

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 318**  
**THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY**  
**FALL 2008**

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**OFFICE HOURS:** Mondays and Wednesdays 11:30-12:20, Tuesdays 12:00-12:20, and by appointment

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It is one of the most powerful positions in the world, newspapers devote more space to it than to any other branch of government, and the president is the most widely recognized political figure in the nation. Yet, the framers of the Constitution certainly did not envision this second branch of government—the American presidency—in its current form.



In this course we turn our attention to the position created by Article II of the Constitution and the men who have served in that position as President of the United States. Our goal is a more complete understanding of the powers and responsibilities of the office in both historical and modern contexts and a critical engagement with the major debates in presidency studies. Since 2008 also happens to be a presidential election year, we will spend a considerable amount of time following, discussing, and analyzing the 2008 presidential elections.

### **TEXTBOOKS & COURSE MATERIAL**

- Joseph A. Pika & John Anthony Maltese (2008) The Politics of the Presidency, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition.
- James P. Pfiffner & Roger H. Davidson (2009) Understanding the Presidency, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition.
- Richard J. Ellis & Michael Nelson (2006) Debating the Presidency.
- Various readings available on Moodle on-line reserve (moodle.gac.edu)
- Media coverage of the presidential election and presidential influences on policymaking
- Andrea Lunsford. The Everyday Writer. (For reference on your research paper)

### **GRADES AND ASSIGNMENTS**

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Midterm Exam	20 %	Tuesday, October 28
Final Exam	20 %	Tuesday, December 16
Research Paper Proposal	C/NC	Thursday, September 18
Research Paper Draft	5 %	Thursday, November 6
Research Paper	20 %	Thursday, December 4
Debate	10 %	TBA
Class Participation	25 %	Ongoing

**Exams:** Our approach to studying the American presidency is divided into four main sections. The midterm exam will cover the first two sections of the course: The Presidency in Structural & Historical Context and Presidential Elections & the Public. The final exam will cover the final two sections of the course: the Presidency & the Government and Presidential Policymaking. The final exam will not be cumulative. The format of both exams will be take home essays.

**Research Paper:** You will research and write an 8-12 page paper on the topic of your choice related to the American presidency. Your paper should present an interesting and original research question and defend a thesis with thoughtful analysis and convincing scholarly evidence. I expect you to conduct thorough research and draw heavily upon scholarly books and articles along with other credible sources. You will prepare a brief proposal (1-2 pages) of your research topic, along with a list of five or more academic sources related to your topic. The proposal is due in class on Thursday, September 18. You will submit a first draft of your paper on November 6 in class, which will be graded. The final draft of your paper is due in class on Thursday, December 4.

**Debate:** Throughout the semester we will read from Ellis and Nelson's Debating the Presidency, a reader containing conflicting viewpoints on a number of interesting topics related to the presidency. At five points throughout the semester we will hold structured debates on five of these topics. Working with a partner, you will research and prepare arguments for one side of one of the issues listed below and will participate in a formal debate on the topic in class. The five topics, along with the date on which they will be argued are:

- Resolved, the president should be elected directly by the people (10/2)
- Resolved, the media are too hard on presidents (10/23)
- Resolved, a broad executive privilege is essential to the successful functioning of the Presidency (10/30)
- Resolved, the president has too much power in the selection of judges (11/20)
- Resolved, presidents have usurped the war power that rightfully belongs to Congress (12/11)

**Participation:** Your participation is an integral part of this class. Learning requires much more than me simply shoveling information into your open minds. It is an active process that requires you to take the reins in asking questions, seeking out information, working collectively to achieve understanding of complex problems, and critically examining your assumptions about how the world works. My role in this process is to guide and encourage you, but I can not do that without your participation. Participation includes attending class on time (obviously, you can't participate if you're not here), completing the assigned readings, contributing to class discussions with thoughtful comments, and listening attentively to me and to your classmates. Here's what these things mean to me.

