

PS 484(G)-001

The American Presidency

Mr. Ryan Voris

MWF 11AM-11:50AM

Whitehall Classroom Building (CB) 316

Contact Information:

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Introduction:

PS 484: A course in the American presidency emphasizing institutional developments and the impact of recent presidents on the office, other governmental institutions, domestic and foreign policies. The course also includes an examination of the broader context of the executive branch of government.

For many Americans, the President is the focal point of the U.S. political system. As such, both the office and its occupants are intensely scrutinized. We demand much of our presidents who are both powerful and limited in our political system. Presidential power is not static, it flows from the Constitution and is shaped by the individual who occupies the office, as well as the political environment. This class is designed to focus on the presidency as an institution within a larger political system and examine the malleability and limitations of presidential power. Topics to be covered will include: the presidential selection process, presidents and congress, the presidency and the media, the presidency and public opinion, and presidential war powers.

Learning Outcomes:

Students who attend lectures regularly and who do the assigned readings should be able to:

- (1) Possess an elementary working knowledge of basic social science theory and data relating to the American presidency.
- (2) Examine the historical development of the presidency as an institution of American government.
- (3) Describe and critique the electoral system used to nominate and select the president.
- (4) Analyze the different constraints and demands that act on the president, including the institutional and political relationship involved in presidential leadership
- (5) Understand areas of debate in the role of the modern presidency in American politics

Course Requirements:

Grade Determination: Your final course grade will be based on four components:

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| (1) Midterm Exam (25%) | **For Graduate Students: Midterm Exam (25%) |
| (2) Final Exam (30%) | Final Exam (27%) |
| (3) Position Papers (20%) | Position Papers (15%) |
| (4) Research Paper (25%) | Research Paper (33%) |

Required Texts:

- (1) Nelson, Michael (Ed), 2014. *The Presidency and the Political System*, 10th Edition. (CQ Press).

- (2) Ellis, Richard and Michael Nelson (Eds.), 2015. *Debating the Presidency: Conflicting Perspectives on the American Executive*, 3rd Edition. (CQ Press)
- (3) *The Federalist Papers*. We will be reading a selection of the Federalist Papers that address the presidency throughout the semester. These can be found online, and will be linked through Blackboard.

Exams (55%): There will be two (2) exams given during the course of the semester weighted as follows; Midterm Exam 25% and the Final Exam 30%. The final exam will be cumulative. Exams will consist of a mixture of multiple choice and short essay questions. All exams will be conducted in class and students are required to bring a writing utensil to class on the day of the exam. Exams and answer sheets will be provided by the instructor. And material covered in lecture, class discussion, or the assigned readings is considered fair game for the exams.

The final exam will be given at the time and place scheduled by the university, and no rescheduling is permitted except for university approved excuses. Make-up exams will also be given only for university excused absences. When possible, all students should attempt to receive instructor approval prior to missing an exam (university approved travel, scheduled surgery, etc). For unforeseen reasons it is your responsibility to contact me ASAP following the exam. If you miss an exam for an unexcused absence you will receive a zero for the exam.

****For Graduate Students:** Exams will contain essay questions that graduate students must answer. These questions will be in place of some of the short essays that undergraduate students will answer, ensuring that the exam will be completed in a similar time frame.

Position Papers (20%): Throughout the semester we will be using the Ellis and Nelson text to have class discussions on major topics relevant to the study of the presidency. These include such topics are the method of nominating and electing the president, term limits, presidential war powers, etc. Each student is expected to complete a short paper on any 4 topics they would like. These can be done on any topic covered in class, but each student must complete two prior to the midterm and two after the midterm. In these papers students are expected to briefly summarize each side of the argument and explain which side they agree with and why they support that side. These papers are to be 2-4 pages, 12pt Times New Roman font, double spaced, standard margins. Note that the summary portion of the paper should not exceed 1 page of the final product. Papers are due the class period that chapter is discussed.

****For Graduate Student:** Graduate students are expected to complete the same number of position papers as undergraduate students, but these papers should be 3-5 pages long and included some external research on the topics under discussion. These papers should critically analyze the arguments presented as well as justifying you own position.

Research Paper (25%): Each student is expected to complete a 15-20 page research paper during the class covering any area of interest to the student. While topics must be approved by the instructor, students are encouraged to research any area on how the president interacts with the aspects of the job; legislative leadership, communication strategies, management style, campaigning, etc. More details will be discussed over the course of the semester. A hard copy of the final paper is due December 5th at the beginning of class.

