

Political Science 4036
The American Presidency
Spring 2015

Professor: Kevin V. Mulcahy
Office: 221 Stubbs Hall, Tu-Wed-TH 1:30-4:30
Phone: 225-578-2533
E-Mail: kmulcah@lsu.edu

Note: THE USE OF LAPTOPS AND CELL PHONES IS PROHIBITED DURING CLASS.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to provide an overview of various theories on the institution of the American Presidency. It is principally focused on the triune relationship between Domestic Affairs, Foreign Affairs and the Election Process that all successful Presidents must balance carefully. However, this course does not provide a historical survey of the presidents from Washington to Obama; it emphasizes the Office of the Presidency as an institution.

Course Texts

The Politics of the Presidency - Joseph Pika and J.A. Maltese
Dwight D. Eisenhower - Tom Wicker
Richard Nixon - Elizabeth Drew
Jimmy Carter - Julian E. Zelizer

Grading

A: 400-360 B: 359-320 C: 319-280 D: 279-240 F: 239-0

- **Three** non-cumulative exams on the dates assigned- **50 pts each**
 - Exams will cover lecture material, textbook readings, and in class videos.
- **Three** biography tests, which will be on the dates assigned- **20 pts each**
- **Up to 9** randomly- given quizzes on the movies/ Pika chapters - **10 pts each**
- **One** paper 15 pages, 4500 words- **100 pts**
 - Due the last Tuesday of class. Late papers will be penalized 20% each day that it is late.
 - Each of the presidents whose biographies you have read confronted a defining crisis during their time as president. What was their political background? What was their record as president? What crises did they each face and how did they manage their crisis? Discuss any notable achievements. Evaluate tenure.

- It is essential that the responses be presented clearly, concisely, and with very frequent, extensive in-text citations [ex. (Greenstein, 58)]. Citations are to be drawn exclusively from lecture material, video, and texts.
- What is **not** desired is a series of facts about presidents; **analysis is necessary**. The last section of your paper should empower/ interest/ evaluate the three presidents.
- Paper should be double- spaced, Times New Roman font; 1" Top, bottom and side margins, and include page numbers. The paper should be at least 15 pages in length **and a cover page**. A reference page is not necessary

Class Attendance

- **Class participation is expected & required.**
- Attendance is the *sine qua non* of participation. Accordingly, attendance will be taken daily.
- The penalty for any absence (for whatever reason) over three is a **reduction of ten points from the final course total**, for each class missed beyond three.
- **My assistant and I are not in a position to judge problems in your personal life that impact your attendance** (such as your car breaking down), so kindly **do not disturb us** with these matters.
- If you have long term physical or familial problems, contact the Office of Disability Services and they will advise us as to the proper course of action.
- Be a good citizen about arriving on time and staying for the entire class.
- Arriving late and/or leaving class early is only allowed in the case of a dire emergency.

Graduate Students / Law Students

If you are a graduate student or Law school student – please see me @ 221 Stubbs Hall within the first 2 weeks of the semester.

COURSE OUTLINE

Part I: The Office of the President

1/15: Introduction; discussion of syllabus

Evolution of the Presidency I

Pika Chapter 6

1/20: Evolution of the Presidency II

1/22: Presidential Character and Greatness I
Pika Chapter 4

1/27: Presidential Character and Greatness I

1/29: *Thirteen Days*

2/3: *Thirteen Days* continued
Test on Eisenhower Biography

2/5: *Thirteen Days* conclusion
President's Constitutional "Hats"

2/10: The President and Congress
Pika Chapter 5

2/12: **EXAM 1:** Consisting of...
Part 1 Lectures
Thirteen Days movie
Pika Readings

2/17: No class (Mardi Gras holiday)

Part II: Becoming the President of the United States

2/19: Nomination Process I

Pika Chapter 2

2/24: Nomination Process II

Convention I

2/26: Convention II

Pika Chapter 1

3/3: *The Fog of War*

Test on Nixon Biography

3/5: *The Fog of War* conclusion/discussion

Campaign I

3/10: *Maya Lin: The Controversy over her Vietnam Wall Design*

3/12: The Campaign II

The 2000 Election (Bush vs. Gore)

3/17: 2008 Democratic Selection Process

Pika Chapter 3

3/19: The Electoral College

Pika Chapter 11

3/24: EXAM 2:

Part 2 Lectures

Pika Readings

The Fog of War

Part III: Being President

3/26: Organization of the Federal Government

Pika Chapter 8

3/31: The Federal Budget

4/2: Foreign and Defense Policy

Test on Carter Biography

4/7: No class (Spring Break)

4/9: No class (Spring Break)

4/14: National Security Advisory Process

Presidency in the Cold War I

Pika Chapter 10

4/16: Presidency in the Cold War II

4/21: Presidency in the Post-9/11 World I

Pika Chapter 11

4/23: Presidency in the Post-9/11 World II

Reflections on the Current World Order

PAPER ON PRESIDENTIAL BIOGRAPHIES DUE!

4/28: *The Unknown Known*

4/30: Final day of class

The Unknown Known conclusion/discussion

MAY 4-9: FINAL EXAM