

**SPRING 2012
PLS 309
The American Chief Executive**

Class Logistics:
Time: MW, 2:00-3:15 pm
Place: Leutze Hall 110

Instructor: Dr. Jungkun Seo
Office Hours: MW, 11 am – 1 pm or by appointment
Office: Leutze Hall 118, E-mail: SEOJ at UNCW.EDU

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the origins and evolution of the American presidency. Diverse dimensions of presidential politics will be covered throughout the semester; the constitutional, historical, personal, and institutional. Specific subjects include presidential election, presidential leadership, presidential interactions with Congress, the court, political parties, the media and the public. Ultimately, we explore and debate how we, as citizens, should evaluate presidential power we admire, yet fear as well. In addition, 2012 is an exciting election season for presidential politics so that throughout the course, we will keep a collective eye on events in primaries, conventions, and debates that bear on the American presidency.

II. COURSE READINGS

(Textbook) Thomas E. Cronin and Michael A. Genovese. (CG) 2010. *The Paradoxes of the American Presidency*. 3rd ed. (New York:

Oxford University Press). Additional readings (#) are also REQUIRED to read and downloadable from the course blackboard.

III. STUDENT HANDBOOK

If you require accommodation for test-taking please make sure I have the referral letter no less than three days before the test. Also, according to *University of North Carolina Bulletin* and the *Student Handbook*, you are advised that: (1) Do not commit plagiarism. (2) Do not receive unauthorized assistance during the exams. (3) Violations of these rules in any assignment may be subject to a minimum penalty of failing grade for the assignment and could result in a grade of “F” for the course.

IV. ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY

Students using laptop computers MUST sit in the back of the classroom to avoid disturbing fellow students. Of course, use of cellphones and texting are never permitted in class. Any violation of these policies may result in a zero for your attendance grade.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- ✚ 15% Midterm I (Feb 15, W)
- ✚ 20% Midterm II (Mar 26, M)
- ✚ 15% Final exam (May 2, W, 3 pm)
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- ✚ 10% President Report/Presentation
- ✚ 10% Debate Presentation
- ✚ 10% Debate Participation
- ✚ 15% Campaign Memo/Presentation
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- ✚ 5% Class Attendance/Participation

Submit assignments by the announced due dates. Grades on late submission drop one third of a grade for each day they are late.

For the whole course, letter grades will be assigned according to the following point totals:

A=92.5 or more	A-=89.5-92.49
B+=87.5-89.49	B=82.5-87.49
B-=79.5-82.49	C+=77.5-79.49
C=69.5-77.49	D=59.5-69.49
F= less than 59.5	

VI. READINGS BY CLASS SESSION (# readings posted on blackboard)

Jan 11 (W) Course Introduction:

Bruce Buchanan. "The Distinction is Electability," *The New York Times*, Aug 15, 2011; # Andrew Gelman. "Why Are Primaries Hard to Predict?" *The New York Times*, Nov 29, 2011.

Jan 16 (M) Martin Luther King Holiday

Jan 18 (W) Presidential Paradoxes

CG, Ch 1.
Stephen Skowronek. 2011. "Presidential Leadership in Political Time," in *Presidential Leadership in Political Time*, 2nd ed. 27-78 (Lawrence: the University of Kansas Press)

Jan 23-25 Presidential Evaluation

CG, Ch 2.
Jill L. Curry and Irwin L. Morris. 2010. "Explaining Presidential Greatness: The Roles of Peace and Prosperity?" *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 40(3): 515-530.

Jan 30-Feb 1 Presidential Election

CG, Ch 3.
M. V. Hood III and Seth C. McKee, 2010. "What Made Carolina Blue? In-Migration and the 2008 North Carolina Presidential Vote," *American Politics Research*, 38(2):266-302

Feb 6-8 Presidential Power and Leadership I

CG, Ch 4.
Scott C. James. 2005. "The Evolution of the Presidency: Between the Promise and the Fear" in Joel D. Aberbach and Mark A. Peterson ed. *The Executive Branch*. (Oxford University Press), pp.3-40.

Feb 13 (M) Presidential Power and Leadership II

Richard Neustadt. 1960. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents* (New York: Free Press), pp. 29-49
William G. Howell. 2003. *Power Without Persuasion: The Politics of Direct Presidential Action*. (Princeton University Press): 1-23.

Feb 15 (W) MIDTERM I (15 %)

Feb 20-22 Presidents in a System of Shared Power

CG, Ch 5.
Andrew Rudalevige. 2006. "Charting a New Imperial Presidency," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 36(3): 506-524

Feb 27-29 Presidents and Congress I

CG, Ch 6.
Richard Fleisher et al. 2000. "The Demise of the Two Presidencies" *American Politics Quarterly* 28(1): 3-25

Mar 5-7 Presidents and Congress II

Peter Trubowitz and Jungkun Seo. 2012. "The China Card: Playing Politics with Sino-American Relations" Forthcoming, *Political Science Quarterly*, Summer 2012
George C. Edwards III and Andrew Barrett. "Presidential Agenda Setting in Congress," in Jon R. Bond and Richard Fleisher ed. *Polarized Politics: Congress and the President in a Partisan Era*. (Washington D.C.: CQ Press), 109-133

Mar 12-14 Spring Break!

Mar 19-21 Inside the White House and the American VP

CG, Ch 7 & 8
James P. Pfiffner. 2011. "Decision Making in the Obama White House," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 41(2): 244-262.
Mark Hiller and Douglas Kriner. 2008. "Institutional Change and the Dynamics of Vice Presidential Selection," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 38(3): 401-421.

Mar 26 (M) MIDTERM II (20 %)

Mar 28 (W) Presidents and the Court

CG, Ch 9.
Michael Nelson. 1988. "The President and the Court: Reinterpreting the Court Packing Episode of 1937," *Political Science Quarterly*, 103(2): 267-293

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Apr 2-4 Presidents and Political Parties

CG, Ch 10

Daniel J. