pos3413b - The American Presidency
David Houghton

Course Home

Instructor Contact

Instructor	David Houghton
Office	Phillips Hall 311G
Office Hours	Wednesday, 10am-12pm up to and including Wed 25 May. After that I will be teaching the course from the UK, but can still be reached by email or by leaving a message at the phone number below
Phone	407 823-6025
E-mail	david.houghton@ucf.edu

Introduction

Welcome to POS3413 *American Presidency*, Summer D 2011. This course is fully online, and there are no face-to-face meetings. On this website you will find the course schedule, which will tell you what to read - and in some cases what to watch or listen to - in each Module (click on 'Schedule'). Modules generally post at 5pm on a Friday, with the exception of Module 1 (which will post on the first day of class on Monday 16 May). Each week a new Module will be posted which will ask you to complete various readings and do assignments, in most cases within seven days.

Course Description

Although it is by necessity a more abbreviated version than that taught face-to-face, this online version of the course is designed to provide students with a comprehensive introduction to the office of the American president. All aspects of the office will be examined, including recruitment and presidential elections, staffing, policy making and relations with Congress and the public. The role of individual leadership characteristics will also be given particular attention, but the presidency will also be placed in the context of the broader American political landscape, with special emphasis paid to the capacity of the office to cope with the domestic and international environment of the 21st Century. No other executive position in the world system

has the status of the US presidency. Both in foreign/military and economic affairs the world looks to the US for leadership. And yet the formal powers of the presidency within the American political system are limited; that system was created to frustrate leadership, not to give in free rein, and therein lies the central dilemma of the office.

There will be two sections to the course this semester: in Part I we begin by examining the various paradoxes which beset the modern American presidency. In Part II we then examine the institutional and political relationships between the president and other influential bodies in American politics.

Required Texts

The following books have been placed on order and should be available for purchase at the UCF Book Store or via an online seller such as http://www.amazon.com. I *strongly* recommend that you buy your own copies, as you'll be tested on their contents at exam time:

Thomas Cronin and Michael Genovese, *The Paradoxes of the American Presidency*, third edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). There is an Amazon.com link here.

Irwin Morris, *The American Presidency: An Analytical Approach* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). There is an Amazon.com link here.

A Word of Warning About Online Courses

If you haven't taken an online class before, you should know that they can be quite gruelling: since there are no face to face meetings, there is a lot more emphasis on reading than there might be in an ordinary class, and most of all you need to organize yourself so that you complete the readings and postings on time. This will require a great deal of self-discipline on your part. Do not take this course unless you are strongly motivated to do all the readings and other assignments on time.

Rules of Assessment

The final grade will be composed of three elements (note that all times given in this course refer to local time in Orlando, FL, which is US Eastern Time):

- A Midterm Examination on everything covered so far, taken online *at any time* between Friday 10 June 5pm and Friday 17 June 5pm. Consists of 50 multiple choice questions and worth 40%.
- Cumulative Final Examination, taken online *at any time* between Friday 8 July 5pm and Friday 15 July 5pm. Consists of 100 multiple choice questions and worth 50%.
- Discussion postings will collectively account for 10%. You will usually have a week to do each posting, and discussion topics will close when the week ends (see individual Modules for details). Note: although I will allow every member of the class to do *one* late posting during the semester, after that I will deduct 1% from

your 10% Discussions score for every posting which appears late. It is therefore very much in your interest to ensure that you do the readings and discussion postings on time.

Makeup examinations and extensions to weekly assignments will be offered *only in the very rarest of circumstances*. In order to be eligible to take a makeup exam or get an extension, you must give a *convincing written explanation*, backed up with proper medical or other documentation, as to why you were unable to meet the expectations required of other class members. Only where the instructor is fully satisfied that the student could not be expected to complete the original assignment/examination given his or her personal circumstances will any exceptions whatsoever be granted. Note also that any makeup examination *will not necessarily be of the same format as the original exam*.

Finally, please note that ***no extra credit*** will be offered in this course; by continuing with the course, you are agreeing to abide by its rules of assessment and agreeing to accept the marks/grades assigned to your work. All grades are final. The grading scheme will be as follows:

A 90 or above
A- 88-89
B+ 86-87
B 82-85
B- 80-81
C+ 78-79
C 73-77
C- 70-72
D+ 67-69
D 63-66
D- 60-62
F Below 60

Schedule of Readings
Summer D 2011

The following readings may be subject to change as the course proceeds, so you should check back here frequently. Any readings not included in the required text will be added to the webpage via a link called 'Additional Readings Box'.

Post Date	Module	Activity
Part I: Introduction		
Monday 16 May	1: Introduction To Class	Overview of objectives and methods of assessment, and a bird's eye view of what we'll be covering during the semester. Post discussion to 'Introductions'. Modules will normally be posted on a Friday, beginning on Friday 20 May.
Friday 20 May	2: Paradoxes of the American Presidency	Read Cronin and Genovese, *The Paradoxes of the American Presidency*, Chapter 1 and Morris, *The American Presidency*, Chapters 1 and 2. Post discussion to 'Paradoxes'.
Part II: Institutional and Political Relationships		
Friday 27 May	3: How We Judge/Elect Presidents	Cronin and Genovese, Chapters 2 and 3 and Morris, Chapter 11. View a short video on party conventions by clicking here. Post discussion to 'Judging/Electing Presidents'.
Friday 3 June	4: Presidential Power and Leadership	Cronin and Genovese, Chapter 4 and Morris, Chapter 4, as well as 'Barber' and 'Rose'. You can find these in a folder on the course homepage called 'Additional Readings Box'. Post discussion to 'Power and Leadership'.
Friday 10 June	5: Midterm Examination	Examination on everything covered so far, taken online *at any time* between Friday 10 June 5pm and Friday 17 June 5pm. Consists of 50 multiple choice questions.
Friday 17 June	6: Presidents in a System of Shared Powers/Congress	Cronin and Genovese, Chapters 5 and 6 and Morris, Chapter 6. Post discussion to 'Shared Powers/Congress'.
Friday 24 June	7: Presidents as Chief Executives/the Courts	Cronin and Genovese, Chapters 7 and 9 and Morris, Chapter 8. Post discussion to 'Chief Executives/Courts'.
Friday 1 July	8: Presidents and Political Parties/Foreign Policy	Cronin and Genovese, Chapter 10 and Morris, Chapter 9. Post discussion to 'Political Parties/Foreign Policy'.
Friday 8 July	9: Final Examination	Cumulative final examination, taken online *at any time* between Friday 8 July 5pm and Friday 15 July 5pm. Consists of 100 multiple choice questions.