Course Overview

POS 3413 focuses on the U.S. presidency and scholarly examination of the presidency. We will examine the constitutional and political powers of the president and the relationships among the president, Congress, the judiciary, the bureaucracy, the public, and the media. We will consider how and why the U.S. presidency has changed over time and how and why the presidency may change in the future. We will also look at the presidency in comparative perspective and consider leadership and the nature of power in the U.S. in a broader context.

There are three principal themes around which the course material is organized. The material associated with each of these themes is by no means entirely distinct. However, it may be helpful to think about the course material as it relates to these themes.

1. The Presidency as an Institution

The presidency as an institution involves consideration of the constitutional foundations of the presidency, as well as how different presidents have interpreted and influenced the role of the executive and developments related to the presidency that are not identified or outlined in detail in the Constitution. For example, the Constitution specifies that the president is commander-in-chief of the military. The Congress is given the power to declare war. Presidents have historically committed U.S. troops to combat, however, without a congressional declaration of war. In this and other areas, the role and powers of the presidency remain open to interpretation and change. The Constitution provides a framework for the institution of the executive. We will consider how this institution has developed and changed over time.

2. The Presidency as Part of the Larger Political and Economic System

The executive is a single element within the broader political system. The Congress, the judiciary, the bureaucracy, political parties, interest groups, media, the public, and the economy are each important elements of the context within which the president operates. We will consider the relationship of the executive to each of these aspects of the political system, focusing in particular on historical changes in the relationship between the president and the broader context and presidents who have played key roles in defining these relationships.

3. Alternatives and Proposed Changes to the U.S. Executive
The U.S. system of checks and balances and separation of powers is but one example of how a government may be structured. In a parliamentary system such as that of Great Britain, for example, the executive (i.e., the Prime Minister) is chosen from among the members of the legislature and is elected by members of the legislature rather than by a national electorate. We will examine alternatives to the U.S. executive system and proposals that have been made for changing the presidency. We will consider arguments that have been made in favor and against these proposals for change and the reasons why some argue for change.

Classes will be a combination of lecture, discussion, and group activities. There will be 2 midterms and a final exam, a term paper, and each of you will participate in a debate on a topic related to the presidency. See the Course Requirements section below for more information on the specifics of exams, the paper assignment, and the debates. You should keep up with the reading for the class, and come to class prepared to answer questions and participate in discussions about the reading and current events related to the presidency.

Required Text and Additional Required Readings

There are two texts required for the course. They are available in the Graham Center bookstore.


In addition to the texts, there are readings available at the copy shop in Graham Center. These readings include the following:

1. The Evolution of the Presidency, Chapter 3 from The Presidency, by Richard M. Pious
2. High Crimes and Misdemeanors, from web address: www.crf-usa.org/impeachment/highcrimes.html
3. The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson, from web address: www.crf-usa.org/impeachment/impeachment1.html
4. Reinventing the Presidency, Chapter 16 from The Presidency, by Richard M. Pious

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation: I expect you to attend class prepared to discuss the reading and course material. We will also be doing some group activities in class, and your participation in these is required. Except for group activities, there is no reason for more than one person to be talking at a time. If you have something to say while someone else is talking, please raise your hand and wait to be called upon.
Debate (5% of overall grade): Each of you will be assigned a topic for debate, and we will hold these debates as scheduled on the Course Calendar below. Depending upon class enrollment, 3-5 students will be assigned to each topic. Each person is expected to prepare 3-4 minutes of comments either in support or opposition to the resolution at hand. Take a look at the debate topics and when each is scheduled on the Course Calendar below, and plan to choose a topic in the first 2-3 weeks of the semester. You will argue only one side of the debate topic, so be sure to identify whether you want to argue in support or opposition.

Debate Topics

1. Resolved that there should be a single national primary to choose the party nominees for the presidency.

2. Resolved that debates between the presidential candidates from the two major parties should also include third-party candidates who have at least 5% support in national public opinion polls.

3. Resolved that the Constitution should be amended to do away with the Electoral College. The candidate who receives the plurality of the national popular vote should become president.

4. Resolved that the private life of presidents and presidential candidates should be out of bounds for media and public scrutiny.

5. Resolved that the president and his/her advisors should ignore his/her public approval ratings when making decisions about public policy and presidential actions.

6. Resolved that the Constitution should be amended to more clearly define the powers of the president.

7. Resolved that the U.S. Constitution should be amended to give the president the sole power to declare war.

8. Resolved that presidential candidates should take a more active role in developing their party’s platform and, if elected, work to implement that platform.

9. Resolved that the Senate should support presidential nominees to the federal judiciary without regard to partisan or ideological considerations.

10. Resolved that the role of the first lady should be more clearly defined.

11. Resolved that the vice presidency should be strengthened to increase the responsibilities of the vice president.

12. Resolved that the United States should reform itself to become a parliamentary democracy.

Exams: There will be 2 midterms and a final exam for the course. The first midterm (15% of...
Overall grade) is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 1**. The second midterm (20% of overall grade) will be on **Tuesday, November 5**. The final (30% of overall grade) is scheduled for **Tuesday, December 10, 3:30-6:15**. Exams will be a combination of essay, short-answer, and fill-in-the-blank questions. I will provide a review guide before each exam to give you a better idea of what to expect.