- I consider your completion of the assigned readings to be your ticket of admittance to class. You cannot participate meaningfully in a discussion of the readings if you have not completed them. In the event that you have not completed the readings, I may ask you to leave and you will be counted as absent for the day.
- Your contribution to class discussion will come in many forms: active participation (leadership) in small group activities, asking questions about the course material in class, contributing meaningful comments and observations in large group discussions, answering questions I pose to the class, etc.
- Listening is a valuable skill. It is important that you learn to hear and respond to the comments made by your classmates as well as to my comments, so always look for ways you can engage with comments from a previous speaker. This means that you should not be talking when other people are speaking.

## COURSE POLICIES & GUIDELINES

**Attendance:** You are an adult and therefore, you do not need to notify me when you miss class and you do not need to explain your absences to me. Please do not send me an email asking if you “missed anything important in class”! If you miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate for notes. If you have any questions about your notes, please see me during my office hours. Missing more than *two* classes during the semester *will negatively affect your participation grade* regardless of the reasons for the absences. Missing more than *five* classes during the semester may result in an F for the course.

**Academic Honesty:** Gustavus Adolphus College standards for academic honesty apply in this class. If you have questions about these standards, please consult the College Honor Code. Your decision to remain enrolled in this class will serve as your agreement to abide by the following statement for each assignment you submit: “*On my honor, I pledge that I have not given, received, or tolerated others’ use of unauthorized aid in completing this work.*” Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any thoughts or ideas that are not your own, even if you are not directly quoting a source must be attributed to their source through in text citations. Plagiarized work will be given a zero, cases will be reported to the dean, and the incident may be grounds for failing the course.

**Cell Phones:** Please turn off your cell phone before class. If a cell phone rings during class time, the owner will be asked to bring a treat to share with the entire class during our next meeting to compensate us for the distraction.



**Grade Dispute:** Any grade disputes must be submitted in writing to me no later than one week after the assignment is returned.

**Special Accommodations:** If you have a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical, or learning disability that may have an effect on your ability to complete assigned course work, please contact Laurie Bickett, the Disability Services Coordinator, in the Advising Center. She will review your concerns and decide with you what accommodations are necessary. Upon receipt of documentation from her, I will be happy to work with you.

**The Writing Center:** At the Writing Center, you’ll work with a peer tutor one-on-one: you can talk frankly about your writing concerns and receive on-the-spot feedback. The Writing Center is not a proofreading service; rather, it is a peer teaching facility that helps you clarify your thinking, structure your papers, develop evidence, hone your style, and practice self-editing skills. Please call x6027 for hours and locations.

# COURSE SCHEDULE

## SECTION 1: THE PRESIDENCY IN STRUCTURAL & HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### Week 1: Conceptualizing the American Presidency

**Tuesday (9/2)**

**Thursday (9/4)**

*Read:* Milkis & Nelson 2 (Moodle Reserve); Pfiffner & Davidson 46

### Week 2: Framers' Intentions and Presidential Roles

**Tuesday (9/9)**

*Read:* Pika & Maltese 1, Article II of the U.S. Constitution

**Thursday 9/11)**

*Read:* Pfiffner & Davidson 2 & 3

### Week 3: Presidential Powers

**Tuesday (9/16)**

*Read:* Pfiffner & Davidson 6, 7, 8, & 9

**Thursday (9/18)**

*Read:* Ellis & Nelson 1

*Due:* Research Paper Proposal and five sources (1-2 pages)

