

**AmCS 3422
Americans and their Presidents
Fall 2016
Lectures: Monday and Wednesday, 1:00-2:00
Seigle L006
Discussion Sections on Friday**

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 12:00-2:00
Busch 113**

About the Course

This course takes a multidisciplinary approach to the Presidency in the United States, examining the shifting roles of the chief executive from George Washington through Barack Obama.

After a consideration of the institutional and cultural foundations of the presidency, the course examines four distinct topics: Politics (the process through which Presidents win elections and deploy power within the American political system), Policy (the process through which Presidents seek to achieve their objectives through the institutions of governance), Personality (the process through which Presidents shape and respond to prevailing notions of public and private life), and Posterity (the process through which Americans remember Presidents and the Presidency, often with the direct involvement of current and former presidents themselves).

In addition to examining the Presidency in broad terms, the course will periodically consider the case studies of five Presidents who shaped the ways Americans—policymakers, scholars, and private citizens alike—conceive of the Presidency: George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan. Considering “the Big Five” provides a means to periodically take stock of major themes in the course. Equally important, reserving these five presidents for separate consideration prevents them from overwhelming the rest of the semester.

Class Meetings

The class meets for lecture on Mondays and Wednesdays. Discussion sections meet on Fridays. **Students do not have to complete the reading before lecture.** Instead, students are expected to finish all assigned readings before discussion.

Discussion sections are an essential part of the class, since they provide important opportunities for students to engage the reading, raise questions, and develop their own ideas. **Attendance is required, and a student may have no more than three unexcused absences. Each additional unexcused absence will result in a full letter grade reduction on the final grade for the**

course.

While attendance in discussion section is a requirement, attendance is not the same as participation. Students are expected to speak in discussion sections. While students have different comfort levels in discussion, all students have a responsibility to contribute.

Most of the time in discussion will be devoted to the week's reading. Students should come to discussion having completed the reading. Students also need to be active readers. This means not only possessing a keen grasp of the details of the reading, but also formulating ideas about how the readings connect to each other and to the course as a whole.

Reading

Readings fall into four categories: 1) books available at the campus bookstore; 2) articles, book sections, and other materials available through Blackboard; 3) Websites and other electronic sources available through Blackboard.

Most of the reading consists of primary sources, which are designed to provide intensive practice in the task of scholarly analysis. Meanwhile, a few selected secondary sources are designed to provide practical experience with understanding and evaluating scholarship.

The following books are on sale at the Campus Store:

- Gergen, David. Eyewitness to Power: The Essence of Leadership, Nixon to Clinton. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.
- Gormley, William T., and Steven J. Balla. Bureaucracy and Democracy: Accountability and Performance. 3rd ed. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2013.
- Weems, Mason Locke. The Life of Washington. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996.

Assignments

In addition to the reading for this course, there are six major assignments:

- 1) A 3-5 page paper due October 14.
- 2) A midterm exam, administered during the regular class time on October 24.
- 3) A presentation on a movie or television program on December 2. This presentation will constitute a portion of each student's participation grade.
- 4) A 10-12 page research paper due on December 9.
- 5) A final exam on December 21 from 1:00-3:00.
- 6) Participation in discussion.

The two essays are due in both printed and electronic form. Printed copies must be delivered at the beginning of discussion. Electronic copies must be uploaded to Blackboard before 11:59 PM that day. If Blackboard is unavailable, students must send electronic copies via e-mail.

Additional details on these assignments will be distributed over the course of the semester.

Grading

First Essay	15%
Midterm Exam	15%
Research Paper	25%
Final Exam	25%
Participation	20%

General Requirements

Certain general requirements apply to the individual assignments and to the class as a whole.

- **A passing grade is required for all assignments in order to receive a passing grade for the course.**
- Delivering either essay after the deadline will result in a deduction of one letter grade per day. For example, a paper that would normally receive an A if delivered on time would receive a B if delivered within twenty-four hours after the deadline. **A paper delivered more than seventy-two hours after the deadline will not receive a passing grade.**
- Students taking the course credit/no credit must receive a grade of C- or better in order to receive credit.
- **The use in class of laptop computers, cell phones, audio recorders, and other electronic devices is prohibited.**

Important Additional Information and Resources

Accommodations based upon sexual assault:

The University is committed to offering reasonable academic accommodations to students who are victims of sexual assault. Students are eligible for accommodation regardless of whether they seek criminal or disciplinary action. Depending on the specific nature of the allegation, such measures may include but are not limited to: implementation of a no-contact order, course/classroom assignment changes, and other academic support services and accommodations. If you need to request such accommodations, please direct your request to Kim Webb (kim_webb@wustl.edu), Director of the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center. Ms. Webb is a confidential resource; however, requests for accommodations will be shared with the appropriate University administration and faculty. The University will maintain as confidential any accommodations or protective measures provided to an individual student so long as it does not impair the ability to provide such measures.

