

Political Science 324
Spring Semester 2024
Office Hours: MF 10:20-11:30; W 11:30-12:30
or by appointment

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The United States Presidency (meets in Sage Hall 2215 12:40-1:40 MWF—3 credits)

Course Description: This course examines the presidency through study of its constitutional position and historical development, presidential elections, the power of the office, relations with other political actors, how the president relates to the public, and presidential performance.



Reading Materials: You are asked to buy one book: *The Paradoxes of the American Presidency* by Thomas E. Cronin, Michael A. Genovese, and Meena Bose. The book is available at the University Bookstore. Other materials are available via link or Canvas, as noted below.

Learning Outcomes: students who successfully complete the course will:

- understand the constitutional powers and historical development of the office
- know and possess well-informed judgments about the presidential selection process
- reflect critically on the presidential role and how it relates to presidential performance
- assess the place of the presidency within a larger, complex governmental system
- hone writing and communication skills

Note: These Learning Outcomes are in support of our departmental learning goals:

<https://uwosh.edu/politicalscience/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2016/10/Learning-Goals-2016.pdf>

Assignments and Grading: The components to your grade are as follows:

First Exam:	15%
Second Exam, including take-home essay:	25%
Third Exam:	15%
Attendance/Participation:	25%
Reading Reaction papers	20%

Test Format: You will have three tests. Each test will have multiple assessment tools, including multiple choice questions, short answer/term identifications and some essay. The second test is worth more than the others because it also includes an take-home essay question that will be given to you on the prior Monday. This take-home portion is due to Canvas on Friday at 5 PM.

In-class tests are open note (but not open book) in format. This means that your performance is largely up to your own diligence in reading and taking good notes rather than based on what you can cram into your head on a given day. Be forewarned that open note tests allow me to get more detailed and expect more of you than I would otherwise. In answering questions I expect you to make specific reference to readings and lecture material, and to present a reasoned consideration of materials and topics we have covered. Barring a documented medical excuse or a prior excuse for an approved University event, tests must be taken on the date and time scheduled.

Reading Responses: You are asked to produce six reading reactions for assigned readings. Responses are individually submitted and about readings that we will be discussing that day. Please hand in your response at least an hour before class on Canvas. You will be divided into one of two groups, which will hand in responses on different days. There are seven weeks to write (so you can skip one of the weeks):

<u>Group 1 students write on</u>		<u>Group 2 students write on</u>
Week 2:	Neustadt	Posner and Vermeule
Week 3:	Tulis	Skowronek
Week 4/5:	Cronin et al., ch. 2	Cronin et al., ch. 3
Week 6:	Ellis	Landy and Milkis
Week 9:	Cronin et al., ch. 8	Cronin et al., ch. 9
Week 11:	Trump ballot disqualification podcast	student loan forgiveness podcast
Week 12:	Renshon	Lim

The reaction should be about a full page of single-spaced text, divided into 3 paragraphs. The first should concisely but fully summarize the reading; the second should comment on the reading with an explanation or discussion of your comment; the third should ask a question prompted by the reading, one that you are genuinely curious about—not something you know the answer to, along with an explanation of why you ask it. Each paragraph should make it clear that you have read the assignment. The clearer that is, the better. When referring to something in the text, please cite the page number. Response papers will be graded either ++, +, 0, or –. An A = 11-12 total; A- = 10; B+ 9; etc. – is reserved for papers not handed in. I comment on/grade your papers on Canvas.

Attendance/Participation grade: This component of your grade is based on your attendance, your attentiveness, the observations you make, your willingness to read assigned materials, the questions you pose, the arguments you advance, and your respect for others and the class. I expect

everyone to participate regularly. This grade is only partly reflective of the volume of participation; it is also an assessment of its quality. Class attendance is mandatory. If you are sick, please let me know to avoid getting a zero for participation that day.

A portion of this grade is based on you **leading class discussion** on a particular day. You should be prepared to lead discussion in the first 15-20 minutes of the class, professionally and ably. Someone who leads discussion should be polished, confident, knowledgeable about the reading at hand, ask good and answerable questions, and then react ably to what students have to say. The items below should not be run through formulaically—they are just general suggestions about what to ask specific questions about. When discussing a reading, typically it is best to move from specific questions about a reading to more general questions about the topic at hand.

- what is the author's thesis; what is the message they are aiming to convey?
- how convincing is that argument; is there good supporting evidence?
- does this connect to current events or other readings that you have encountered?
- what are the strengths and weaknesses of this work
- what do you think we should discuss more?

You will sign up for a day to do this during the second week of the semester. Immediately prior to or immediately after the class you will hand in the notes you drew on to lead the discussion.