## SECTION 2: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS & THE PUBLIC

### Week 4: Presidential Campaigns

**Tuesday (9/23)**

*Read:* Pika & Maltese 2; Pfiffner & Davidson 13

**Thursday (9/25)**

*Read:* Pfiffner & Davidson 12 & 14; Ellis & Nelson 2

### Week 5: Presidential Elections

**Tuesday (9/30)**

*Read:* Pfiffner & Davidson 15 & 18

**Thursday (10/2)**

*Read:* Ellis & Nelson 3

*In Class:* Debate

### Week 6: Presidential Personalities

**Tuesday (10/7): No Class—Nobel Conference**

**Thursday (10/9)**

*Read:* Pika & Maltese 4; Pfiffner & Davidson 42; Ellis & Nelson 11

**Week 7: Presidents and the Public**

**Tuesday (10/14)**

*Read:* Pika & Maltese 3; Pfiffner & Davidson 22

**Thursday (10/16)**

*Read:* Pfiffner & Davidson 19, 20, & 21

**Week 8: Presidents and the Public**

**Tuesday (10/21): No Class—Fall Break**

**Thursday (10/23)**

*Read:* Ellis & Nelson 5 & 6

*In Class:* Debate

Take Home Exam 1 Distributed

**SECTION 3: THE PRESIDENCY & THE GOVERNMENT**

**Week 9: The Institutional Presidency and Executive Privilege**

**Tuesday (10/28)**

*Read:* Pfiffner & Davidson 24 & 25

*Due:* Take Home Exam 1

**Thursday (10/30)**

*Read:* Pfiffner & Davidson 30; Ellis & Nelson 9

*In Class:* Debate

**Week 10: Presidents and the Bureaucracy**

**Tuesday (11/4)**

*Read:* Pika & Maltese 6

**Thursday (11/6)**

*Read:* Ellis & Nelson 10

*Due:* Research Paper Draft

**Week 11: Presidents and Congress**

**Tuesday (11/11)**

*Read:* Pika & Maltese 5

**Thursday (11/13)**

*Read:* Pfiffner & Davidson 28, 32 & 33

**Week 12: Presidents and the Courts**

**Tuesday (11/18)**

*Read:* Pika & Maltese 7; Pfiffner & Davidson 31

**Thursday (11/20)**

*Read:* Ellis & Nelson 8

*In Class:* Debate

**Week 13: Presidents and the Courts**

**Tuesday (11/25)**

*Read:* Pfiffner & Davidson 40

**Thursday (11/27): No Class—Thanksgiving Break**

**SECTION 4: PRESIDENTIAL POLICYMAKING**

**Week 14: Presidents and Domestic Policymaking**

**Tuesday (12/2)**

*Read:* Pfiffner & Davidson 16, 17, & 18

*In Class:* Research paper presentations

**Thursday (12/4)**

*In Class:* Research paper presentations

*Due:* Research Paper

**Week 15: Presidents and Foreign Policymaking**

**Tuesday (12/9)**

*Read:* Pfiffner & Davidson 36

*In Class:* Research paper presentations

**Thursday (12/11)**

*Read:* Ellis & Nelson 7

*In Class:* Debate

Take Home Exam #2 distributed

**Week 16: Final Exam Week**

**Tuesday (12/16)**

Take Home Exam #2 due in my office by 5:00 pm. Paper copy only.

## TAKE HOME EXAM GUIDELINES

Your exams in this course are in the form of take-home essays. I will distribute the essay topics in class and they are due on the dates listed on the syllabus.

You should complete all work on your take-home exams independently of other students in the class. Working with other students on these exams, or allowing other students to read your exam is cheating. You are, however, welcome to consult your notes or the readings in crafting your response to the essay question.

### **I will grade your exams according to the following criteria:**

- The essay accurately and fully answers the question posed in the assignment (30%)
- The essay draws upon all relevant course readings (30%)
- The essay clearly, and accurately, defines all relevant course terms or concepts discussed (30%)
- The essay is free of spelling and grammatical errors (10%)

You will answer two of three questions provided. Each essay may be between 3-5 pages in length. I will not read beyond page 5 on each essay. Each essay should be typed, double-spaced, written in standard font (12 point Times New Roman, for example), and with standard 1 inch margins. Include a cover page which includes your name and the date. **PLEASE DO NOT INCLUDE YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ELSE ON THE ESSAY.** You do not need to include a bibliography. Please reference authors by their last name and include specific page numbers if you use a direct quotation from the readings. When you use readings from the readers, be sure to reference the author of the article rather than the editor of the reader in your in text citation.

## RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES

You will research and write an 8-12 page paper on the topic of your choice related to the American presidency. Your paper should present an interesting and original research question and defend a thesis with thoughtful analysis and convincing scholarly evidence. I expect you to conduct thorough research and draw heavily upon scholarly books and articles along with other credible sources.

