

THE AMERICAN EXECUTIVE
POLS 3203
Spring 2019

Classroom: Brewster C-101
Class time: Tues. & Thurs., 2 to 3:15 p.m.
Office hours: Mon., Wed., & Fri., 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.,
or by appointment

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COURSE OVERVIEW

This course provides a broad examination of the American presidency. It examines five major areas: (1) the historical development of the presidency and the presidential election process; (2) the influence of public opinion and the media on the presidency; (3) presidential styles and decision-making; (4) the president's relationship with Congress and the judiciary; and (5) the president's role in policymaking. As we cover each of these subjects, I encourage you to think critically about several important questions concerning the presidency: Why did the framers of the Constitution create an executive branch and why did they limit its power? How do presidential elections affect a president's ability to govern? What leadership skills and personal qualities are necessary for a successful presidency? How do the media, the Congress, the courts, and the bureaucracy limit the power of the White House? What situations and circumstances provide opportunities for the president to shape and influence the policy-making process?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The general learning objective in this course is for you to gain a broad understanding of the presidency. To complete this class successfully, you will need to demonstrate factual, applied, and conceptual knowledge of the subjects covered in the course. I will expect you to be able to define terms; interpret the significance of important events; apply principles to hypothetical scenarios; compare and contrast concepts; construct solutions to political problems; and assess the strengths and weaknesses of various perspectives concerning the executive branch. In addition, this course is designated as a *General Education* course for the social sciences (GE:SO).^{*} Therefore, upon completion of this course, you also will be able to: identify core concepts and measures used to study politics; explain at least one approach to the study of politics; and identify the contribution of political science to our larger society. Please note that I will not share my partisan affiliation to anyone in the class. My larger and ultimate learning objective in this course is to teach each of you *not what to think*, but rather *how to think* about the issues we address in class.

REQUIRED READINGS

The required readings in this course are: (1) *Presidential Leadership: Politics and Policy Making*, 10th ed., George C. Edwards III and Stephen J. Wayne (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018); (2) *The Modern American Presidency* 2nd ed., Lewis L. Gould (University Press of Kansas, 2009); and (3) selected readings on Blackboard.

^{*} For additional information about general education learning objectives, please see <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/committee/as/SocialSciencesCreditSyllabusInstructions.docx>.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Classes begin with a lecture on the topic listed in the course outline. Everyone should come to class prepared to ask questions and to contribute to class discussions. Keeping up with the assigned weekly readings and attending class regularly throughout the semester will allow for more informed classroom discussions and for more interesting debates, as well as improve your ability to contribute to and learn from the class interactions. I also encourage everyone to read a newspaper, watch the television news, and follow current events. Doing so will broaden your interest in this course and help you better understand the importance of the material we cover. To incorporate visual learning in the classroom, and to help generate additional thought and discussion on the subjects covered in the course, I often show video material in class. This includes televised news footage of various historical events, documentaries, and political films. On occasion, I may select documentaries and films that have an “R” rating. Please see me if you have any moral, religious, political, or other objections to viewing documentaries or films with an “R” rating.

EVALUATION

Your final grade in the course will be based on your quiz and exam performance, class attendance and participation, and completion of the online assignments. The weight assigned to each is:

- (1) Quiz 1 on January 29 is worth 10% of your overall grade.
- (2) Mid-term exam on February 26 is worth 20% of your overall grade.
- (3) Quiz 2 on March 26 is worth 10% of your overall grade.
- (4) You have the option of choosing a take-home final exam (due on April 23) or an in-class final exam on April 25. The final exam is worth 30% of your overall grade.
- (5) Class attendance is worth 20% of your overall grade.
- (6) Completion of the online assignments is worth 10% of your overall grade.

