



American Presidency

PSCI 341 01W
Spring 2014

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Course Information

Course Hour and Classroom: Web Based Class

Textbook required:

DiClerico, Robert E. 2013.
The Contemporary American President.
Boston, MA: Pearson (ISBN: 978-0-13-601882-7).



Textbook Readings. Given the vast amount of information available in the course, we will not have enough time to “cover” all of the readings in the assigned book—chapter by chapter. Consequently, this course will depend on you to **complete all assigned readings** and be prepared to discuss them in online class in a timely manner. Please note that all assigned readings are critically important for successfully completing exams and class activities.

Course Description

The evaluation of the institution of the American Presidency within the framework of the U.S. Constitution, the American democratic and partisan political processes, and the processes by which the national government's public administrators administer and develop public policy.

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an understanding of the structure and functioning of the US presidency. This course will identify the constitutional powers of the president and its development and expansion, examine presidential relations with Congress and the public, and assess presidential leadership as a key policy maker in the United States.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course

1. Students will explain the role of the president in the American political system.
2. Students will outline the powers the Constitution gives the president.
3. Students will identify the institutional resources presidents have to help them exercise their powers.
4. Students will explain how modern presidents have become even more powerful.

Course Policies and Procedures

All students are expected to comply with the following requirements.

1. Complete all course readings for each module of the course.
2. Regularly check the course site for announcement and updates.
3. Complete assigned readings.
4. Take each of the scheduled exams.
5. Participate fully in the class discussion.
6. Complete class activities.
7. Write reflection papers.
8. Students will respect their fellow classmates and the instructor. This includes treating everyone with courtesy and respect in any and all correspondence for the course. For more information on this subject, please see the Student Guidebook.
9. All students will maintain the highest level of personal responsibility and academic honesty. Academic dishonesty affects all individuals at the University and accordingly will not be tolerated. For this class, academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic work. In particular, passing off work as your own that was written by someone else, without proper citation or attribution, on either exams or discussion assignments will be considered an act of plagiarism. This holds true whether material comes from the textbook, another publication, an internet source, or another student. Violations of academic integrity/honesty while carrying out academic assignments may, at the discretion of the instructor, receive a zero on the particular work in question, receive an "F" in the course and may result in significant administrative penalties.
10. Students will comply with any and all eCollege technical requirements in terms of training, computer access, & Internet access.
11. Failure to complete two of any discussion, assignment, or activity will be considered "excessive" absenteeism and the student will be administratively dropped from the class.

Technology Requirements

Because this is an online course, all students must meet the following technology requirements to successfully complete this course.

1. Regular access to a good quality computer.
2. Regular, high-quality Internet access, specifically, a high-speed internet connection, not dial-up or a cellular phone. Students should use the eCollege tutorial to test the quality and speed of their browser and ensure that it is compatible with the system. It is strongly recommended that students perform a "Browser Test" prior to the start of this course. To launch a browser test, login in to eCollege, click on the 'myCourses' tab, and then select the "Browser Test" link under Support Services.
3. Students will need access to an Internet browser such as Internet Explorer and access to Microsoft Word or to word processing software that they can save files in "Microsoft Word" compatible style.
4. Students will need access to Adobe Acrobat Reader that can open and print documents in the form of pdf.

eCollege Student Technical Support

Technical support for eCollege is provided around the clock (24 hours a day/7 days a week) so if students experience technical issues with the class page itself they should contact the student help desk for assistance. Students can access support through one of three following methods:

1. **Chat support:** Students can access real-time chat support from within the course page by clicking on "Tech Support" in the tool bar and then clicking on "Chat Online."
2. **Phone:** Students can access phone support by calling the toll free phone number for eCollege, 1-866-656-5511.
3. **E- mail:** Student can request assistance by e-mail eCollege directly at helpdesk@online.tamuc.org. Please note that you might not receive a response for 24 hours if you use the e-mail option.

eCollege also has extensive help files available. These can be accessed by clicking the 'Help' button on the toolbar.

Access and Navigation

This course will be facilitated using eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to: <https://leo.tamuc.edu/>.

You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903-468-6000 or by email helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Student Conduct & Discipline

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. It is the responsibility of each student to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. (See *Code of Student Conduct* from *Student Guide Handbook*).

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library Room 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Communications

It is very important to go to this online course 4-5 times each week to: (1) read new announcements, (2) check your university email, (3) review activities and assignments, (4) check the **Schedule of activities and assignments**, and (5) communicate as needed with your instructor and class members.

Virtual Office

This is a non-graded forum where students should go to receive helpful tips and advice from the instructor or to ask questions that may be valuable to the entire class. Virtual Office is designed to facilitate class communication and foster success. Students should check-in daily for pertinent, up-to-date class discussion threads. The forum may be accessed via the Virtual Office listing on the menu under "Course Home".

