

**COURSE SYLLABUS  
BALL STATE UNIVERSITY  
SUMMER 2022  
May 16 - July 22, 2022**

**COURSE NUMBER:** POLS 632

**TITLE:** The American Presidency

**PLACE/TIME:** On-line (Asynchronous)

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Pamela M. Schaal

**Contact Information:** pmschaal@bsu.edu

**Office Hours:** By virtual appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will explore the theoretical, historical, and contemporary forces that combine to shape the modern presidency. The process of decision-making at national level by the executive branch will be highlighted examining the Executive Office of the President (EOP) as well as the cabinet. It also provides an analysis of the interaction of formal institutional veto players of the United States government focusing on executive branch.

**COURSE RATIONALE:** To develop an understanding of the impact of the presidency upon public policy formation as well as an understanding of the process of decision-making at the national level by reviewing peer reviewed journal articles and books.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

For many Americans, the President is the focal point of the U.S. political system. As such, both the office and its occupants are intensely scrutinized. We demand much of our presidents who are both powerful and limited in our political system. Presidential power is not static, it flows from the constitution and is shaped by the individual who occupies the office. This class is designed to focus on the presidency as an institution within a larger political system and to examine the malleability and limitations of presidential power. Topics to be covered will include: the presidential selection process, presidents and congress, the presidency and the media, the presidency and public opinion, and presidential war powers among others.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

- 1.) Possess working knowledge of basic social science theory and data relating to the American presidency.

- 2.) Classify the major contributions to the presidential literature by reading and discussing such literature.
- 3.) Evaluate the major generational themes of political institution literature by studying such literature and taking a comprehensive exam.
- 4.) Describe and objectively evaluate the electoral system used to select the president.
- 5.) Identify and articulate the strengths and weaknesses of the presidency as a political institution in the American political system.
- 6.) Understand the institutional and political relationships that are involved in presidential leadership.
- 7.) Understand and articulate the formal and informal bases for presidential power in the American political system.

## **TEXTS:**

### Required Texts

- Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Samuel Kernell
- Presidential Power and The Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership From Roosevelt to Reagan. Richard E. Neustadt.
- The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader. Fred I. Greenstein.
- The Personal President: Power Invested Promise Unfulfilled. Theodore J. Lowi.
- The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership From John Adams to Bill Clinton. Stephen Skowronek.
- The Presidency and the Political System (11<sup>th</sup> Edition). Editor Michael Nelson.
- The President and the Parties: The Transformation of the American Party System Since the New Deal. Sidney M. Milkis
- Polarized Politics: Congress and the President in a Partisan Era by Jon R. Bond and Richard Fleisher

### Recommended Texts:

- The Federalists Papers. Hamilton, Madison, Jay.

### Recommended Films:

- All the President's Men
- The American President
- Wag the Dog

**ONLINE RESOURCES:** A BSU network account for email and Canvas.

**SOFTWARE:** Microsoft Office

## **COURSE POLICIES:**

### Participation and Timeliness:

Your regular participation and timeliness are important to your academic success. You must be self-motivated and disciplined to meet all due dates. Developing a routine is essential.

All assignments are expected to be submitted by a specific time and date. Assignments submitted late may be subject to a reduction in points, or no points at all.

Students with Disabilities: Some elements of this course may not be accessible to persons with some types of disabilities. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact Ball State's Disabled Student Development (DSD) office. DSD coordinates services for students with disabilities. Documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disabled Student Development can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or [dsd@bsu.edu](mailto:dsd@bsu.edu). Further online information for students may be found at the [BSU Disabled Student Development web page](#).

### Communication:

For questions of a personal nature, such as questions about your grade, please use your BSU email. The instructor will typically respond to messages within 48 hours of receiving them.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to adhere to University guidelines as presented in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities as outlined in the student handbook.

Rules of Conduct: Laptops may be used for note taking only during lectures but cell phones or other hand held devices may not. Please silence your cell phones before class and refrain from using these phones during lectures. During exams, no laptops or cell phones may be used. During lectures, discussions, presentations, and exams, please display civility and respect towards your peers. Please maintain a level of professionalism as expected in a college environment.<sup>1</sup>

Etiquette Statement: Please remember the following in all forms of communication in this course:

- Be mindful to not use language that could be considered strong or offensive.
- Keep all writings and correspondence as professional as possible.
- Keep writing to a point and stay on topic.
- Double-check all writing to make sure that it clearly conveys the exact intended message.

