior (sleeping, talking, etc.) will be asked to take a seat in the front row, or closest available, for the rest of the semester.
- Texting in class is prohibited. Anyone caught texting in class will be asked to leave the classroom.

The Department of Political Science and Philosophy is committed to support the learning of all students. As part of maintaining the decorum of the classroom, students are expected to behave appropriately and in a responsible manner. Comments made during class discussion should be well thought out and not based on personal prejudice. Any student who is disruptive or engages in ad hominem attacks will be asked to leave.

Assignments and Exams

Exams: All three exams will consist of two sections; short answer and fill-in-the-blank. Each exam will be worth 100 points. Exams 1 and 2 will cover the material noted in the Course Outline section of the syllabus. The Final Exam is comprehensive and will consist of both new material and terms from the two previous exams and a White House document that will be provided in class the week before the final along with additional information. Make-ups for Exams 1-2 must be scheduled within two weeks of the original exam date.

Presidential Election Predictions: Based on previous years leading up to a presidential election, candidates running for the office will formally announce their intentions in the coming months. Breaking precedent, some already have. Based on what you learn about the presidential selection process, each student will be required to identify two likely candidates and provide substantive reasons for your predictions.

This assignment is designed to help students develop their observational skills regarding the political environment. A print copy with detailed instructions will be provided in class. A copy of this assignment’s guidelines will not be available on Blackboard. Anyone who is absent the day it is distributed or needs an additional copy must see me after class or during my office hours. This assignment is worth 100 points and is due at the beginning of class on Tuesday, February 19th. Emailed submissions will not be accepted. Late assignments will have 10 points deducted for each day past the due date.

To benefit everyone, questions about this assignment must be asked before or during class.

In-Class Discussion, Presidential Documents: Students must attend class on the day of this exercise to receive credit. Only university-related absences, verified by a faculty advisor, will be accepted. Prior to this exercise students will be given a print copy of the necessary materials. This assignment is worth 50 points. Please note that the designated date may be subject to change, if necessary.

Pop Quizzes: 5-10 pop quizzes based on the assigned reading will be given throughout the semester. Quizzes can only be taken in-class. Make-ups will only be permitted for absences related to participation in a sanctioned university event and notification by a faculty advisor. Pop quizzes are worth 25 points each. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the semester.

Extra Credit: A documentary will be shown at the end of the semester. Only students who attend every class in which the movie is shown and discussed will have 10 points of extra credit added to their final grade.

Final grades will follow Angelo State University’s Grading Scale: A: 100-90%; B: 89-80%; C: 79-70%; D: 69-60%; F: 59% or below.
Course Outline: It is your responsibility to read the assigned material, including the examples and case studies in each chapter, prior to class. You are also expected to bring your textbook to each class for reference.

Part I: Origins, Elections, and the Public Presidency

Week 1: January 15th & 17th
   (T) First day of class, review of the syllabus
   (TH) Federalist Papers, Nos. 51 and 70 (Available Online)

Week 2: January 22nd & 24th
   (T-TH) Appendix C, Excerpts of the U.S. Constitution; Chapter 1, The Changing Presidency

Week 3: January 29 & 31st
   (T-TH) Chapter 2, Election Politics

Week 4: February 5th & 7th
   (T-TH) Chapter 3, Public Politics

Week 5: February 12th & 14th
   (T-TH) Chapter 4, Presidential Character and Performance

Week 6: February 19th & 21st
   (T) Lecture wrap-up and review; Presidential Election Predictions assignment is due.
   (TH) Exam 1 (covers Federalist Papers Nos. 51 and 70, Appendix C, and Chapters 1-4)

Part II: Presidential Politics

Week 7: February 26th & 28th
   (T-TH) Chapter 5, Legislative Politics; “Bush 41 and the Budget Summit” (Handout)

Week 8: March 5th & 7th
   (T-TH) Chapter 6, Executive Politics

Spring Break: March 11th-15th, No class, the University is closed.

Week 9: March 19th & 21st
   (T-TH) Chapter 7, Judicial Politics; White House document (Handout)

Week 10: March 26th & 28th (Note: Thursday, March 28th, Last day to drop a class)
   (T) Lecture wrap-up and review
   (TH) Exam 2 (covers Chapters 5-7 and Bush 41 and the Budget Summit article provided in class)

Part III: The President and Public Policy

Week 11: April 2nd & 4th
   (T-TH) Chapter 8, The Politics of Domestic Policy

Week 12: April 9th & 11th
   (T-TH) Chapter 10, The Politics of National Security Policy

Week 13: April 16th & 18th
   (T-TH) Chapter 9, The Politics of Economic Policy

Week 14: April 23rd & 25th
   (T) Chapter 11, The Trump Transition and First One Hundred Days
   (TH) In-Class Discussion of the White House White House memo (A print copy will be provided in class prior to this assignment.)

Week 15: April 30th & May 2nd, Movie (TBA) and Final Exam Review

Week 16: Final Exam (covers Chapters 10-14 AND terms from Exams 1 & 2)
   (TH) May 9th: POLS 3308, 10:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M. (RAS 110)