Course averages will be converted to letter grades using the scale below:

Course Average	Grade	Course Average	Grade
93 and above =	A	73 to 76 =	C
90 to 92 =	A-	70 to 72 =	C-
87 to 89 =	B+	67 to 69 =	D+
83 to 86 =	B	63 to 66 =	D
80 to 82 =	B-	60 to 62 =	D-
77 to 79 =	C+	Below 60 =	F

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Class attendance is mandatory. I will circulate an attendance sign-in sheet at the beginning of each lecture. It is your responsibility to make sure that you sign the attendance sheet if you are present in class. If you arrive excessively late to class or if you leave class early, you will receive only partial credit for attendance. Your class attendance grade will be based on the percentage of classes that you attend (e.g., a student who attends every class will earn a 100; a student who attends half of the classes will earn a 50, etc.). Students who are active participants during class discussions will receive a bonus point added to their overall course grade.

ONLINE ASSIGNMENTS

Online participation is a requirement for this course, and the Packback Questions platform will be used to expand discussion of class topics and current events outside of the classroom. You are required to answer discussion board questions and to post questions of your own. Please only post questions that are relevant to the topics covered in class. This assignment is due during weeks 3-8 and 10-13, no later than Sunday of those weeks. I ask that you post just one question and one answer per week. Your answer to a discussion board question must include supporting materials (i.e., links to articles or videos from reputable sources) to earn credit. I expect your answers to be more than your opinions. A credit-worthy answer justifies your thoughts and supports your claims with evidence that you cite. In total, there are 10 weeks with assignments throughout the semester. This means you will be asked to answer a total of 10 discussion board questions and to post 10 questions, equaling 20 assignments. Your online grade will be based on the percentage of those assignments that you have completed throughout the semester. For example, if you successfully completed all 20 assignments, you would earn an online grade of 100%. Alternatively, if you completed 15 of the 20 assignments, you would earn a 75% ($15/20=.75$). Before you start posting, be sure to read the Community Guidelines found in the tutorial on Packback. If your post does not follow the Packback Community Guidelines, there is a chance it will be removed and you will not receive points for that post. On occasion, I will devote a portion of class time to the most interesting posts raised on Packback to generate further discussion.

INFORMATION ON PACKBACK

You will receive a welcome email from holla@packback.co prompting you to complete your Packback registration. Packback has already created an account for you with your university email. All you need to do is reset your password. This email may be directed to spam or filtered out, so please make sure you do a thorough scan of your inbox if you cannot find the email. If you search your inbox and still cannot find the welcome email, or if you are new to the course, you may manually register by following the instructions below:

1. Navigate to <https://Packback.co/questions> and click “Register as a new student.” Note: If you already have an account on Packback you can login with your credentials.
2. Make sure to register with your ECU email address and real first name and last name.
3. Enter our class community’s access code into the “Join a new Community” module on your dashboard. Our community access code is: 2e157f0f-8c5f-4bae-8a49-288cf5224329
4. Follow the instructions on your screen to finish your registration.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding Packback throughout the semester, please contact the customer support team at holla@packback.co. For a brief introduction to Packback Questions and why we are using it in class, watch this video: vimeo.com/packback/Welcome-to-Packback-Questions.

EXCUSED ABSENCES AND VERIFICATION

I will excuse absences, including those on exam dates, for the following reasons: (1) participation in an authorized activity as an official representative of the university (this includes athletic events, university-sponsored performances, or academic conferences); (2) participation in other activities deemed by the Dean of Students to warrant an excused absence; (3) an extreme personal emergency; (4) the death of an immediate family member; (5) participation in a religious holiday; and (6) health reasons such as an incapacitating or contagious illness or unavoidable surgery. Please do not schedule non-emergency doctor's appointments (such as an annual check-up visit or a dental visit) or any other personal commitments during our class time. Serious students plan their personal schedules around their academic schedules, not the other way around. If your absence meets any of the criteria mentioned above, I will need you to present me with some form of verification no later than two weeks after the absence if you wish to have your absence excused. Some acceptable forms of verification include the following: a note from Student Health Services; a note from a doctor or medical office; an obituary; or official documentation from the athletic department indicating your travel schedule. In the event of severe weather, please call the University Emergency Telephone Number at 252-328-0062 or visit the ECU emergency alert website (<http://www.ecu.edu/alert>) to check on whether the university has canceled classes. If the university has not canceled classes, but you commute to campus from a considerable distance and believe driving conditions may be hazardous, I will consider excusing your absence.

