POLS 3308: American Presidency: Fall 2020

Professor: Watts  Email: dwatts2 @ angelo.edu  Phone: 942-2262  Office: RAS223
Office Hours: (T-Th): 9-10 a.m.; 1-4 p.m.; (W): 11 a.m.- 1 p.m.; All others by appointment only.
  Instructor is available by email. Please note, I do not have internet access at home due to continuing
online “harassment” activities, according to the FBI, so responses to emails will be delayed.

Course Description: This is a course on the American Presidency. It will cover the origins of the institution and
how it has evolved over time. Presidential politics and the dynamic relationships between the White House, the
other two branches of government, 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 Texas 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 state
government’s actions and decisions on public policy. The study of the Texas 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.


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, lecture slides, course
assignments, and your grades. When necessary, the course instructional designer or I will post announcements
or send emails about any changes to the course schedule.

Policies on examinations: 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-
recognized accommodation or illness to request an online exam be reopened. The makeup exam must be taken
before the next exam is made available online. Failure to do so within this time frame will results in an
automatic “F” for that exam. In the case of an emergency or events that prevent you from completing course
assignments within their given timeframes, a formal 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 a difficult life event should contact the Office of
Student Affairs as soon as possible so they can assist you with making arrangements and notifying your
professors. The office is located in the Houston Harte University Center, Room 112, and additional information
can be found on ASU’s website.

Title IX: The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation,
gender identity, and other types of sexual misconduct. Faculty members are obligated by law and university
policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance. Students are encouraged to
report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to Michelle Boone (michelle.boone@angelo.edu; 325-942-
2173), Director of Title IX Compliance, Mayer Administration Building, Office 210.
Assignments and Exams

Exams (100 points each): All three exams will consist of two parts; short answer and “matching.”

-Exams 1 and 2: The chapters covered on Exams 1 and 2 are noted in the Course Outline section of the syllabus.
-Final Exam: The Final Exam is comprehensive and will consist of new material from the chapters listed in Part III of the course outline and select terms from the first and second exams.

(Note: In the event the campus closes during the semester due to the pandemic, the remaining exams will be available online and will follow the matching format.)

In-Class POTUS News Discussion (75 points each): Two classes have been designated in the Course Outline for an in-class news discussion related to the presidency and the topics covered prior to each discussion. Therefore, all students need to be attentive to news reports regarding the president and upcoming election, particularly those that related to the topics covered in the textbook.

-Discussion points MUST relate to the course material and referenced accordingly.
-Discussion 1, example: News relating to how the current president, and his recent predecessors have used the “bully pulpit” to communicate with the public as a means to advance their political or policy agendas.

-Articles must be substantive and from established, creditable news outlets.
-Each student must be printed copies of the news reports they cite during the discussion and turn them in at the end of class (stapled together with your name visibly printed on the top news article).

-Everyone is expected to contribute to the discussion
-Observations must be relevant, substantive, related to the course material, and will be graded accordingly.

(Note: In the event the campus closes, the remaining discussion or discussions will be presented online in a quiz format and the questions will structured around relevant news events.)

Quizzes (25 points each): Seven pop quizzes will be given throughout the semester and based on the assigned reading.

(Note: In the event the campus closes during the semester, the quizzes will be posted on Blackboard in a folder identified according to the Course Outline sections of this syllabus)

-The lowest quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the semester but all quiz columns and scores will still remain visible on Blackboard. A column labelled as the quiz total column will show the points earned with the lowest quiz score dropped and will be the point total calculated into your final grade.

Extra Credit (15 points): A documentary will be shown at the end of the semester. Only students who attend every class in which the movie is shown will receive credit. (Note: If the campus is forced to close before the end of the semester, an optional quiz will be posted on Blackboard. It will follow the same format as the previous quizzes and is also worth 15 points. Points earned will be added under the Extra Credit column.)

Final grades will follow the University’s grading scale:
A: 100-90%; B: 89-80%; C: 79-70%; D: 69-60%; F: 59% or below

Additional Notes: 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.

The Department of Political Science and Philosophy is committed to support the learning of all students. As part of maintaining the decorum of the online classroom, students are expected to behave appropriately and in a responsible manner.

Missed deadlines: Decisions regarding missed deadlines will be made at the discretion of the instructor.
Statement on Required Use of Masks-Facial Coverings by Students in Class at Angelo State University

As a member of the Texas Tech University System, Angelo State University has adopted the mandatory Facial Covering Policy to ensure a safe and healthy classroom experience. Current research on the COVID-19 virus suggests there is a significant reduction in the potential for transmission of the virus from person to person by wearing a mask-facial covering that covers the nose and mouth areas. Therefore, in compliance with the university policy, students in this class are required to wear a mask-facial covering before, during, and after class. Faculty members may also ask you to display your daily screening badge as a prerequisite to enter the classroom. You are also asked to maintain safe distancing practices to the best of your ability. For the safety of everyone, any student not appropriately wearing a mask-facial covering will be asked to leave the classroom immediately. The student will be responsible to make up any missed class content or work. Continued non-compliance with the Texas Tech University System Policy may result in disciplinary action through the Office of Student Conduct.
Course Outline: It is your responsibility to read assigned material, including examples and case studies in each chapter, prior to class. You are also expected to bring your textbook to every class.

As previously stated in the syllabus, I do not have internet access at home due to continuing online “harassment” activities, according to the FBI, so responses to emails will be delayed.

Part I

Week 1: August 18 & 20
   (T) First day of class, review of course syllabus; Distribution of TBD Article, read by Thursday, August 20.
   (TH) TBD Article discussion

Week 2: August 25 & 27
   (T) Appendix C, Excerpts of the U.S. Constitution
   (TH) Chapter 1, The Changing Presidency

Week 3: September 1 & 3
   (T-TH) Chapter 2, Election Politics

Week 4: September 8 & 10
   (T-TH) Chapter 3, Public Politics

Week 5: September 15 & 17
   (T-TH) Chapter 4, Presidential Character and Performance

Week 6: September 22 & 24
   (T) Exam 1: U.S. Constitution, Chapters 1-4, TBD article
   (TH) POTUS News Discussion, no. 1 (Topics covered in Chapters 1-4 and Article II);
   Distribution of TBD Article-2

Part II

Week 7: September 29 & October 1
   (T) Chapter 5, Legislative Politics
   (TH) TBD Article-2

Week 8: October 6 & 8
   (T-TH) Chapter 6, Executive Politics

Week 9: October 13 & 15
   (T-TH) Chapter 7, Judicial Politics

Week 10: October 20 & 22
   (T-TH) Lecture wrap up

Week 11: October 27 & 29
   (T) Exam 2, Chapters 5-7, TBD Article-2
   (TH) POTUS News Discussion, no. 2 (Topics covered in Chapters 5-7)

Part III

Week 12: November 3 & 5
   (T-TH) Chapter 8, The Politics of Domestic Policy

Week 13: November 10 & 12 (Note: Tuesday, Nov. 12, Last day to drop classes)
   (T-TH) Chapter 10, The Politics of National Security Policy

Week 14: November 17 & 19
   (T) Chapter 11, An Embattled, Defiant President
   (TH) TBD, in-class extra credit assignment

FINAL EXAM: Chapters 8, 10, and 11; plus select terms from Exams 1 and 2
   (SATURDAY) November 21, 10:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M. (RAS 112)