## **TECHNICAL INFORMATION:**

Become familiar with the class interface before the semester begins and seek help if necessary. BSU provides resources to help you. A lack of Blackboard knowledge is not an acceptable excuse for late or incomplete work.

### Technical Assistance:

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<sup>1</sup> Students may not always value different ideological perspectives but we should learn to appreciate these different perspectives and agree to respectfully disagree when resolution is not possible.

If you have technical questions, you can contact Ball State's Help Desk. In addition, the Help Desk staff has put together many [how-to video clips](#) in its Tech Clips section that can guide you through many of the most common questions. The helpdesk can be contacted at: 1765-285-1517 or email at [helpdesk@bsu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@bsu.edu).

*Diversity Statement:* “Ball State University aspires to attract and retain a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as expressed in our [Beneficence Pledge](#) and university resources <http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/multiculturalcenter>”

### **REFLECTION PAPERS:**

Reflection papers offer students a chance to share the most important themes and critical concepts of the books. Ranging in length from five (minimum) to ten (maximum) pages, these papers will let students share what impressed them most about the scholarly literature of the Presidency.

### **COURSE GRADING:**

#### Method of Evaluating Students

Reflection papers: 40% [select 4 books]

Final exam (or research paper): 30%

Participation and assignments: 30%

### **GRADING SCALE:**

**A: 95-100**

**A-: 90-94**

**B+: 87-89**

**B: 83-86**

**B-: 80-82**

**C+: 77-79**

**C: 73-76**

**C-: 70-72**

**D+: 67-69**

**D: 63-66**

**D-: 60-62**

**F: 0-59**

## **COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE (tentative):**

### **Week 1**

Introduction and Overview of the Executive Branch

The Two Constitutional Presidencies by Jeffrey K. Tulis (Chap. 1/Nelson reader)

### **Week 2**

The Development of Presidential Power: Conservative Insurgency and Constitutional Construction by Stephen Skowronek (Chap. 3/Nelson reader).

The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership From John Adams to Bill Clinton. Stephen Skowronek [optional reflection paper]

### **Week 3**

The Presidency in History: Leading from the Eye of the Storm by Sidney M. Milkis and Marc Landy (Chap. 4/Nelson reader)

Presidential Power and The Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership From Roosevelt to Reagan. Richard E. Neustadt. [optional reflection paper]

### **Week 4**

Presidential Competence by Paul Quirk (Chap. 5/Nelson reader)

The Psychological Presidency by Michael Nelson (Chap. 6/Nelson reader)

The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader. Fred I. Greenstein. [optional reflection paper]

## **Week 5**

The Presidency and the Nominating Process: Aspirants, Parties, and Selections by Lara M. Brown (Chap. 7/Nelson reader)

The Faulty Premises of the Electoral College by George C. Edwards III (Chap. 8/Nelson reader)

## **Week 6**

The President and the Media: The Case of Donald Trump by Marjorie Randon Hershey (Chap. 10/Nelson reader)

Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Samuel Kernell  
[optional reflection paper]

## **Week 7**

The Presidency and Unilateral Power: A Taxonomy by Andrew Rudalevige (Chap. 17/Nelson reader)

The Personal President: Power Invested Promise Unfulfilled. Theodore J. Lowi.  
[optional reflection paper]

## **Week 8**

The Presidency and Political Parties by Sidney M. Milkis (Chap. 12 /Nelson reader)

The President and the Parties: The Transformation of the American Party System Since the New Deal. Sidney M. Milkis [optional reflection paper]

## **Week 9**

The Institutional Presidency by John P. Burke (Chap. 13/Nelson reader)

The Presidency and the Bureaucracy: The Levers of Presidential Control by David E. Lewis and Terry M. Moe (Chap. 14/Nelson reader)

## **Week 10**

The President and Congress by Matthew J. Dickinson (Chap. 15/Nelson reader)

*Polarized Politics: Congress and the President in a Partisan Era* by Jon R. Bond and Richard Fleisher (optional reflection paper)

Final Exam