Daily Topics and Reading Assignments

February 5	course intro; syllabus; inventing the presidency—the Philadelphia Convention reading: none
February 7	the Constitution and the presidency: the Philadelphia Convention, continued reading: Article I and Article II of the Constitution, which can be found at https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/full-text
February 9	the Constitution and the presidency, continued reading: Amendments 12, 20, 22, and 25 found at and https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/full-text
February 12	Theory of Presidential Power #1—the President as Clerk reading: Neustadt's "The Power to Persuade" from <i>Presidential Power</i> (Canvas)
February 14	Theory of Presidential Power #2—the President as Prime Mover reading: Posner and Vermeule, <i>The Executive Unbound</i> , Introduction, available as an eBook from Polk Library
February 16	division of functions constitutionalism versus delegation constitutionalism reading: <i>Youngstown Sheet and Tube v. Sawyer</i> (1952) excerpts (Canvas)
February 19	political development #1: interbranch power across time reading: Siemers, "The Relative Power of the Branches has Always Ebbled and Flowed" (Canvas)

- February 21 political development #2: the founders presidency and the Wilsonian presidency
reading: Tulis, “The Two Constitutional Presidencies” (Canvas)
- February 23 political development #3:
reading: Skowronek, “Twentieth Century Choices” from the symposium Has the Constitution Exacerbated the Crisis of Governance?” to be found at <https://www.bu.edu/bulawreview/files/2014/08/SKOWRONEKDYSFUNCTION.pdf>
- February 26 Theory of Presidential Power #3: Skowronek’s Critical Election and Regime Cycles
reading: none
- February 28 Introduction to Presidential Paradoxes
reading: Cronin, Genovese and Bose, *Presidential Paradoxes*, Preface and chapter 1
- March 1 evaluating presidents
reading: *Presidential Paradoxes*, chapter 2
- March 4 electing presidents
reading: *Presidential Paradoxes*, chapter 3
- March 6 presidential elections—the primary system
reading: none
- March 8 **first exam**—in-class open note exam
- March 11 Presidential Power and Leadership
reading: *Presidential Paradoxes*, chapter 4
- March 13 how presidents have thought about and described the job
reading: Ellis, “The Joy of Power” (Canvas)
- March 15 evaluating presidents, continued
reading: Landy and Milkis, *Presidential Greatness*, Conclusion (Canvas)
- March 18 the president and Congress
reading: *Presidential Paradoxes*, chapter 5
- March 20 the president and the Supreme Court
reading: *Presidential Paradoxes*, chapter 6
- March 22 contemporary issues in interbranch relations, the “major questions” doctrine and the Supreme Court’s reconsideration of the Chevron standard
reading: “How the Supreme Court put itself in Charge of the Executive Branch” at <https://www.vox.com/scotus/23791610/supreme-court-major-questions-doctrine-nebraska-biden-student-loans-gorsuch-barrett>

Week of March 25 through 29, enjoy Spring Break!

- April 1 presidents as chief executives
reading: *Presidential Paradoxes*, chapter 7
- April 3 presidential elections—the Electoral College
reading: none
- April 5 No class: I will be at the Midwest Political Science Association’s annual conference
- April 8 presidents and domestic policy
reading: *Presidential Paradoxes*, chapter 8
- April 10 presidents and foreign policy
reading: *Presidential Paradoxes*, chapter 9
- April 12 contemporary policy issue—Biden foreign policy in theory and practice
reading: Ettinger: “Truman Redux? Biden’s National Security Strategy” (Canvas)
- April 15 the future of the American presidency
reading: *Presidential Paradoxes*, chapter 10
you will get the take-home essay today
- April 17 discussion of election, current events, and reflections on *Presidential Paradoxes*
reading none
- April 19 **second exam**—in class with take-home essay portion due at 5 PM
- April 22 contemporary legal cases and the presidency—14th Amendment disqualification
read: section 3 of the Constitution’s XIVth Amendment at
<https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/full-text>
and listen to the National Constitution Center’s podcast “Should President Trump
be allowed on the 2024 Ballot” at:
<https://constitutioncenter.org/news-debate/podcasts/should-president-trump-be-allowed-on-the-2024-ballot>
- April 24 contemporary legal cases and the presidency—presidential immunity
reading: Tipler, “The Law: The Contours of Presidential Immunity” in *Presidential
Studies Quarterly*, June 1 2019 (found through Polk Library website)
and “Judges Skeptical of Trump Arguments for Broad Criminal Immunity” at
<https://thehill.com/regulation/court-battles/4397557-judges-skeptical-of-trump-arguments-for-broad-criminal-immunity/>
- April 26 contemporary legal cases and the presidency—student loan forgiveness
listen to podcast: “Presidential Power, Standing, and Student Loan Forgiveness”
from the National Constitution Center at
<https://constitutioncenter.org/news-debate/podcasts/presidential-power-standing-and-student-loan-forgiveness>
- April 29 presidential personality
reading: Renshon’s *Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates*, Conclusion (Canvas)
- May 1 presidential rhetoric
reading: Lim, The Linguistic Simplification of Presidential Rhetoric (Canvas)