**Term Paper (30% of overall grade):** For the class paper, you will choose 1 of 2 options.

*Paper Option 1:* If you choose option 1, your paper will be a comparison, contrast, and analysis of at least 3 scholarly research articles on the presidency. Each of the articles must address the same general topic of concern AND BE PUBLISHED SINCE JANUARY 1, 1990. For this option, you will need to come up with a list of a **minimum of 7** articles that you are interested in and submit the list to me by **Tuesday, October 8th**. For each article, provide a full bibliographic citation (see example below) and a brief statement about the topic of the article. The initial list of articles that you submit may include more than a single topic, but try to identify a minimum of 3 articles per topic. I will choose at least 3 articles from your list, and these articles will be the basis for your paper. You may rank order your list to indicate preferences for particular articles, but rank ordering is not necessary.

To find appropriate articles, start with a topic in mind. This will allow for a focused search. You are limited to topics that concern the U.S. presidency. Examples of appropriate topics include:

- Presidential powers (e.g. presidential war powers)
- Impeachment
- Presidential/Congressional relations
- Presidential appointments of judges, ambassadors, or cabinet members
- Presidential vote choice
- Presidential approval
- The first ladyship

The following are journals that are appropriate for finding scholarly articles on the presidency:

- *Presidential Studies Quarterly*
- *American Journal of Political Science*
- *Journal of Politics*
- *American Politics Quarterly*
- *White House Studies*
- *American Political Science Review*

These are only examples--there are too many scholarly journals to list them all. If you search JSTOR, which is available through the FIU library website, your search will be limited to journals that are appropriate for this assignment. **IMPORTANT NOTE: Newspapers or popular news magazines such as Newsweek and Time are not scholarly journals and NOT appropriate as sources for your articles.**

An example of the full bibliographic citation required for the list of articles you turn in to me is as follows:

Note that this citation includes AUTHOR, YEAR OF PUBLICATION, TITLE OF ARTICLE, TITLE OF JOURNAL, JOURNAL VOLUME, and PAGE NUMBERS.

For option 1, your paper should include the following (IN ADDITION TO FOLLOWING THE GENERAL GUIDELINES IDENTIFIED BELOW):

1. A summary of each of your articles that identifies the research topic, research findings, and conclusions of the article.
2. A critical analysis of the research and conclusions presented in each article. Do you see problems with the research or conclusions – why or why not?
3. A discussion of the important similarities and differences between/among your articles. For example, do the authors of the separate articles find the same/different things? Do the authors look at the same thing in different ways? It is important to go beyond mere identification of similarities and differences to explain why these are important and what you think they mean.

**Paper Option 2**: If you choose option 2, you will conduct a minimum of 5 interviews about general political attitudes (e.g. partisanship, ideology, attitudes on various political issues) and views concerning a topic related to the presidency. I will provide surveys for these interviews, and you will also conduct more in-depth interviews with your 5 respondents. Your paper will discuss the results of the surveys I provide and the interviews you conduct and, to some extent, include a comparison of your results to those of national surveys. Web sites that carry national poll results on politics and the presidency include:

www.pollingreport.com

www.gallup.com

For paper option 2, be sure to include the following information in your paper:

1. An introduction and overview that identifies the topic of your paper and the central points covered in your paper.
2. A discussion of your sampling method and a description of your respondents: Based on what we cover in class about different techniques of sampling, describe the sampling technique you used for your 5 interviews and the sampling technique(s) used for the national survey results you identify in your paper. Identify the demographic characteristics (age, income, education, occupation), partisan affiliation, ideology, and level of political knowledge (based on index of survey items) of your respondents.

3. A discussion of the survey and interview results and some comparison of your results to the results of national surveys.

This discussion should be based on some of the questions from the survey that I provide and the additional information you gather from your respondents. Examples of the type
of additional information you might gather are as follows:

- What are your respondents’ views of the presidential election of 2000? Which candidate did they support, and would they support the same candidate if the election were held again now? Are there views in this area influenced by their ideological or political party preferences?

- What are your respondents’ views about the presidency more generally – for example, what should the role of the president be in our political system? Should the presidency be changed to weaken or strengthen the president? Do we expect too much of our presidents? Have the events of September 11, 2001 affected their expectations or views of the presidency? …etc.

The additional information you gather must in some way be connected to the presidency. If you have any questions about what is appropriate, please ask!!

4. A bibliography that includes the sources you use for your national survey results.

5. Turn in the original surveys (or copies) with your paper.

General Guidelines for Papers:

1. Include an introduction that summarizes your paper topic and the material you present in your paper.
2. Include a conclusion that reviews and summarizes the major points of your paper.
3. Properly cite material that is taken from other sources, including articles, books, and web sites. I will provide examples to illustrate how to properly cite references.
4. Do not turn in a rough draft as your final paper. You should have spell-checked your document and read it carefully for errors that a spell-checker would miss and for grammatical errors such as incomplete or run-on sentences. You should also carefully read your paper for clarity – if you have to stop and think about what a statement or paragraph means, you can be pretty sure that any reader will also have questions.
5. Whichever option you choose, your paper should be about 8 pages, typed, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins and font comparable to this syllabus (12-pt Times New Roman).