****For Graduate Students:** Graduate students in the course will also have to complete a research project during the semester. It is expected that graduate student projects will be more substantial than those by undergraduates. These papers are expected to be 20-25 pages and include some analysis of the topic rather than a mere report on presidential leadership.

Course Policies:

Contacting the Instructor: While I am always willing to meet with you during office hours as well as before and after class, email is the quickest way to get in contact with me for personal and course related

business. Feel free to email me anytime, and I will get back to you as soon as I can. Typically I am close to my email and will be able to respond within 24 hours. The exception to this would be over the weekends when it may take me a bit longer to respond. While I will attempt to get back to you promptly, please allow 48 hours for any email sent over the weekend. Also, be sure to see the “Email Policy” section below for more information about how to structure your emails.

Office Hours: Office hours are listed above and are times set aside for you to come and discuss anything related to the course. Anyone may come by my office hours without making an appointment, though letting me know beforehand may help to prevent multiple people coming by at the same time. Also, if the listed times do not work for your schedule, we can set up an appointment at another time. When emailing to make an appointment include a selection of times that you are available to speed the process.

Email Policy: There are a few general guidelines to follow when emailing me. First, begin the subject line with “PS484:” followed by a brief statement about the nature of your email. This will help to ensure that I see your email and am able to respond to it in a timely fashion. Second, emails are not text messages and should not be written as such. Open the email by addressing me as Mr. Voris, concisely indicating the nature of your problem and/or request, and signing off with your name. Emails that do not follow this procedure risk not being replied to as I may not see it or know who is sending the email. Additionally, be sure to follow University procedures for all email communication. Any emails to the instructor should be sent from your UK email account, and grades will not be discussed over email.

Classroom Standards: I expect all students to behave in a professional manner during class time. This includes coming to class on time and prepared to start at 11am. It is disrespectful to me and to your fellow students to come late and disrupt class, so please be on time. I will not tolerate chronic tardiness, and if you arrive to class more than 5 minutes late, you may be asked to leave. Also, unless you have obtained prior approval from me, you may not leave class early. Furthermore, I do not tolerate rude and disruptive classroom behavior. During class, refrain from talking during the lecture, reading a newspaper, doing crosswords, sudoku or other puzzles/games, sleeping, or listening to your iPod or other .mp3 players. When in class, turn off your cell phones, silencing will not suffice when many of your phones have a “vibrate” function that is just as loud and disruptive. Finally, due to the potential for distracting you and your fellow classmates, please avoid using laptop computers or other devices that may be used to access the Internet for purposes other than class activities (e.g., Facebooking, shopping eBay, emailing, etc.). I reserve the right to dismiss from class any student in violation of any classroom standards policies.

Attendance: Attendance is essential to success in most college courses. Lectures provide material that will not be covered in the readings as well as provide indications about what materials will be covered on the exams. According to University Rule 5.2.4.2 any student who misses more than one-fifth (1/5) of the total scheduled meetings for the course will be required to petition for a “W” in the course.

Grading: The grading scale for the final course grade for this course is as follows: A = 90-100%, B = 80-89%, C = 70-79%, D = 60-69%, and E = 0-59%.

All grades will be posted to Blackboard after the instructor has completed grading them. Allow one week for each assignment to be graded and posted to Blackboard.

Excused Absences: The University defines the following as acceptable reasons for excused absences: illness of the student or serious illness of a member of the student’s immediate family; death of a member of the student’s immediate family; trips for members of student organizations sponsored by an academic unit, trips for university classes and trips for participation in intercollegiate athletic events; major religious holidays; any other circumstances which the instructor finds reasonable cause for nonattendance. For all absences that can be foreseen (religious holidays, university trips, etc) it is your responsibility to notify me at least one week prior to the absence, for all unforeseen absences you should notify me no later than one week after the absence. I reserve the right to require documentation for any excused absence, and it is your responsibility to provide proper identification. Students with excused absences that result in

missing more than one-fifth (1/5) of scheduled course meetings will be required to petition for a “W” in the course.

Late Assignments: University policy will be followed regarding all make-up exams and writing assignments. Make-up exams and writing will only be allowed for excused absences. For definitions of these terms, please consult the Student Rights and Responsibilities handbook. Position papers are due on the day they are discussed and no late assignments will be accepted except in the case of excused absences. All other late assignments will be penalized 10 percentage points per day late.