QUIZZES AND EXAMS

Failure to be present for any of the scheduled quizzes or exams will result in an automatic "0." On all quiz and exam dates, please come prepared with a bubble sheet for quizzes and a blue book for exams. If you cannot attend a quiz or an exam, please contact me at least 30 minutes before I have administered the test. I will grant a make-up only for circumstances that I deem extraordinary or for circumstances that meet university guidelines. If you miss a test because of an illness, you are still required to contact me beforehand. You must also present me with proper verification.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is a fundamental value of higher education shared by all at East Carolina University. Consistent with this principle, I expect all students to complete their academic work honestly. I will not tolerate any student's involvement in *cheating, plagiarism, falsifying work, submitting the same assignment for more than one course, or other acts that would be in violation of the university's academic integrity standards*. If I become aware of or suspect a potential academic integrity violation, I will meet with the student under suspicion following the procedures outlined in the university's academic integrity policy. Should I determine that an academic integrity violation has occurred, I reserve the right to assign a grade penalty up to and including an "F" for the assignment or the course. If it also comes to my attention that the student involved in such an incident has had a prior academic integrity violation, or if there are other aggravating circumstances, I will refer the case directly to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Should the Academic Integrity Board determine that the accused student committed an academic integrity violation, the penalties, as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, may include a grade penalty and up to suspension from the university. For more information, please see: <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/currentfacultymanual/part6section2.pdf>.

CLASSROOM RULES

The classroom is a learning environment. I expect all students to observe some basic rules of courtesy and respect, which include the following: (1) arrive to class on time and do not leave before class is dismissed; (2) do not pack up your things early; it is disruptive to others around you; (3) turn off cell phones and keep them put away during class; (4) no laptop use during video screenings; (5) no listening to music through headphones during class; (6) no sleeping during class; (7) no carrying on private conversations with others in the classroom while someone else is speaking; and (8) please be courteous to your classmates and respectful of your fellow students' views, comments, and questions. Classroom discussion is meant to allow us to hear a variety of viewpoints, and this can only happen if we respect each other and our differences. Failure to follow these rules will negatively affect your class attendance grade. Repeated or extreme offenses could result in your expulsion from the class.

E-MAIL

E-mail is a valuable tool for me to communicate announcements and information to the entire class. Please check your ECU e-mail at least once a day (weekends excluded). E-mail is also a good way for you to contact me. Please feel free to use e-mail to set up one-on-one meetings with me if my office hours conflict with your schedule. If you have specific questions about the course material, I am happy to answer them through e-mail; however, I would encourage you to set up a one-on-one meeting with me if you are having general difficulty with your understanding of the course material. I am also happy to answer any specific questions concerning academic or career advising through e-mail, but again I would encourage you to set up a one-on-one meeting with me if you need more general academic or career advice. Please do not use e-mail to request information already listed in the syllabus, such as an exam date or the weight assigned to a specific exam.

APPOINTMENTS

I have two offices located in the Brewster Building, Room A-101 and Room D-303. Typically, I work from A-101 in the morning and D-303 in the afternoon. My office hours are from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. If you cannot meet with me during my office hours, please see me after class or contact me by telephone or e-mail to schedule an appointment. I am also happy to have lunch with anyone on Friday who wishes to join me. If you wish to schedule a lunch, please contact me at least one day in advance.

