POLI 4630

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POLITICAL SCIENCE 4630: THE U.S. PRESIDENCY

Course Description and Learning Objectives
This course is an overview of the United States presidency: the president’s roles as leader of the nation, head of the executive branch, commander-in-chief of the military, and leader of the party; the nature, development, and sources of presidential power as well as its limitations; the presidential selection process; and interactions of the president with governmental institutions, the public, and the world. By the end of the semester, students will be able to:
- understand the complexity and paradoxical nature of the U.S. presidency;
- describe and evaluate the U.S. presidential election system;
- apply political science concepts and methods to the study of the presidency;
- explore presidency-related controversies from various normative perspectives.

Course Requirements
Grades will be based on a mid-term exam (1/3 of your grade), a final exam (1/3 of your grade), and two written assignments (each 1/6 of your grade). Exams are based on lectures and readings. A description of the written assignments is attached. Note that they are due on September 10 and November 12.

Important Information
Attendance will be taken daily, and class attendance/participation may determine borderline grades. Students missing 5 classes in a row will be reported to the Dean of Liberal Arts. Lectures and class discussions may sometimes lag behind the reading assignments; nevertheless, students should keep up with the reading assignments and be prepared to discuss them by the dates they are assigned. Please note that the last day to drop a class is October 14.

All written assignments must be turned in electronically via turnitin in Moodle, AND in hard copy, by class time on the due dates. The penalty for late papers and written assignments is 5 points per day.

If a student must miss an exam due to extreme emergency, a makeup exam may be scheduled, but only if the instructor is contacted before the missed exam (if at all possible). Exams may be made up only at the discretion of the instructor.

Required Texts
The following books are required and available at the bookstore:

In addition, students are expected to keep up with the news.

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Anyone found guilty of academic dishonesty will receive an automatic F and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent through University channels. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. In short, DON’T DO IT! For more information on academic dishonesty and its consequences, please refer to the Student Code of Conduct at this web site: http://studentaffairs.uno.edu. (Or just type “academic integrity” into the UNO web site search engine.)

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information, please go to www.ods.uno.edu.

**Calendar and Readings**

**The Nature of the Presidency**
- Aug 25: Cronin and Genovese, chapter 1.
- Aug 27: Cronin and Genovese, chapter 2; Ellis and Nelson, chapter 5.

**Presidential Elections**
- Sept. 1: Cronin and Genovese, chapter 3.
- Sept. 3: Ellis and Nelson, chapters 2-3.

**Presidential Roles and Leadership**
- Sept. 8: Cronin and Genovese, chapter 4.
- Sept. 10: Ellis and Nelson, chapter 12. **First paper due today.**
- Sept. 15: Neustadt and Barber excerpts: available on Moodle.
- Sept. 17: Cronin and Genovese, chapter 5.

**Sept. 24:** MID-TERM EXAM.

**Presidents and Congress**
- Sept. 29: Cronin and Genovese, chapter 6.
- Oct. 6: Ellis and Nelson, chapters 7-8.
The Executive Branch
   Oct. 8: Cronin and Genovese, chapter 7.
   Oct. 20: Cronin and Genovese, chapter 8.

Presidents and the Judiciary
   Oct. 27: Cronin and Genovese, chapter 9.

The Future of the Presidency
   Nov. 3: Cronin and Genovese, chapter 10.
   Nov. 5: Ellis and Nelson, chapter 4.
   Nov. 10: Ellis and Nelson, chapter 13.

Contending Approaches to the Presidency
   Nov. 12: Genovese, Introduction and chapters 1-2. **Second paper due today.**
   Nov. 17: Genovese, chapters 3-4.
   Nov. 19: Genovese, chapters 5-6.

Political Scientists Analyze the Obama Presidency

December 1 and 3: Graduate student presentations. Also on December 3, brief review for the final exam.

**FINAL EXAM scheduled for Tuesday, December 8, 3-5 p.m.**
POLITICAL SCIENCE 4630
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Write a 3-5 page paper on the presidential selection process and whether you think it should be reformed. You may focus on one or more aspects of the presidential selection system, such as the nomination process, the Electoral College, campaign finance, and the selection of vice presidential running mates. Present arguments both in favor of, and opposed to, the reforms you discuss. If you think the current system works well and should not be changed, address the criticisms and explain why you think the current system is still the best. Use at least three academic sources other than, or in addition to, the books assigned for class. Other sources (such as popular magazines or newspapers) may also be cited, but they must be used in addition to the three or more academic sources. In order to avoid plagiarizing someone else’s work, it is important to cite the sources of your ideas, and especially to cite the sources of direct quotes by page number. Be sure to attach a bibliography; make sure that all the sources cited in your paper are in the bibliography, and that all the sources in your bibliography are used in the paper.

Paper #2. Due November 12.
Write a 5-7 page paper on the president of your choice, explaining how that president handled at least three (or more) of the nine presidential paradoxes discussed in chapter 1 of Cronin and Genovese’s The Paradoxes of the American Presidency. Consult and cite at least three biographical sources in writing your paper, and attach your bibliography. You should use biographical sources that are scholarly books and/or articles—or at the very least, please do not use sources that are extremely biased and partisan either in that president’s favor or against him.

Both papers should be double-spaced in standard font with the pages numbered. You may use the standard citation and bibliographic format of your choice. If you don’t already have a favorite format, I recommend that of the American Political Science Association. The APSA Style Manual has been placed on the course Moodle site for you to consult.

Turn in both a hard copy of each paper and an electronic copy of each paper submitted via turnitin on Moodle. Thank you!
Students receiving graduate credit for this course are required to write a graduate-level research paper, and will present their research to the class. This paper will be worth 2/3 of your grade in the course (with exams comprising the other 1/3 of the grade). The due date for the research paper is **Monday, May 5.** A brief topic statement is due on **February 10.** Class presentations will be April 23 and 28.

The paper may be either a quantitative research design or a data analysis paper. Recommended length is approximately 15-25 double-spaced pages typed in standard font. (Don’t forget to number your pages!)

The research paper should include:
- **Introduction** of your topic and research question;
- **Literature review** setting the context for your own study by detailing work and findings on your topic by previous authors (citing at least the most important previous works; if you are doing a research design without data analysis, the literature review should be more extensive);
- **Hypothesis/hypotheses**;
- **Methodology** including the source(s) of data, operationalization of variables, and data analysis techniques;
- **Reporting of findings and interpretation of results** (for data analysis papers);
- **Summary and conclusion** including the contribution of your study and implications for future research.

**Bibliography** in standard format of your choice. The *APSA Style Manual* is on Moodle and is the recommended format if you don’t already have a favorite.
OPTION 1: In-class Midterm and Final Exams (same exams as POLI 4630 on the same dates).

OPTION 2: Choose two of the five sections below, and submit a 4-6 page critical essay for each of the two sections. The essays should briefly summarize and critique the state of the literature on the section topic. The essays need not cover all sources listed under the section heading, and other sources may be included. The first essay is due on February 19; the second is due on March 26.

1. Presidential Power, Leadership, and Success

2. The Institutional Presidency and the Executive Branch


3. The Presidency and Separation of Powers


4. The Rhetorical Presidency: Relations with the Public and the Media


5. Presidential Elections