Submitting assignments

You are responsible for attaching the correct assignment to the correct folder in the Dropbox. Once you submit your assignment, you should always click on the Outbox to make sure the assignment is there. You can tell if it is attached in at least two ways: (1) touch the little document icon (symbol for an attachment) with your cursor and the name of your document will appear or (2) click on the little icon and

actually open and view the document. Submitting an incorrect document, a blank document, or no document is counted as failure to complete the assignment on time.

Each assignment or work should include your name in the content. Also make your computer file name, when attaching to the Dropbox, using your last name and a specific assignment (i.e., Choi Response Paper2.doc or Choi Activity1.docx).

Announcements

Announcements are posted often in the course. When you go to the course, you should first read any announcements that have been posted since you were last in the class.

Email Correspondence

Email from me is sent to your University email account. It is important to go to MyLeo mail regularly to check for messages.

If you need to contact me, email is the best way to reach me. Please end your message with your first and last name so I know who you are. Unless otherwise announced, I will do my best to respond within 48 hours except weekends.

Grading and Evaluation

This course occurs in a digital learning environment designed in module format. Each module runs around two weeks during which time you will be expected to read assigned material, participate in discussions, complete class activities, write reflection papers, and take midterm exams. Each module opens and closes on a certain date and once a module closes it will not be opened again. Therefore you need to demonstrate a level of time management that allows you to meet deadlines as posted.

Midterm Exams: 240 Points (40% of total course grade)

Exam Format

Students will take three midterm exams that feature 40 multiple choice questions. 60 minutes are allotted for exam.

o Complete exam [Possible points (80 points x 3 exams) = 240 points]

Exam Times and Dates

Midterm exams will be taken online and are scheduled on the dates listed below. The midterm exam will begin at **11:59 PM** on Friday and will close 72 hours later at **11:59 PM** on Monday.

Midterm Exam #1

Opens 2/14

Due 2/17

Covers Chapters 1, 3, 4, Difficulties in Studying the Presidency, Studying the Presidency, Federalist No. 69, No. 70

Midterm Exam #2

Opens 3/21

Due 3/24

Covers Chapters 5, 9, 10, West (2006)

Midterm Exam #3

Opens 4/18

Due 4/21

Covers Chapters 6, 7, 2, 8

Technical Issues: Students will take three midterm exams via the course page. Students are responsible for testing the compatibility of their own computers and software prior to starting the exam and must be sure to have a high speed internet connection to eliminate the chance of technical problems. Exams are timed and can only be taken once. Once the exam has begun, the allotted time will begin counting down and students will not be able to “pause” or put the exam time on hold, even if they disconnect from the course site or exam. Students should save their answers frequently by clicking on the “Save Answers” button. Students should not click the “Submit Test” button until they have completed the exam as it will not be possible to re-enter the exam once the test has been submitted. Students who encounter technical problems as a result of failing to comply with these guidelines will not be given an opportunity to re-take or re-access an exam. Any technical problems should be immediately referred to the help desk.

Make Up Exams

If a student misses a midterm exam, that student will receive a grade of 0 for the exam. Make-up exams will only be granted at the discretion of the instructor. Any request for a make-up exam must be made in writing and include documentation explaining why the absence was legitimate. Such a request must be received within 2 calendar days of the missed exam date, unless the student is physically unable to submit such a request during that time period. Legitimate reasons may include illness severe enough to require professional treatment, death in the immediate family, participation in University activities, and/or legal obligations. Technical problems with accessing the course will not be considered a valid excuse for missing an exam unless it can be shown that the problem is the fault of the eCollege platform. *Please note, these reasons do not guarantee that a make-up exam will be given.*

Make-up exams will be exclusively essay format.

Class Discussion: 120 Points (20% of total course grade)

This is the second graded component of the course and will consist of six discussions. Topics for the discussion will be posted on **Tuesday each module at 9 AM**. Each discussion thread will close at **11:59 PM on Monday next week of each module**. Regardless of the reason, there will be no make-up opportunities for discussion assignments and students will not receive any credit for posts made after the deadline.

Each student will randomly be assigned to a discussion group for the duration of the course. The instructor will create a discussion thread topic for each discussion group to which students are expected to compile responses.

Students will be graded upon two criteria. First, students are expected to submit an original response to the topic posted, answering all parts of the topic (one original post requiring 200-300 words in length). Second, students are expected to respond to the posts of other students in their discussion group (two peer responses requiring 100 words each in length). Students should engage in conversation with their group members in a thoughtful discussion about the topic as well as their individual responses to the topic. These posts should not be made all on the same day during the final hours of the discussion time line.