DISABILITY SERVICES

East Carolina University seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a covered disability must go to the Department for Disability Support Services located in Slay 138 to verify the disability before any accommodations can occur. The telephone number is 252-737-1016.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1. Overview of the Presidency

January 8, 2019. Overview of the course / Importance of the presidency

January 10, 2019. Creation and constitutional powers of the executive branch

- Required reading for Week 1: *Presidential Leadership*, chapter 2

Week 2. Running for President: The Nomination Campaign

January 15, 2019. Rules of the nomination process from past to present

January 17, 2019. Campaign finance rules during the nomination process

- Required reading for Week 2: *Presidential Leadership*, chapter 3, and Blackboard reading, “Campaign Finance”

Week 3. Running for President: The General Election Campaign

January 22, 2019. The importance of the Electoral College on campaign strategy

January 24, 2019. Campaigning for votes in the general election

- Required reading for the Week 3: *Presidential Leadership*, chapter 4

Week 4. After the Election: Public Opinion and Approval of the President

January 29, 2019. **QUIZ 1**

January 31, 2019. High and contradictory public expectations

- Required reading for Week 4: *Presidential Leadership*, chapter 5

Week 5. Leading the Public

February 5, 2019. Direct opinion leadership

February 7, 2019. Framing the issues

- Required reading for Week 5: *Presidential Leadership*, chapters 6

Week 6. The President, the Media, and Information Control

February 12, 2019. Relations between the president and the press

February 14, 2019. Media effects

- Required reading for Week 6: *Presidential Leadership*, chapter 7

Week 7. The Structure of the Executive Branch

February 19, 2019. The cabinet, executive departments, and executive offices

February 21, 2019. The Vice President and First Lady

- Required reading for Week 7: *Presidential Leadership*, chapter 8

Week 8. Mid-term Exam and Presidential Decision Making

February 26, 2019. **Mid-term Exam** (covers all material from weeks 1-7)

February 28, 2019. Relationships with advisors and presidential personality characteristics

- Required reading for Week 8: *Presidential Leadership*, chapter 9, and Blackboard reading, “Psychology of Presidential Leadership”

Week 9. Spring Break (No class on March 5 and March 7, 2019)

Week 10. Presidential Leadership Styles from FDR to Eisenhower

March 12, 2019. The modern presidency / Assessing the leadership style of F. Roosevelt

March 14, 2019. Assessing the leadership styles of Truman and Eisenhower

- Required reading for Week 10: *The Modern American Presidency*, chapters 4-5

Week 11. Presidential Leadership Styles from Kennedy to Reagan

March 19, 2019. Assessing the leadership styles of Kennedy and Johnson

March 21, 2019. Assessing the leadership styles of Nixon and Reagan

- Required reading for Week 11: *The Modern American Presidency*, chapters 7-9

Week 12. The President in the Legislative Arena

March 26, 2019. **QUIZ 2** (covers all material from weeks 8-11)

March 28, 2019. The president's legislative powers and skills

- Required reading for Week 12: *Presidential Leadership*, chapter 11

Week 13. The President and the Judiciary

April 2, 2019. The president's judicial powers

April 4, 2019. The President and the Supreme Court

- Required reading for Week 13: *Presidential Leadership*, chapter 12

Week 14. Domestic and Economic Policy

April 9, 2019. The basics of the federal budget and the budgetary process

April 11, 2019. Issues and controversies in budgeting, and the making of economic policy

- Required reading for Week 14: *Presidential Leadership*, chapter 13

Week 15. Foreign and Defense Policy

April 16, 2019. The two presidencies thesis / begin film: *Thirteen Days*

April 18, 2019. Finish film: *Thirteen Days*

- Required reading for Week 15: *Presidential Leadership*, chapter 14

Week 16. Evaluating Presidents

April 23, 2019. Methods of assessing presidents and their legacies / Take-home final exam due

FINAL EXAM: April 25, 2019. If you decided not to complete the take-home final exam, you must take the in-class final exam. The in-class final exam is cumulative, covering all the material listed above. It is scheduled from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Brewster C-101.