Course Content and Aims

The course is cross-listed in the Government Department and the LBJ School, which reflects its interdisciplinary and theory-practice orientation. Course topics and readings offer an overview of the interdisciplinary field of presidency studies. The three broad questions that integrate the disparate topics covered are “How does the presidency work?” “What is presidential leadership and what makes it effective?” “What is the state of scholarly research on these topics?” The course has three aims: To provide a coherent introduction to the major literature on the presidency, to identify and address enduringly important research and operational questions about the institution and its central figure, and to sharpen student problem clarification, writing, deliberation and presentation skills.

Required Readings

Most of the following titles have been ordered through the Co-op:


*Additional required readings* in Readings Packet (designated “RP” on syllabus) and on this course’s Blackboard site (designated BB on syllabus). The RP is available at Speedway/Abel’s Copying (715 W. 23rd Ste N). You are also expected to be up-to-date on major presidential news.
Student Responsibilities

1. Six 'reaction' papers. (30%) 3-5 pages, (assigned questions are starred * on outline)
2. Presentation (with handouts) on outside readings: book or two articles (20%)
3. Final paper. (15%) Topic depends on student objectives.
4. Final paper presentation (15%)
5. Verbal participation (20%) in seminar discussions.

Topics, Dates, Paper Assignments

I. Introduction
   A. Requirements; The Functions of the Presidency; Presidency Research (1/16)
   B. Presidential Leadership: Research and Practice (1/23)
      *(What is presidential leadership? presidency research? How do/should they relate?)
II. History, Presidential Accountability and the Constitution
   A. History: Theories and Cases (1/30)
   B. The Presidential Accountability System (PAS) and the Constitution (2/6)
      *(How well does the PAS support the Constitution?)
III. The Operational Presidency
   A. Managing the White House (2/13)
   B. Domestic Policy Leadership (2/20)
   C. Presidential Influence in Congress (2/27)
      *(identify and assess the tools of policy leadership)
   D. The Budget and Economic Policy (3/6)
   E. Foreign Policy/National Security (3/20)
      *(Appraise President Obama’s performance to date in economic and foreign policy)
IV. Classic Theoretical Perspectives
   A. Presidential Power (3/27)
   B. Presidential Character (4/3)
      *(compare Neustadt/Barber/Buchanan visions of presidential leadership)
V. The Presidency and the People
   A. Presidential Selection (4/10)
   B. Media and Communications (4/17)
   C. Public Opinion and Performance Evaluation (4/24)
      *(Appraise the core interactions between presidents and citizens).
VI. Final Paper Presentations (5/1)

Weekly Assignments and Supplementary Readings

The starred (*) items are assigned weekly readings. Items listed under “background” are
suggestions for further exploration of the topics.

PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP: RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Practice

*Neustadt, pp. ix-xxiv

Research

*Buchanan presentation: the 2012 comp question. Presidency Research Traditions
*Morris text, pp. 1-55.
*Moe, Terry. 2009. The Revolution in Presidential Studies
Presidential Studies Quarterly
http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/122652268/HTMLSTART
*Jacobs, Lawrence. 2010. Building Reliable Theories of the Presidency
Presidential Studies Quarterly
http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/122652277/HTMLSTART

Background

Rockman, Burt. 2010. Does the Revolution in Presidential Studies Mean "Off With the President's Head"?
Presidential Studies Quarterly
http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/122652264/HTMLSTART
Presidential Studies Quarterly
http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/122652256/HTMLSTART


2. HISTORY: THEORIES AND CASES


Greenstein, 1-231. FDR-Barack Obama.

Skowronek, Presidential Leadership in Political Time, pp. 89-135 (RP6).


Morris Text, pp. 56-87

Background


3. THE PRESIDENTIAL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM AND THE CONSTITUTION


*Yalof, Presidency and the Judiciary, in Nelson, pp. 435-462

**Background**


**4. MODELS OF PRESIDENTIAL MANAGEMENT**

*Morris text, pp. 190-203

*Jones, pp. 66-127.


**Background**


5. DOMESTIC POLICY LEADERSHIP

*Lewis and Moe, “Presidency and Bureaucracy: Levers of Control,” in Nelson, 367-395

Background

6. PRESIDENTIAL INFLUENCE IN CONGRESS

*Morris text, pp. 154-172
*Jones, pp. 221-338

Background


7. THE BUDGET AND ECONOMIC POLICY

*Morris text, pp. 216-234.

Background

Obama “House on a Rock” speech (BB5).


8. FOREIGN POLICY/NATIONAL SECURITY

*Morris text pp. 204-215.

*Polsky, “The Presidency at War” In Nelson, pp. 489-506.


Background

Obama West Point Speech (BB6)
Obama Nobel Prize Speech (BB7).
Obama Cairo Speech (BB8).


9. PRESIDENTIAL POWER

*Morris text, pp. 88-132
*Neustadt, 1-318.

Background


10. PRESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

* Review "Emotional Intelligence" discussion in intro and conclusion and for each president in Greenstein

Background


**11. PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION**


* 2012 Presidential Election reading TBA.

**Background**


12. MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

*Additional media reading TBA!

Background


13. PUBLIC OPINION AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

*Morris text, pp. 235-252
*Jones, pp. 128-176
*Miroff, Presidential Leadership as Spectacle, in Nelson, pp. 210-235.

**Background**


