This course offers an examination of the role, structure, and functioning of the presidency in the American political system. Students are cautioned that the ‘presidency’ is not synonymous with the ‘president’. Rather, the presidency is both an institution and a relatively large group of individuals directed toward the achievement of certain goals. While some attention in this class will focus on individual presidents, the primary emphasis will be directed toward investigation of the institutional role of the office and the network of associations that attempt to fulfill its functions. Also, while most available time will be devoted to the current presidency, considerable attention also will be given to the historical evolution of this office.

The course will begin with an attempt to develop a perspective for analyzing the presidency and evaluating individual presidents. Next, we will look at the constitutional origins and historical development of the institution. Subsequently, we will examine presidential selection and tenure, presidential publics and the media, the president as chief executive, as party leader, as legislative leader, presidential relations with the courts, the president’s role in relation to domestic policy, and the president’s role in foreign affairs. Each week we will also have a presentation on a particular president and the manner in which the aforementioned variables manifested themselves during his administration.

After the introductory lectures, the course will utilize a seminar format. You are reminded that a ‘seminar’ is a group of supervised students doing research or advanced study. The primary role of the instructor in a seminar is to provide a framework and supervision of students’ activities. Generally, this involves acting as a facilitator rather than as a lecturer. If s/he is forced to act otherwise, students will not be accomplishing all that is possible in the class.

The major responsibility for whatever learning takes place in this course will reside with the class as a whole. The more that each person reads and participates, the more everyone will learn. To the degree that you don’t do the reading, you deny yourself information that will be required on your final paper and deprive the class of your insights on this information. Also, when you read a book or article, ask yourself both what valuable information you can draw from it and what weaknesses exist in the author’s presentation.

Finally, listen to what other members of the class say. Each person will have a different, and generally valuable, perspective on the reading. Do not stake out territory and try to defend it. No matter what you believe about the topics we discuss, there is more to be learned about each subject.

Additional Information:
Instructor: Thadd Tecza Home Phone: (303) 329-6493
Office: Ketchum 134A Office Phone: (303) 492-2985
Class Meetings: T-Th 2:00-3:15 p.m. Office Hours: T-Th 11:00-12:30
Classroom: DLYC 103 E-mail: Tecza@colorado.edu
Required Texts:


Grading:

After the first two weeks of class, each Tuesday one student will have primary responsibility for introducing the required reading and leading the class discussion. This may take the form of a brief presentation of additional reading that s/he has done on the topic, but most of the class should consist of discussion facilitated by the lead student. This student also will submit a bibliography of the preparatory readings that s/he has done. Students are strongly urged to make an appointment with the instructor to plan which topics will be covered during the discussion and the format that will be used. The instructor will grade each student’s performance as discussion leader and, cumulatively, these scores will contribute 30% to the final grade.

Also, each Thursday a student will have responsibility for presenting an overview and analysis of a president and his administration. The person will distribute to each member of the class a ten page typed summary of the life of this president, the significant events that shaped his career, his path to the presidency, the significant events during his presidency, and his major achievements and failures. To as great a degree as possible, these reports should relate the president and his presidency to the reading topics assigned in the course. That is, discuss such things as the way in which he was recruited and nominated, his campaign, the way in which he organized his administration, his legislative record, his foreign policy and other topics covered in the syllabus for weekly discussions. Finally, analyze his successes and failures as president. Do not spend considerable time with the person’s early life and formative years except as these times contributed to his presidential performance. This paper is to include a bibliography of additional readings relevant to this presidency.

The report submitted to the instructor, and all written work submitted in this course, is to be typed, double spaced, New Times Roman font, on one side of each page, in twelve-point type, with normal college margins. All statements of fact and all direct quotations are to be referenced. You may use any standard, academically accepted method of referencing, i.e., footnotes, endnotes, or parentheticals. If you do not own a Reference Manual, please get one to aid in this task. These summaries will be graded and cumulatively the scores will contribute 30% to the final grade.

Last, on Saturday, April 30, between 9:00 and 10: a.m., each student is responsible for submitting a twenty page final paper. The title of this paper is “The American Presidency”. The purpose of the paper is to allow you to demonstrate what you have learned in the course.
It should be focused toward demonstrating the relationship between particular presidencies and the variables discussed in the readings. That is, use the reports on particular presidencies and other information on particular presidents offered in the readings to demonstrate points related to the subjects discussed each Friday. It is to incorporate all of the readings, the student reports and the class discussions.

This paper will be graded on the degree to which it demonstrates that you have done all of the readings, attended all of the classes and have read all of the reports provided by other students. You will lose points by not incorporating significant portions of the readings, omitting discussion of particular seminar sessions and failing to talk about the presidencies of individuals reported on by members of the class. Each specific statement you make about material from the readings and presidential reports should be referenced. The more specific references you make, the better. This paper cannot be over referenced. It will contribute 40% to each student’s final grade.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Cheating will constitute grounds for failing the course and will be reported to the Dean's Office. Please review the University’s policy regarding academic integrity at: http://www.colorado.edu/policies/acadinteg.html.