Not following these guidelines will negatively affect your grade. You are allowed one spelling or grammatical error for each page (8 errors for an 8-page paper), and I will deduct 1% for each error over this amount.

Papers are due by 4 PM on Tuesday, November 26. You may turn in your paper in class or leave it in my mailbox in the Political Science Department Office. Late papers will be penalized ½ letter grade per day.
Course Calendar and Reading Schedule

Note: As appropriate, I reserve the right to make changes to the Course Calendar. Any changes will be announced in class.

Week 1, August 29        Course Introduction and Overview

Required Reading: Milkis and Nelson, Chapters 1 and 2

Week 2, September 3, 5    Constitutional Design of the Presidency

Required Reading: Cronin and Genovese, Chapter 1; Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 3; Appendix: Constitution of the United States, pp. 425-443.

Week 3, September 10, 12  Presidential Elections

Required Reading: Cronin and Genovese, Chapter 2; Milkis and Nelson, Chapters 4 and 5;

Thursday, September 12, Debate Topic 1: Resolved that there should be a single national primary to choose the party nominees for the presidency.

Thursday, September 12, Debate Topic 2: Resolved that debates between the presidential candidates from the two major parties should also include third-party candidates who have at least 5% support in national public opinion polls.

Week 4, September 17, 19  The Evolution of the Presidency

Required Reading: The Evolution of the Presidency, Chapter 3 in Pious (from Additional Readings); Milkis and Nelson, Chapters 6 and 7

Thursday, September 19, Debate Topic 3: Resolved that the Constitution should be amended to do away with the Electoral College. The candidate who receives the plurality of the national popular vote should become president.

Week 5, September 24, 26  Evaluating Presidential Performance

Required Reading: Cronin and Genovese, Chapter 3; Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 8

Thursday, September 26, Debate Topic 4: Resolved that the private life of presidents and presidential candidates should be out of bounds for media and public scrutiny.
Thursday, September 26, Debate Topic 5: Resolved that the president and his/her advisors should ignore his/her public approval ratings when making decisions about public policy and presidential actions.

Week 6, October 1, 3 EXAM 1, Tuesday, October 1

Required Reading: Cronin and Genovese, Chapter 4

Week 7, October 8, 10 Presidential Power and Leadership

FOR THOSE CHOOSING PAPER OPTION 1, YOUR LIST OF ARTICLES IS DUE by Tuesday, October 8th.

Required Reading: Cronin and Genovese, Chapter 5; Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 9

Thursday, October 10, Debate Topic 6: Resolved that the Constitution should be amended to more clearly define the powers of the president.

Week 8, October 15, 17 The President and Congress

Required Reading: Required Reading: High Crimes and Misdemeanors, The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson (from Additional Readings available in copy center); Cronin and Genovese, Chapter 6; Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 10

Thursday, October 17, Debate Topic 7: Resolved that the U.S. Constitution should be amended to give the president the sole power to declare war.

Week 9, October 22, 24 The President and Political Parties

Required Reading: Cronin and Genovese, Chapter 7; Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 11

Thursday, October 24, Debate Topic 8: Resolved that presidential candidates should take a more active role in developing their party’s platform and, if elected, work to implement that platform.

Week 10, October 29, 31 The President and the Judiciary

Required Reading: Cronin and Genovese, Chapter 8; Milkis and Nelson, Chapters 12 and 13

Thursday, October 31, Debate Topic 9: Resolved that the Senate should support presidential nominees to the federal judiciary without regard to partisan or ideological considerations.

Week 11, November 5, 7 EXAM 2, Thursday, November 7
The President and Cabinet

Required Reading: Cronin and Genovese, Chapter 9; Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 14

Week 12, November 12, 14  The Vice Presidency

Required Reading: Cronin and Genovese, Chapter 10; Milkis and Nelson Chapter 15

November 12/14, Debate Topic 10: Resolved that the role of the first lady should be more clearly defined.

Thursday, November 14, Debate Topic 11: Resolved that the vice presidency should be strengthened to increase the responsibilities of the vice president.

Week 13, November 19, 21  Alternative Executives and Proposals for Reform

Required Reading: Cronin and Genovese, Chapter 11; Reinventing the Presidency, Chapter 16 in Pious (from Additional Readings available in copy center or on reserve in the library)

Thursday, November 21, Debate Topic 12: Resolved that the United States should reform itself to become a parliamentary democracy.

Week 14, November 26, 28  Thursday, Nov. 28, THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Tuesday, November 26: Papers are due by 4 PM (You may turn in your paper in class or leave it in my mailbox in the Political Science Department Office.) Late papers will be penalized ½ letter grade per day.

Week 15, December 3  Conclusions and Review

Week 16, Final Exam, Tuesday, December 10, 3:30-6:15