If a student comes to me to discuss or disclose an instance of sexual assault, sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking, or if I otherwise observe or become aware of such an allegation, I will keep the information as private as I can, but as a faculty member of Washington University, I am required to immediately report it to my

Department Chair or Dean or directly to Ms. Jessica Kennedy, the University's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to speak with the Title IX Coordinator directly, Ms. Kennedy can be reached at (314) 935-3118, jwkennedy@wustl.edu, or by visiting her office in the Women's Building. Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to Tamara King, Associate Dean for Students and Director of Student Conduct, or by contacting WUPD at (314) 935-5555 or your local law enforcement agency.

You can also speak confidentially and learn more about available resources at the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center by calling (314) 935-8761 or visiting the 4th floor of Seigle Hall.

Bias Reporting:

The University has a process through which students, faculty, staff and community members who have experienced or witnessed incidents of bias, prejudice or discrimination against a student can report their experiences to the University's Bias Report and Support System (BRSS) team. See: brss.wustl.edu

Mental Health:

Mental Health Services' professional staff members work with students to resolve personal and interpersonal difficulties, many of which can affect the academic experience. These include conflicts with or worry about friends or family, concerns about eating or drinking patterns, and feelings of anxiety and depression. See: shs.wustl.edu/MentalHealth

Schedule of Meetings

Introduction

- Week 1
- August 29: Preliminary Lecture
August 31: The Notion of Presidential Classification
September 2: Preliminary Discussion Meeting
- Presidential Opinion Survey.
 - U.S. Constitution, White House Website.
 - List of Presidents, White House Website.

Part I: Foundations

- Week 2
- September 5: **No Class (Labor Day)**
September 7: Leadership and Executive Authority in Early America
September 9: Discussion
- Records of the Federal Convention of 1787, ed. Max Farrand (New Haven: Yale University Press; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), selections.
 - Selected State Constitutions, The Federal and State Constitutions, Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies Now or Heretofore Forming the United States of America, ed. Francis Newton Thorpe (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1909), selections.

Part II: Politics

- Week 3
- September 12: Selecting a Candidate
September 14: Electing a President
September 16: Discussion
- Presidential Election Returns, Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections.
- Week 4
- September 19: Congress, Courts, and States
September 21: Media and External Pressures
September 23: Discussion
- Trial of Andrew Johnson, President of the United States... (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1868), selections.
 - Proposed Articles of Impeachment against Richard Nixon, The Evolving Presidency.
 - United States v. Nixon, The Evolving Presidency.
 - Articles of Impeachment Against William Jefferson Clinton, House of Representatives Resolution 611 (1998).
 - "The Misuse of Impeachment, The New York Times, 13 December 1998.
 - "Impeachment: The Debate on Articles of Impeachment Against

- President Clinton,” The New York Times, 19 December 1998.
- “After Impeachment,” The Wall Street Journal, 21 December 1998.

Week 5

September 26: Presidential Communication

September 28: The Politics of the Big Five

September 30: Discussion

- George Washington, First Inaugural, in A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, ed. James D. Richardson (New York: Bureau of National Literature, 1897), Vol 1.
- Andrew Jackson, First Annual Message, in A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, Vol 2.
- Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, in A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, Vol 5.
- Franklin D. Roosevelt, Fireside Chat 1: On the Banking Crisis (March 12, 1933), Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia.
- John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, January 20, 1961, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.
- Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at the Brandenburg Gate,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, YouTube.
- Barack Obama, Victory Speech, November 5, 2008, The New York Times.
- John McCain, Concession Speech, November 5, 2008, The New York Times.

Part II: Policy

Week 6

October 3: The Cabinet and White House Staff, the Bureaucracy, and the States

October 5: Debates, Pleasant Conversations, and Other Nasty Arguments

October 7: Discussion

- 1960 Presidential Debate, YouTube.
- 2004 Presidential Debate, YouTube.

Week 7

October 10: Domestic Policymaking

October 12: Foreign Policymaking

October 14: **First Essay Due**

Week 8

October 17: **No Class (Fall Break)**

October 19: The Policymaking of the Big Five

October 21: Discussion

- Gormley and Balla, Bureaucracy and Democracy.
- “To Serve the President: Ten alumni on life as a White House staffer,” A&S Magazine, Spring 2012.

Week 9
October 24: Review
October 26: **Midterm Exam**
October 28: **No Reading for this week. Discussion will focus on the final writing assignment.**

Part III: Personality

Week 10
October 31: Revisiting the List
November 2: Privacy and Publicity
November 4: Discussion
• Gergen, Eyewitness to Power.

Week 11
November 7: Sex, Drugs, and Rock & Roll
November 9: Personality and the Big Five
November 11: Discussion
• **No Reading for this week. Discussion will focus on the election.**

Part IV: Posterity

Week 12
November 14: The Cinematic President
November 16: The Televised President
November 18: Discussion
• Weems, The Life of Washington.

Week 13
November 21: Preserving the Presidential Past
November 23: **No Class (Thanksgiving Break)**
November 25: **No Class (Thanksgiving Break)**

Week 14
November 28: Posterity and the Big Five
November 30: Obama in Context
December 2: **Movie Presentations**

Week 15
December 5: Revisiting the List
December 7: Final Review
December 9: Final Discussion (**Research Paper Due**)