**Step 1:** Think about which aspects of the American presidency most interest you. Flip through the course texts and identify topics or questions that interest you. Conduct preliminary library research on these topics to determine whether they would make good research projects. You're going to be living with this paper all semester so it's important that you choose something you're truly interested in writing about.

**Step 2:** Prepare a brief proposal (1-2 pages) of your research topic, along with a list of five or more academic sources related to your topic. This proposal is due in class on Thursday, September 18. The proposal should be approximately one to two paragraphs and should explain the general area you intend to address, why you have chosen that area, and any background knowledge you have that pertains to this topic. You should list five or more relevant sources based on your preliminary inquiry into the topic. Please use APA or Chicago style citations and list the works in alphabetical order by author.

**Step 3:** Conduct library research on your topic. Collect as much scholarly information as you can find about the topic. You may need to use interlibrary loan to acquire some of the information, so do not procrastinate on this step. Make friends with a reference librarian if you are having trouble finding information or if you are not sure what qualifies as "scholarly" sources. Your final paper should use between 15 and 30 sources.

**Step 4:** Begin outlining your paper. Draft a working thesis statement. It may change as you work on your paper, but it will help guide your writing. You will be making and defending an original argument based on your research, so think about the best way to organize your paper so that it is logical, easy to follow, and persuasive.

**Step 5:** Write a complete draft of your paper. This draft of your paper is due on November 6 in class and will be graded based on your thesis, research, and argument development.

**Step 6:** Review my comments from your draft. Revise and edit your paper. You may need to conduct additional research or adjust your structure to make it more persuasive. The final draft of your paper is due in class on Thursday, December 4.

### **Paper Guidelines**

- Papers should be typed, 8-12 double-spaced pages (not including title page (with a title!) and works cited page) with standard (1"-1.25") margins, font type (Times New Roman) and size (12 point). I will not read beyond page 12 so be sure to stay within the allotted pages. Staple your paper.
- Include a bibliography that is formatted according to APA or Chicago guidelines. Information on formatting is available in your Lunsford manual or at the library.
- Your paper should be logically and thoughtfully organized, well written, and carefully proofread for factual, grammar, and spelling errors. Remember that this is a formal writing assignment and so your language and style should reflect this (avoid contractions, slang, passive voice, and all of the "Twenty Most Common Errors" listed in section 3 of the Lunsford style guide).

**Getting Help:** If you are having difficulty at any stage of the process (selecting a topic, writing, revising, proofreading) there are many places you can turn to for help:

- Come see me during office hours or set up an appointment to meet with me. I am happy to talk to you about your paper at any stage of the process.
- Set up an appointment with the tutors in the Writing Center. They can help you at any stage of the writing process.
- Talk with a classmate or exchange papers with a classmate for help revising, editing, and/or proofreading.
- Talk with a reference librarian. They can help you find sources that you might not know exist.

**Grading:** Your grade for the papers is based on four components, with the largest component based on points two and three:

- Development of original and interesting research question and thesis
- Thorough and accurate research
- Persuasive argumentation
- Your writing style, including grammar, spelling, word choice, organization and overall presentation

**Late Paper Penalty:** Papers will be penalized 10% (out of 100%) for each day (or portion thereof) they are late.

**A Reminder Concerning Plagiarism:** Plagiarism—using the words or ideas of someone else without attribution--will not be tolerated under any circumstance. Any thoughts or ideas that are not your own, even if you are not directly quoting a source must be attributed to their source through in-text citations. When in doubt, over-cite. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, consult pages 172-175 in the Lunsford handbook or come and talk to me. Plagiarized work will be given a zero, cases will be reported to the dean, and the incident may result in failure of the course.