May 3	possible reform of the presidency #1, the Electoral College reading: Keyssar, <i>Why do we Still have the Electoral College</i> , Conclusion (Canvas)
May 6	possible reform of the presidency #2, the nomination process reading: de Wolff et al, "Selecting Representative and Qualified Candidates for President" https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2110&context=faculty_scholarship
May 8	money in presidential elections reading: Wayne, "Campaign Finance" (Canvas)
May 10	possible reform of the presidency #3, history and future of regulating money in presidential elections review the timeline at https://www.opensecrets.org/resources/learn/timeline
May 13	reemphasizing the faithful execution standard reading: Kent, Leib, and Shugerman, "Faithful Execution and Article II" pp. 2112-2121 and 2178-2192 available through Polk Library website in the <i>Harvard Law Review</i> , June 2019 (use article search function)
May 15	course summary and reflection
May 17	third exam

Grading Policy: Each component of the grade receives a letter grade on our A, A-, B+, etc. scale. The GPA corresponding to these numbers 4.0, 3.7, 3.3, etc. is used to calculate an average, which will be your course grade. You can ask me at any time about your participation/attendance score. Barring documented medical necessity or other University-sanctioned excuse, tests must be taken on the day scheduled. If the take-home portion of the second exam is late by 1 to 3 days, there is a penalty of one grade step (a B+ would become a B); if late by longer than that a full grade will be deducted (a B+ would become a C+).

Here is our tutorial on **writing in Political Science** that you should be familiar with:
https://uwosh.edu/politicalscience/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2016/04/Writing_Tips.pdf

The Fine Print!

Prerequisites: There are no formal prerequisitea for this course, but having taken PS 105 is recommended.

Office Hours: Will be held in person in my office. If you wish to meet with me via Microsoft Teams that is possible as well, just let me know beforehand that is your preference.

Electronics Policy: There is ample evidence that computer usage in the classroom harms academic performance, both for the user and the students around the user because of distractions. As long as you use laptops and any other device for class purposes that is fine, but keep in mind that it is probably not the best approach to learn and often offers distraction for you and others.

Academic Honesty: A college education is intended to develop your skills, knowledge, and confidence. Assignments are designed to work on these very things. Taking others' work as your own, quoting or paraphrasing without attribution, and other forms of academic dishonesty short-circuit the learning process and are not acceptable. Two general rules should be kept in mind: all quoted and paraphrased material must be cited and when something is not common knowledge, you should have a citation. Plagiarism is using others' ideas without giving them credit. Most of it is inadvertent; some is intentional; some covers a small amount of text, others involve a whole paper. Please note that using Artificial Intelligence programs like ChatGTP to formulate answers or even parts of text is a form of plagiarism. You are cheating your own education if you rely on them. If you have plagiarized, University rules require me to meet with you, to show you what I believe has occurred and ask you for your explanation. Examples of academic dishonesty and possible sanctions are here (see UWS 14.03 and 14.04): <https://www.uwosh.edu/stuaff/images/Chapter%20UWS%2014.pdf>

Notice: The Department of Political Science is committed to offering you a high-quality classroom experience, and we take your feedback very seriously. If you have concerns about anything related to this course, assignments, or teaching method, you are encouraged to first speak with your instructor directly. If you are not comfortable speaking with the instructor, you are invited to speak with the Chair of the Department of Political Science, Dr. Tracy Slagter. She can be reached at slagter@uwosh.edu. Should she be unable to resolve your concerns, she will guide you to appropriate resources within the College of Letters and Science.

Disability Accommodations: It is the policy and practice of UW Oshkosh to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion, please notify me as soon as possible. You are also welcome to contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 920-424-3100 or dean1@uwosh.edu. For more information, visit the Services for Students with Disabilities website at: <http://www.uwosh.edu/deanofstudents/disability-services>.

Note: If any major changes are made to this schedule and these policies, I will announce them in a timely manner via your UW Oshkosh email account and make a revised syllabus available.

The following URL contains a description of students' consumer protection rights required by the Students Right to Know Act of 1990: <https://uwosh.edu/financialaid/consumer-information/>