

HIS 350R (39445): The History of the American Presidency
Fall 2012 – M 6 pm – GAR 2.128

H. W. Brands (GAR 3.306; hwbrands@austin.utexas.edu; M 5-6, W 2:30-3:30)

Description:

For more than a century, the presidency has occupied the center of American politics. Yet the modern presidency bears faint resemblance to the institution the Founders framed in the 1780s. This course will examine the presidency and the individuals who have held it, with an eye toward discovering trends of historical and contemporary interest. Topics will include the presidency as conceived by the framers of the Constitution, the emergence of political parties, the role of the president as diplomat-in-chief, the presidency and the sectional crisis, the president at war, the emergence of the United States as a world power, the president as a celebrity, the family lives of presidents, and the president and the evolving media.

Readings:

H. W. Brands, *A Brief History of the Presidency* (draft posted on Blackboard)

Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*

Joyce Appleby, *Thomas Jefferson*

H. W. Brands, *Woodrow Wilson*

Robert Dallek, *Harry S. Truman*

Assignments:

Students will write **two book reviews** (500 words each) and **one research paper** (5000 words). The reviews will cover books from the common reading list. The paper will examine one president in detail.

Grading

Class preparation and participation: 25%

Book reviews: 25%

Research paper: 50%

Schedule

Sep 10	Overview of course and presidency
Sep 17	<i>Brief History</i> , parts 1-2, and <i>Thomas Jefferson</i> .
Sep 24	<i>Brief History</i> , part 3-4. Review of <i>Jefferson</i> .
Oct 1	<i>Brief History</i> , parts 5-6. Identify your president
Oct 8	<i>Woodrow Wilson</i> . Bibliography
Oct 15	<i>Presidential Power</i> , pp. 1-tba. Review of <i>Wilson</i>
Oct 22	<i>Presidential Power</i> , pp. tba-end. Outline
Oct 29	<i>Harry S. Truman</i> . Introduction
Nov 5	Part 1
Nov 12	Student presentations. Half draft
Nov 19	Student presentations. Full draft
Nov 26	Student presentations
Dec 3	Final paper. Congratulations: You're done!