

POS 3413 The Presidency, Fall 2011

Thursdays, 5:30-8:15 p.m.

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Office Hours: M&W, 1:00-2:30, 4:00-5:00 p.m. and most Fridays, 2:30-5:00 p.m.

(It is best if you make an appointment ahead of time by calling 474-2337.)

As its title indicates, this course is about the American presidency, a constitutional office whose occupant is entrusted with the task of “faithfully” executing the laws of the United States. In this course we shall study the intellectual and political history of the presidency. To that end, we shall carefully read and discuss two books (*The American Presidency. An Intellectual History*, by Forrest McDonald and *The Politics Presidents Make. Leadership from John Adams to Bill Clinton*, by Stephen Skowronek) and excerpts from original documents (“The Constitution of the United States”) and De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*), and consult other sources.

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- (1) Identify the principal powers of the presidency
- (2) Recognize the historical antecedents to the office
- (3) Articulate what the founders had in mind when they designed it
- (4) Trace the political evolution of the office from its origins to the present
- (5) Evaluate the presidencies of several of its most salient occupants
- (6) Argue for or against several suggested reforms for the office

Requirements. You are required to attend class faithfully and, having read the assigned reading beforehand, to contribute to the class either in person or on the discussion forum. Based on your contributions in both arenas, you will receive a weekly “preparation and contribution” (P&C for short) grade on a scale of 0 to 100. This will be computed as follows: For every day you are in class from start to finish, you will earn 80 points, unless in response to my questions it is evident that you did not read the assignment, in which case you will earn only 60 points. You can earn an additional 20 points during the week depending on the *quality* of your contributions, either in class or in the e-learning forum, which of course have to be rooted in the readings, the film, your own research (see below) or, in the case of those who have first- or second-hand experience of dictatorship (e.g., having learned it from parents or other relatives), anecdotes. Talking off the top of your head, or talking a lot without saying anything meaningful, won’t earn you any points. (In fact, in such cases I would have to admonish you to restrain yourself.) By *quality* I mean thoughtful questions or comments that go to the heart of the matter at hand, particularly those that give insight into one or another dictatorship or, even better, that identify parallels or contrasts among two or more readings.

As well as P&C, you will write two “Review of Reviews” essays in which, among other things, you will summarize, compare, and evaluate several reviews of each of two required texts in the course and, in the process, evaluate the book itself. Formats for

both essays will be posted in due course. Finally, there may occasional, unannounced quizzes on the readings.

Grading. The course grade will be computed as follows:

P&C-----	30%
Review Essay I---	30
Review Essay II--	30
Quizzes-----	10*
Total-----	100%

*In case no quizzes are administered, each of essays will be increased to 35%.

Integrity. It goes without saying, but it bears repeating anyway, that anyone enrolled in this course makes a commitment to act with integrity. As the home page of the Department of Government puts it, this means “conducting ourselves honorably, conspicuously refraining from lying or cheating about our work. There can be no phony excuses for failing to complete an assignment, no turning in another’s work as one’s own, no plagiarism.” Anyone found to have plagiarized is subject to being assessed a penalty up to and including being assigned an F in the course and reported to university authorities for additional measures.

Regarding the last-named offense, here is UWF’s plagiarism policy: “The UWF Student Handbook, Code of Student Conduct, Academic Misconduct, states: ‘Plagiarism. The act of representing the ideas, words, creations or work of another as one’s own.’ Plagiarism combines theft with fraud, and the penalty is correspondingly severe: failure for the assignment and, in some cases, for the entire course. At the instructor’s discretion, she/he may recommend that the student be suspended from the university. Ignorance of the rules about plagiarism is no excuse for it, and carelessness is just as bad as purposeful violation. Students who have plagiarized have cheated themselves out of the experience of being responsible members of the academic community and have cheated their classmates by pretending to contribute original ideas.” (For additional information on plagiarism, go the UWF’s home page, click on keyword search, and enter “plagiarism policy” (in quotation marks), which allows you to download a word document several pages long.)

Just to be sure there remains no doubt in anyone’s mind what plagiarism is, I require *everyone* to take the [Library’s Tutorial on Plagiarism](#), and to pass the test found therein, missing no more than 1 question. If you miss more than one, you need to retake the test as many times as needed until you miss no more than one question. You will need to e-mail me the results no later than Monday, August 29th, at 2:20 p.m. *I will not grade any essay from anyone who has not completed this module.*

Student Conduct. It is the students’ responsibility to read the Student Code of Conduct, available at <http://www.uwf.edu/judicialaffairs>. Please know that anyone violating its provisions may be penalized by expulsion from a course or the university.

Disability Services. Students with special needs who require specific examination-related or other course-related accommodations should contact Barbara Fitzpatrick, Director of Disabled Student Services (DSS), dss@uwf.edu, (850) 474-2387. DSS will provide the student with a letter for the instructor that will specify any recommended accommodations.

Schedule of Assignments

(The schedule is subject to revision at instructor's discretion, due notice given.)

Day	Assignment
August 25	Introduction to the course
September 1	<p>Instructor will be away at a conference.</p> <p>Read Article II of "The Constitution of the United States of America," which deals with the presidency, and Alexis de Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i>, Vol. I, Chs. VII and VIII.</p> <p>The office was designed with George Washington, who presided over the Constitutional Convention, in mind. Accordingly, watch "The Importance of George Washington," a lecture by Joanne Freeman of Yale University, and "The Legacy of George Washington in a Post Modern Age," by Gary L. Gree II of the University of Louisville. The relevant excerpts from Constitution and <i>Democracy</i>, as well as links to the video lectures are available under Module 2, "Other Material for Study."</p> <p>Answer questions about the readings and the videos posted in the discussion forum and take an on-line quiz scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on that day. (If no quiz is available, I will let you know.)</p>
September 8	<i>Intellectual History</i> , Chs. 1-3.
September 15	<i>Intellectual History</i> , Chs. 4-5.
September 22	<i>Intellectual History</i> , Chs. 6-7.
September 29	<i>Intellectual History</i> , Chs. 8-9.
October 6	<i>Intellectual History</i> , Chs. 10-11
October 13	<i>Intellectual History</i> , Chs. 12-13
October 20	<i>Intellectual History</i> , Chs. 14-16

October 27 NO CLASS. Review of Reviews Essay I due no later than tomorrow, Friday, at 8:00 a.m. No late papers accepted, no excuses allowed.

November 3 *Politics Presidents Make*, “Preface” and Chs. 1-3.

November 10 *Politics Presidents Make*, Ch. 5

November 17 *Politics Presidents Make*, Ch. 6

November 24 Happy Thanksgiving!

December 1 *Politics Presidents Make*, Ch. 7 and pp. 414-429.

December 8 NO CLASS. “Review of Reviews Essay II” due no later than 8:00 a.m. tomorrow, Friday, December 9th. No late papers accepted, no excuses allowed.