## DEBATE GUIDELINES

### **Formal debate develops important skills which are useful in the classroom and in the workplace:**

- **Research Skills:** In developing arguments to support or oppose your topic, you will need to conduct extensive research on your topic. You will learn what others have said about this topic and find relevant research related to the topic. You will become experts on this issue through your library research. Remember to keep track of where your information comes from because the most persuasive evidence will come from credible sources that you can reference in the debate. You are welcome to bring in notes for your debate.
- **Argumentation Skills:** Your goal is to construct a persuasive argument based on clear logical reasoning and high-quality evidence. This involves more than simply stringing facts and figures together. You will need to be prepared to defend your argument against potential counterarguments, which means you learn to recognize all sides of an argument and learn which arguments are persuasive and which are not. You will also learn to respond quickly to new ideas you may not have thought about.
- **Verbal Skills:** You will need to present your ideas verbally in front of other people. The ability to articulate your ideas in a way that is clear, accessible, concise, and persuasive is an important skill. I understand that public speaking can be a very intimidating activity and that some of you may suffer from public speaking anxiety. I recognize that this debate may be the most difficult assignment of the semester for some of you because of this anxiety. Please remember that the classroom is a supportive learning environment. Though, in a sense, you will be in “competition” with another pair, our ultimate goal is to learn more about these topics and the various arguments related to these topics, and to individually come to conclusions regarding these topics. The best way to avoid the anxiety that might arise from this assignment will be to prepare well so that you are very familiar with your topic. Nearly everyone will need to speak in front of a group at one point in their life. Consider this a good opportunity to practice those skills in a supportive environment.

### **Getting Started**

- Along with your partner, begin researching your topic. You may find it useful to think in terms of research you would do in preparing to write a research paper.
- Pay attention to the source of your information. It is your responsibility to evaluate the credibility of your sources. The more credible your sources, the more persuasive you will be.
- Begin outlining your general argument (the argument that will be developed in your constructive speech). You may find it useful to reference some of the readings on argumentation that are posted on Moodle.
- Brainstorm all of the potential counterarguments. How will you respond to those arguments?
- Decide which person will be the first (and last) speaker, and which will be the second speaker. Write outlines of what you want to cover in each speech. Remember that this form of debate is extemporaneous. That means that you are welcome to use limited notes, but that your speeches should not be written out ahead of time.
- Practice, Practice, Practice!

### **The five topics, along with the date on which they will be argued are:**

- Resolved, the president should be elected directly by the people (10/2)
- Resolved, the media are too hard on presidents (10/23)
- Resolved, a broad executive privilege is essential to the successful functioning of the Presidency (10/30)
- Resolved, the president has too much power in the selection of judges (11/20)
- Resolved, presidents have usurped the war power that rightfully belongs to Congress (12/11)

## **GRADING SCALE FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

*A or A-*: Superior development of original ideas. These papers organize arguments logically, present credible supporting evidence, and communicate the information without stylistic or mechanical errors. These papers present a significant and well-argued position that is both convincing and thought-provoking. I reserve this grade for papers that are truly excellent, and A grades, in particular, are rare.

*B+, B, or B-*: Good development of thesis. These papers organize arguments in a logical way, find credible supporting evidence, and communicate the information without distracting stylistic or mechanical errors. These papers reflect a clear understanding of both the assignment and the course material, however, they lack the sophistication and polish of A papers.

*C+, C, or C-*: Average development of thesis. These papers lack strong development of arguments and/or credible supporting evidence, and include distracting stylistic or mechanical errors. This grade often reflects a lack of time or effort in researching, writing, revising, editing, or proofreading.

*D+ or D*: Poor development of thesis (may not even have a thesis). These papers fail to organize arguments in a logical way (you may not have supporting arguments or any sort of organizational structure), find credible supporting evidence (you may not have the right kind or amount of evidence or you may not be citing that evidence properly), or communicate the information without distracting stylistic or mechanical errors. These papers reflect poor-quality college-level work with little time or effort put into the writing process.

*You can earn an F* if you do not turn in a paper, plagiarize your paper in any way, do not answer the question, and/or do such a poor job in writing your paper that it is impossible to understand what message you want to communicate with the paper.

### **COURSE GRADE SCALE**

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	65-69
D	60-64
F	<59