POS 3413-0070: The American Presidency

Department of Political Science
College of Science, University of Central Florida

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor:	Dr. Daniel Marien	Term:	Fall 2011
		Class Meeting Days	Mon.
Phone:	ORL: 407-823-2608 COC: 321-433-7952	Class Meeting Hours:	6:00 - 8:50 p.m.
E-Mail:	danielmarien@yahoo.com	Class Location:	COCOA Bldg 3, rm 235

INSTRUCTORS' OFFICE HOURS	OFFICE LOCATION	OFFICE PHONE NUMBER
Mondays 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.	UCF Cocoa; BCC bldg 3, room 223	321-433-7912
Tuesdays 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m	UCF Orlando; Philips Hall, room. 313	407-823-0113
Wednesdays 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.	UCF Cocoa; BCC bldg 3, room 223	321-433-7912
Thursdays 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m	UCF Orlando; Philips Hall, room. 313	407-823-0113

Notes:

Remember that a face to face meeting is the best way to deal with complex issues. The second best way is a phone conversation. Email communication works well for exchanging standardized information, but it is not an ideal method for resolving complex issues.

Phoning outside of office hours is not likely to be effective.

You **must** regularly visit your UCF knights email account. The instructor relies on it to update you on the course process, schedule, requirements, etc.

I. Generic University Course Catalog Description

POS 3413 COS-POLS 3(3,0)
The American Presidency:
PR: POS 2041 or C.I.
Examination of historical and contemporary role of the presidency, including the presidential selection process and the office's evolution in status, powers, administrative responsibilities, leadership, and decision-making.

II. Introduction

This is a stressful time in American life. Economic insecurity, growing disparities in income, wealth, and opportunities, shrill politics, bewilderment and anger pervade the scene. People expect answers and leadership from the presidency. Can the institution meet widely shared expectations and deliver relief? The issue is complex. It will be studied from a variety of analytical viewpoints.

III. Specific Description of this Course

The core subject of this course is leadership in a fragmented and disjointed political system in a time of crisis. The course is particularly focused on the leadership experience of Barrack Obama, George W. Bush, Ronald Reagan, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. (but also note that participants' interests in other presidents will be accommodated.)

We focus on several themes: (1) the powers and historical development of the Presidency as a distinct institution; (2) recurring types of presidential leadership situations; (3) an evaluation of the personal qualities presidents bring to their leadership performance.

IV. Course Structure

The course has three phases of uneven length.

Phase 1:

Students first become acquainted with basic issues in the study of the presidency. Most of our reading during this phase will focus on analytical approaches to the presidency (Jones, Skowronek, Greenstein) and on the leadership experiences of Franklin D. Roosevelt and Reagan.

Individual quizzes, group discussions, class wide forums and lectures occupy this period. Discussion groups are formed of 4 or 6 students interested in exploring (during Phase 2) a general theme (for example the foreign policy of President Bush). Note that all groups read the same common materials during Phase 1. Specialized research occurs in Phase 2.

Phase 2:

Here the focus moves to the Bush and Obama presidencies (though interest in other presidencies will be accommodated). Students work in pairs to produce a research report on a single and specific topic (ex.: Bush's decision to invade Iraq) broadly related to a general theme (ex.: President Bush's foreign policy). Students publish their report to the rest of the class on a wiki platform. Groups then suggest, and the instructor selects, a subset of the research reports to be assigned to the final exam.

Phase 3:
Students prepare for and take a final exam covering a subset of the research reports published on the course electronic platform (wiki). Students will thus create part of the course's materials. It is a responsibility to take seriously.

V. Course Goals and Objectives

General Course Goals

1. To help students understand the development of the institution of the Presidency.

2. To help students understand recent U.S. political history from the standpoint of the Presidency.

3. To help students understand the structural perspective of presidential leadership articulated by Stephen Skowronek.

4. To help students understand the agency perspective of presidential leadership articulated by Fred Greenstein.

5. To develop students' ability to work productively in small groups, thereby nurturing useful workplace skills.

6. To develop students' ability to research and assemble an informative, grounded and interesting research report and to publish it to their peers in a timely manner.

Specific Instructional Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able:

1. To describe in specific terms the constitutional powers of the presidency, the expectations surrounding the presidency, and the institutional obstacles to fulfil these expectations.

2. To describe in specific terms the leadership experiences of presidents Roosevelt, Ford, Carter, Reagan, G.W. Bush and Obama.

3. a) To describe in specific term the leadership categories developed by Professor Stephen Skowronek (politics of reconstruction; politics of orthodox-innovation; politics of pre-emption; politics of disjunction).
b) To accurately apply these analytical categories to concrete cases of presidential leadership experiences.

4. a) To describe in specific terms the personal qualities useful for presidential leadership as conceived by Professor Fred Greenstein.
b) To analyse a specific presidential leadership performance with the help of Greenstein's categories.

5. To divide group tasks in clear and functional ways, to communicate ideas effectively, to listen attentively to other students' ideas and viewpoints, to demonstrate responsibility vis a vis the group, and to integrate their ideas and contributions in a larger ensemble.

6. To communicate in writing research results in a clear, engaging and informative manner.

VI. Course Prerequisites

The successful completion of an introductory course in American Government.
Keeping abreast of current affairs through the regular reading of a serious newspaper.

VII. Course Credits

3.0 cr.

VIII. Required Texts and Materials

Charles O. Jones, *The American Presidency: A Very Short Introduction*,
Oxford University Press, 2007, ISBN: 978-0-19530701-6.

Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan: A History, 1974-2008*,
Harper Perennial, 2009, ISBN: 978-006074816.