Students will receive a grade on each discussion assignment (Students who do not participate will receive a 0). Grades will be based both upon the quality of the content of a student's posts, as well as the student's engagement with other students by responding to posts in the student's group. Posts that do not fully answer the questions or do not respond posted will not receive full credit. Students who wait until the end of the time frame may receive a grade penalty. **Discussion Posts cannot be made up. No late work accepted.**

- o Post your discussion answers to respond to the discussion questions
[Possible points (12 points x 6 Modules) = 72 points]
- o Respond to classmates' postings
[Possible points ((4 points x 2 responses) x 6 Modules) = 48 points]

Possible assigned points will be divided by the total number of discussion questions. For instance, if there are two discussion questions in Module 3, 6 points will be assigned to original discussion for question #1 and remaining 6 points for questions #2. 2 points will be assigned to two responses for question #1 and remaining 2 points for question #2.

See the Guidelines/Rubric for Discussion Answer and Guidelines/Rubric for Responding Peer's Posting for the evaluation criteria (Will be placed in Doc Sharing under Course Document).

All content submitted for Discussion Assignments must be a student's original submission. Any material taken from another source, including the textbook, should include a proper citation. Material which is copied or pasted from any source will be considered plagiarism as discussed above in the Course Policies and Procedures section.

Class Activities: 120 points (20% of total course grade)

You will have an opportunity to do a variety of class activities which will include the best practices in the area of the American presidency. More specific information will be provided later.

o Complete class activity [Possible points (15 points x 8 Modules) = 120 points]

Reflection Paper: 120 points (20% of total course grade)

You will write three short reflection papers. Reflection paper will ask you to write a specific topic and issue in the area of American presidency. These will be a good opportunity for you to explore issues related to American presidency and presidents. These papers are required to write 3-4 page, typed, with one-inch margins, in Times New Roman, 12-point, double spaced. No late work will be accepted (also see in the Course Policies and Procedures section). Instructions with details on reflection papers will be distributed later.

o Write three reflection papers [Possible points (40 points x 3 papers) = 120 points]

Summary of Assignments and Grading

Assignments	How Many	Point Value	Total Possible	Percent of Total
Midterm Exams	3	80	240 Points	40%
Class Discussion	6	20	120 Points	20%
Class Activities	8	15	120 points	20%
Reflection Paper	3	40	120 points	20%
Total			600 points	100%

Grading Scale

Points	Grade	Standard
540-600	A	Superior
480-539	B	Above Average
420-479	C	Average Performance
360-419	D	Below Average
359 and Below	F	Unsatisfactory

Late Work

No late work accepted and work cannot be made up. Technical difficulties of the student's equipment or internet provider are not excused. When such difficulties occur, students are expected to locate an alternative source for submitting assignments, e.g., neighbor, work place, public library, etc. Technical

difficulties caused by the University or eCollege can be excused provided the student obtains documentation from technical support. Students should always have a back-up in mind for unexpected glitches in technology.

Course Schedule

Module 1 (January 13 – 20)

Course Introduction and Study of the Presidency

1. Preface (ix)
2. Difficulties in Studying the Presidency (xi)
3. Studying the Presidency: Why Presidents Need Political Scientists (Ragsdale 2014)

Class Activity #1

Module 2 (January 21 – February 3)

Perspectives on the Presidency

1. The Constitutional Nature of the Presidency (*Federalist* No. 69 and No. 70)
2. The Selection Process (Ch. 1)

Class Activity #2

Discussion #1

Reflection Paper #1

Module 3 (February 4 – 17)

The Presidency and Governance 1

1. The President and Congress (Ch. 3)
2. President, Public, and Press (Ch. 4)

Exam #1

Class Activity #3

Discussion #2

Module 4 (February 18 – March 3)

The Presidency and Governance 2

1. The President and the Bureaucracy (Ch. 5)
2. Presidential Leadership and Administrative Coordination (West 2006)

Class Activity #4

Discussion #3

Reflection Paper #2

Module 5 (March 4 – 24)

The Psychological Presidency and Leadership

1. Personality and the Presidency (Ch. 9)
2. Presidential Leadership (Ch. 10)

Exam #2

Class Activity #5

Discussion #4

Module 6 (March 25 – April 7)

Presidential Decision Making

1. Decision Making in the White House (Ch. 6)

2. Five Cases in Presidential Decision Making (Ch. 7)

Class Activity #6
Discussion #5
Reflection Paper #3

Module 7 (April 8 – 21)

Presidential Power in Action

1. The President and Foreign Affairs (Ch. 2)
2. The President and Emergency Powers (Ch. 8)

Exam #3
Class Activity #7
Discussion #6

Module 8 (April 29 – May 2)

Evaluating Presidential Power

Class Activity #8

√ Many class activities, discussions, exams, and reflection papers are due at 11:59 PM on Monday, **EXCEPT Module 8**. They are due by 11:59 PM **on Friday**.

√ Please note that the instructor reserves the right to change any part of this syllabus as needed over the course of the semester. Any and all changes will be announced.