A Note on Cheating & Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: All work submitting for this course is expected to be the result of each student’s own thought, research, or self-expression. Cheating and Plagiarism will not be tolerated. The University of Kentucky defines plagiarism as submitting “work purport[ed] to be their own, but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording, or anything else from another source without appropriate acknowledgement of the fact” (Student Rights and Responsibilities, Section 6.3.1). Cheating “includes, but is not limited to, the wrongfully giving, taking, or presenting any information or material by a student with the intent of aiding himself/herself or another on any academic work” which determines the final grade for the course, whether or not any benefit actually occurs (Student Rights and Responsibilities, Section 6.3.2). Any student(s) caught in violation of any form of academic dishonesty will automatically receive a zero (0) on that portion of the final grade. This includes all exams, the UK Core Essay, MyPoliSciLab assignments, and attendance.

Classroom and Learning Accommodations: If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please see me as soon as possible during scheduled office hours. In order to receive accommodations in this course, you must provide me with a Letter of Accommodation from the Disability Resource Center (Room 2, Alumni Gym, 257-2754, email address jkarnes@email.uky.edu) for coordination of campus disability services available to students with disabilities.

Course Schedule:

Note: All items in the “Course Schedule” are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. These changes will be announced in class and/or on Blackboard. You are responsible for all announced changes, so come to class and check Blackboard regularly. All additional readings will be made available via Blackboard.

Date	Topic	Textbook Reading	Other Reading
August 27	Introduction		
August 29	The Founders and the Presidency		Art II
September 1	LABOR DAY- NO CLASS		
September 3	The Founders and the Presidency (cont)	Nelson Ch1	Fed 69, 70 AntiFed 67
September 5	The Founders and the Presidency (cont)		
September 8	Debate: Framers and Modern Presidency	E&N Ch1(Ch1)	
September 10	The Institutional Presidency	Nelson Ch13	AntiFed 69
September 12	The Institutional Presidency (cont)		
September 15	Presidency and the Bureaucracy	Nelson Ch15	
September 17	Debate: Presidential Czars	E&N Ch12	
***September 17 – Last Day to Drop Course and Have it not Appear on Transcript			
September 19	Presidential Power **Research Topics Due	Nelson Ch3	Roosevelt v Taft Reading
September 22	Presidential Power (cont)		

September 24	Presidential Power (cont)	Nelson Ch17	Cato No.V AntiFed 70
September 26	Debate: Presidential Power	E&N Ch2	
September 29	Psychological Presidency	Nelson Ch6	<i>Barber Reading</i>
October 1	Psychological Presidency (cont)		
October 3	Presidential Competence	Nelson Ch5	
October 6	Presidential Competence (cont)		
October 8	Presidential Leadership	Nelson Ch4	<i>Politics Presidents Make Reading</i>
October 10	Presidential Leadership (cont)		
October 13	Debate: Presidential Success	E&N Ch6	
October 15	Exam Review/Make-Up Day		
October 17	Midterm Exam		
October 20	Nominating the President **Rough Outline of Research Paper Due	Nelson Ch7	
October 22	Nominating the President (cont)		
October 24	Debate: Primary Elections	E&N Ch3 (Ch2)	
October 27	Selecting the President	Nelson Ch8	Federalist 68, 71, 72 AntiFed 68, 72
October 29	Selecting the President (cont)		
October 31	Debate: Presidential Elections	E&N Ch4 (Ch3)	
November 3	The President and the Public	Nelson Ch9	<i>Howell Reading Neustadt Reading</i>
November 5	The President and the Public (cont)		
November 7	Debate: Power to Persuade	E&N Ch7	
***November 7th – Last Day to Withdraw from Course			
November 10	The President and the Media	Nelson Ch10	
November 12	The President and the Media (cont)		
November 14	The President and Interest Groups	Nelson Ch11	
November 17	The President and Political Parties	Nelson Ch12	
November 19	The President and Political Parties (cont)		
November 21	The President and Congress	Nelson Ch15	Fed 73 AntiFed 73
November 24	The President and Congress (cont)		
November 26	THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS		
November 28	THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS		
December 1	Debate: Executive Orders	E&N Ch11 (Ch9)	
December 3	Presidential War Powers	Nelson 19	Fed 74, 75 AntiFed 74
December 5	Debate: War Powers **Research Papers Due	E&N Ch9 (Ch7)	
December 8	President and the Judiciary	Nelson Ch16	Fed 76 AntiFed 76-77
December 10	Debate: Judicial Nominations	E&N Ch13 (Ch10)	
December 12	Make-Up Day/ Exam Review		
December 17	Final Exam @ 3.30pm		