Stephen Skworonek, *Presidential Leadership in Political Time*,
Kansas University Press, 2nd edition (**only**), 2011, ISBN: 978-0-7006-1762-3.

Fred I. Greenstein, *The Presidential Difference: Leadership Style from FDR to Barack Obama*,
Princeton University Press, 3rd edition (only), 2009, ISBN: 978-0-691-14383-5.

Additional materials will be assigned and put in library reserve as the course progress.

IX. **Basis for Final Grade**

Assessment	**Percent of final course grade**
RAT Quizzes	20
Ten weekly newspaper reports on presidential activity	10
Graded Group Discussions	30
Paired Contribution to Group Report	30
Final Exam	10

Grading Scale (%)	
94-100	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
60-63	D-
0 - 59	F

X. Grade Dissemination

Graded tests and materials in this course will be returned individually only by request. You can access your scores at any time using the Grade Book function of Webcourses@UCF.

XI. Course Policies

Late Work Policy:
There are no make-ups for in-class graded group discussions, for in-class quizzes or for the final exam. Contributions to the group report turned in late will be assessed a penalty of 5 course points.

The instructor will drop the two lowest scores in the calculation of the Readiness Assessment Test (RAT) quizzes.

Grades of Incomplete

The current university policy concerning incomplete grades will be followed in this course. Incomplete grades are given only in situations where unexpected emergencies prevent a student from completing the course and the remaining work can be completed the next semester. Your instructor is the final authority on whether you qualify for an incomplete. Incomplete work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester or the "I" will automatically be recorded as an "F" on your transcript.

Grading Policy

RAT Quizzes are graded individually. These short quizzes are meant to evaluate the student's readiness to engage in group discussion. Quiz time will be limited. Students will have access to the materials and their notes during the quizzes.

Graded Group Discussions receive a collective grade. Only a random sample of such discussions will be graded by the instructor. Group members are entitled to two absences without penalty from these discussions **if** the absence is for reason beyond their control **and if** sufficient documentation is provided. Students absent more than twice will be penalized by the subtraction of one course point for each additional absence.

Paired contributions to group reports: Contribution topics must be coordinated with the group and the instructor. Students must turn interim research reports and a self-evaluation of their performance in the research pair at the end of the semester. Paired authors normally receive the same grade for their research report. The instructor retains the right to adjust the individual grade of a pair member upward or downward.

The final exam covers the group report contributions selected by the instructor after recommendation from the respective groups. The exam will be time-limited with access to the team reports. It will feature true/false and multiple choice questions.

XII. Course Policies: Technology and Media

Email: Use my email to communicate with me: danielmarien@yahoo.com. Allow up to 48 hours for a response. Repeat message if you haven't received a response within 48 hours.

Laptop Usage: All laptops and other electronic devices must be closed during lectures and class wide fora. Laptop usage by the group note taker is welcome during graded group discussions only. Students observed using an unauthorized electronic device in class will be punished by the subtraction of one course point per observation. Students should consult the written and audio documents available at these URL for rationale justifying this policy:

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/07/technology/07brain.html?ref=homepage&src=me&pagewanted=all

http://www.npr.org/player/v2/mediaPlayer.html?action=1&t=1&islist=false&id=129384107&m=129398822

XIII. Course Policies: Student Expectations

Disability Access:

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

Academic Conduct Policy:

Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. If you are uncertain as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, please consult The Golden Rule, the University of Central Florida's Student Handbook (http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/) for further details. As in all University courses, The Golden Rule Rules of Conduct will be applied. Violations of these rules will result in a failing grade for the entire course and can also result in expulsion from the University

Turinitin.com:

In this course we will utilize turnitin.com, an automated system which instructors can use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. Accordingly, you will be expected to submit your research report (contribution to group report) in both hard copy and electronic format via Turnitin. After the assignment is processed, as instructor I receive a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another author's work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process visit http://www.turnitin.com. Essays are due at turnitin.com the same day as in class.

XIV. Schedule

Date	Finish This Homework Before Class	Topics to be Discussed in Class
8/22	First day of class; no homework is due	Introduction of course goals and means. In-class reading and viewing
8/29	Read Jones, chapters 1-3. Read Greenstein, chapters 1 and 15 Submit Newspaper report	Group Discussion Class Wide Discussion
9/5	**Holiday (No Class)**	
9/12	Read Jones, chapters 4-6. Read New Deal (instructor distributed) Submit Newspaper report	Group Discussion Class Wide Discussion
9/19	Read Greenstein, chapter 2 Read Skowronek, chapters 1-2 Submit Newspaper report	Group Discussion Class Wide Discussion
9/26	Read Wilentz, Intro, Prologue, ch. 1-3 Submit Newspaper report	Group Discussion Class Wide Discussion

10/3	Read Wilentz, ch. 4-7 Read Skowronek, ch. 3 Submit Newspaper report	Group Discussion Class Wide Discussion
10/10	Read Wilentz, ch. 8-10 Read Greenstein, ch. 10 Submit Newspaper report	Group Discussion Class Wide Discussion
10/17	Read Wilentz, ch. 14 and Epilogue Read Skowronek, ch. 4-5 Submit Newspaper report	Group Discussion Class Wide Discussion
10/24	Read Skowronek, ch. 6 Submit Newspaper report	Group Discussion Class Wide Discussion
10/31	Read Greenstein ch. 13-14 Submit Newspaper report	Group Discussion Class Wide Discussion
11/7	Research	Research Planning
11/14	Research	Research Planning
11/21	Research	Research Planning
11/28	Research	Research Planning
12/5		Final Exam at 7:00 pm

* Note: The Schedule is subject to revision