The American Presidency

Unique #85360

Professor Bruce Buchanan
Second Summer Session 2011
M-F 8:30-10
MEZ BO.306
Office: BAT 3.122
Office Hours: T, TH 10-11:30 and by appointment
TA: Peter Harris
Office Hours: M,W,F 10-11

Students with disabilities may request appropriate accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement., Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/

Course Purpose

This course explores the nature of presidential leadership through an examination of the leadership strategies of past presidents and the current incumbent. The goals are to deepen your understanding of how the presidency works and to sharpen your ability to assess the qualifications of candidates and the job performance of presidents.

Course Organization The course is organized into the following three parts and associated lecture topics

A. Development of the Presidency: How and why did presidential power grow? What does presidential history teach the American people to expect of presidents? How does historical precedent affect current presidential performance? What is the nature of presidential leadership?

1. Introduction: Functions and Values
2. The Presidency Defined and Launched: Washington
3. The Presidency Democratized: Jefferson and Jackson
4. Presidential Morality and Power: Polk and Lincoln
5. The Presidency Modernized: TR, Wilson, FDR
7. The Impact of Vietnam and Watergate: Johnson and Nixon
8. Preliminary Appraisals: From Ford to Bush II
9. The Lessons of Presidential History

B. Current Presidential Operations: What are the responsibilities of the institution and what
resources are available to meet them? What are the “state of the art” strategies for deploying resources to achieve a president’s political and policy objectives? How can the quality of a president’s performance in office be reasonably measured?

1. Introduction: The Grounds for Judgment
2. The Campaign for Office
3. The Domestic Policy Arena
4. Confronting Congress
5. Media: The Classic Dilemma
6. The Budget and Economic Policy
7. Foreign Policy
8. Presidential Competence and the Public Interest

C. Evaluating Presidential Candidates: What are the grounds for choice among presidential candidates? How important is character, relative to issue positions and track-record, in appraising the qualifications of candidates? How well does the presidential selection system work?

1. Introduction: Five Dimensions of Presidential Leadership
2. Candidate Qualifications
3. Character: Avoiding Troubled Candidates

D. Course Conclusion: The Division of Labor

Student Responsibilities

1. Two short-answer essay mid-term examinations (30% of grade each)
2. Comprehensive two-question essay final examination (40% of grade)
3. Regular attendance (After 2 “free” absences course grade subject to decrease by ½ letter grade per subsequent absence).

Required Readings

WEEKLY READING AND EXAM SCHEDULE
Complete readings by date indicated

1. July 15
   N, xiii-xv; 1-74
   G, 1-41
   P, 1-17

2. July 22
   N, 77-211
   G, 43-89
   P, 18-55

***FIRST MID-TERM FRIDAY JULY 22***

3. July 29
   N, 211-283
   G, 91-143
   P, 56-130

August 5
   G, 145-188
   P, 131-224

***SECOND MID-TERM FRIDAY AUGUST 5***

5. August 12
   P, 230-262
   G, 191-231

***FINAL EXAMINATION***
   Monday August 15, 9-12 noon