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 2012
		Class Meeting Days	Mon.
Phone:	ORL: 407-823-0113 COC: 321-433-7952	Class Meeting Hours:	6:00 - 8:50 p.m.
E-Mail:	danielmarien@yahoo.com	Class Location:	COCOA Bldg 3, room 366

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 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 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 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 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

Welcome to this course on the American Presidency!

This is an exciting time to study the presidency. The controversial nature of the Obama presidency and the on-going campaign provide natural focal points for an academic examination of the subject.

III. Specific Description of this Course

The course will have three broad interrelated focuses: a general discussion of the role and powers of the presidency in the U.S. political system; a specific discussion of developments during the Obama presidency; and an analysis of presidential campaigns as a special kind of theatrical performance.

As part of the focus on campaigning, student will be given the option to get actively involved in a presidential campaign of their choice. Other students will intensively monitor mass media coverage of the campaign. Both groups of students will relate analytical concepts drawn from our academic readings to their observations of candidate speeches, media construction of the campaign or field observations of citizens and activists.

Course materials include documentary films, academic books, and mass media reports.

IV. Course Goals and Objectives

<u>General Course Goals</u>

1. To help students understand the role and powers of the institution of the Presidency.

2. To help students understand political developments during the Obama presidency.

3. To help students understand how presidential campaigns stage a specific kind of theatrical performance.

4. To help students becoming more aware of the reasons underlying their personal choices as citizens voting, or not voting, in presidential elections.

5. To help students develop the ability to systematically analyze academic monographs.

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 key political developments during the Obama presidency.

3. a) To describe in specific term the concepts of civil sphere, of presidential campaign as a theatrical performance involving collective representation, tales of heroism in the civil sphere, the binary categories of the civil sphere, the process of “walking” the boundaries between the civil sphere and other social spheres.

b) To accurately apply these analytical categories to the 2012 presidential campaign.

4. To be able to articulate accurate pros and cons for personal voting (or non-voting) decisions this fall.

5. To accurately identify the guiding questions, the structure, the evidence and arguments and the conclusions of academic monographs.

V. 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.

VI. Course Credits

3.0 cr.

VII. Required Texts and Materials

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

Theda Skocpol, *Obama and America's Political Future*, Harvard University Press, 2012, ISBN: 978-0-674-06597-0.

Jeffrey C. Alexander, *The Performance of Politics: Obama's Victory and the Democratic Struggle for Power*, Oxford University Press, 2010, ISBN: 978-0-19-992643-5.

An electronic subscription to either the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal*.

VIII. Basis for Final Grade

Assessment	Percent of final course grade
Quizzes	40
Learning Journal Entries	40
Final Exam	20

Quizzes are brief and open book exercise meant to verify that the student has read the material. Student must use a brown scantron.

Learning Journal Entries are weekly written submissions posted in Webcourses@ucf.edu. Each week, the student must write at least 800 words. The weekly entries must address four issues:

a) What are the main ideas presented in the assigned viewing and reading materials for the week?
b) An explanation of how the assigned materials relate to the content observed in the media or the observation drawn from participation in the campaign.
c) A brief description of the ideas, assertions or arguments that the student finds the most meaningful or controversial.
d) An explanation of why the student finds these ideas, assertions or arguments meaningful or controversial

The **Final Exam** will consist in essay questions recapitulating the course's content.

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

IX. 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.

X. Course Policies

Late Work Policy:
There are no make-ups for in-class discussions, for in-class quizzes or for the final exam.

The instructor will drop the two lowest scores in the calculation of the 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.

XI. 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 discussion. Laptop usage by the class note taker is welcome. 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

XII. 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.

XIII. Schedule

Date	Finish This Homework Before Class	Class Activities
8/20	First day of class; no homework is due	Introduction of course goals and means. Viewing of *The Choice 2008* (2 hrs)
8/27	Read Jones, chapter 1 Read Alexander, Preface, Prologue and chap.1 View Speeches at the GOP Convention	Quiz on reading and viewing materials Excerpts of GOP Convention Sharing of Learning Journal
9/3	**Holiday (No Class)** (But View Speeches at the Dem. Convention)	**Holiday (No Class)**
9/10	Read Jones, chapter 2 + pp. 275-295 Read Alexander, chap.2-3 View Speeches at the Dem. Convention	Quiz on reading and viewing materials Excerpts of Dem. Convention Sharing of Learning Journal
9/17	Read Jones, chapter 3 Read Alexander, chap.4 Monitor Media OR Campaign Particip.	Quiz on reading materials Sharing of Learning Journal Viewing of *Inside the Meltdown* (1 hr)
9/24	Read Skocpol, pp. 1-21. Read Alexander, chap.5 Monitor Media OR Campaign Particip.	Quiz on readings and viewing materials Sharing of Learning Journal Viewing of T*he Warning* (1 hr)
10/1	Read Skocpol, pp. 21-42. Read Alexander, chap.6 Monitor Media OR Campaign Particip.	Quiz on readings and viewing materials Sharing of Learning Journal Viewing of *Sick in America* (1 hr)

10/8	Read Skocpol, pp. 42-62. Read Alexander, chap.7 Monitor Media OR Campaign Particip.	Quiz on readings and viewing materials Sharing of Learning Journal Viewing of *Obama's Deal* (1 hr)
10/15	Read Skocpol, pp. 62-89. Read Alexander, chap.8 Monitor Media OR Campaign Particip.	Quiz on readings and viewing materials Sharing of Learning Journal Viewing of doc on 2012 campaign (TBA)
10/22	Read Skocpol, pp. 91-143. Read Alexander, chap.9 Monitor Media OR Campaign Particip.	Quiz on readings and viewing materials Sharing of Learning Journal Viewing of doc on 2012 campaign (TBA)
10/29	Read Skocpol, pp. 143-167. Read Alexander, chap.9 + Epilogue Monitor Media OR Campaign Particip.	Quiz on readings and viewing materials Sharing of Learning Journal
11/5	Recap of Skocpol Recap of Alexander Monitor Media OR Campaign Particip.	Sharing of Learning Journal
11/12	**Holiday (No Class)**	**Holiday (No Class)**
11/19	Voting Returns Jones ch. 4	Quiz Sharing of Learning Journal
11/26	Jones ch. 5-6	Quiz Sharing of Learning Journal
12/3	Jones ch. 7	Quiz Sharing of Learning Journal
12/10		Final Exam at 7:00 pm

* Note: The Schedule is subject to revision