ATTENDANCE: Class participation is not a component of the grade in this course. However, the class proceeds from the assumption that learning is an interactive process that requires class attendance. As a result, missing a significant number of the lectures will constitute grounds for failing the course.

SEXUAL HARRASSMENT: Faculty is required by law to report to university officials any sexual harassment that is observed or reported to them. The university’s sexual harassment policy can be found at: http://www/cusys.edu/~policies/Personnel/sexharass.html.

DISABILITIES ACCOMODATION: The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) provides protection from illegal discrimination for qualified individuals with disabilities. Students requesting instructional accommodations due to disabilities must arrange for such accommodation. Please review the University’s services for such accommodations at: http://www.colorado.edu/sacs/disabilityservices/index.html.
DISCUSSION, READING AND REPORT SCHEDULE:

Week One:

January 11: Introduction
Presidential Roles, Power and Policy
Student Perceptions of the Presidency
Reading: None

January 13: Studying the Presidency
Reading: None

Week Two:

January 18: The Constitutional Origins of the Presidency
Reading:
Cohen and Nice, Chapters 1 and 2
Pfiffner and Davidson, Understanding the Presidency, Section 1
Nelson, The Evolving Presidency, #1, 2, 3

January 20: The Presidency of George Washington
Reading: Nelson, #4, 7

Week Three:

January 25: Historical Perspectives on the Presidency
Reading:
Cohen and Nice, Chapter 3
Pfiffner and Davidson, Section 2
Nelson, #19

January 27: The Presidency of John Adams
Reading: None
Week Four:

February 1: Nominating Presidential Candidates

Reading:

Cohen and Nice, Chapter 4, pp. 69-80
Pfiffner and Davidson, Section 3, #13
Nelson, #11, 35

February 3: The Presidency of Thomas Jefferson

Reading:

Nelson, #8, 9

Week Five:

February 8: Presidential Campaigns, Elections, The Electoral College

Reading:

Cohen and Nice, Chapter 4, pp. 80-95
Pfiffner and Davidson, Section 3, #12,14,15,16,17,18,19
Nelson, #48

February 10: The Presidency of Andrew Jackson

Reading:

Nelson, #12, 13

Week Six:

February 15: The President, Political Parties and Interest Groups

Reading:

Cohen and Nice, Chapter 6

February 17: The Presidency of James Polk

Reading: None
Week Seven:

February 22: The Institutional Presidency and the Executive Branch

Reading:

Cohen and Nice, Chapters 9 and 11
Pfiffner and Davidson, Section 5
Nelson, # 5, 21, 23, 26

February 24: The Presidency of Abraham Lincoln

Reading:

Nelson, # 14, 15, 16

Week Eight:

March 1: Public Opinion and the Media

Reading:

Cohen and Nice, Chapters 7 and 8
Pfiffner and Davidson, Section 4
Nelson, # 20

March 3: The Presidency of Theodore Roosevelt

Reading: None

Week Nine:

March 8: The President and Congress

Reading:

Cohen and Nice, Chapter 10
Pfiffner and Davidson, Section 6, # 32, 33, 34, 35
Nelson, # 18, 37, 43

March 10: The Presidency of Franklin Roosevelt

Reading:
Nelson, #22

Week Ten:

March 15: The President and the Judiciary

Reading:

Cohen and Nice, Chapter 12
Pfiffner and Davidson, Section 6, # 36
Nelson, # 27

March 17: The Presidency of Lyndon Johnson

Reading: None

Week Eleven:

March 29: The President and Domestic Policy

Reading:

Cohen and Nice, Chapter 13
Pfiffner and Davidson, Section 7, # 37, 38, 39
Nelson, #28, 31, 32

March 31: The Presidency of Richard Nixon

Reading:

Nelson, #38, 39, 40

Week Twelve:

April 5: The Budget and Economic Policy

Reading:

Cohen and Nice, Chapter 14
Pfiffner and Davidson, Section 7, # 40
Nelson, # 46

April 7: The Presidency of Ronald Reagan

Reading:
Week Thirteen:

April 12: Foreign Policy and Diplomacy

Reading:

Cohen and Nice, Chapter 15, pp. 433-442
Pfiffner and Davidson, Section 8, # 43, 44
Nelson, # 6, 10, 24, 34

April 14: The Presidency of Jimmy Carter

Reading:

Nelson, # 41

Week Fourteen:

April 19: National Security and Commander-In-Chief

Reading:

Cohen and Nice, Chapter 15, pp. 442-464
Pfiffner and Davidson, Section 8, # 41, 42
Nelson, # 17, 29, 30, 33, 36, 44, 49, 50

April 21: The Presidency of Bill Clinton

Reading:

Nelson, # 45, 47
Week Fifteen:

April 28: Evaluating Presidential Greatness

Reading:

Cohen and Nice, Chapter 5
Pfiffner and Davidson, Section 9

April 28: The Presidency of George W. Bush

Reading: None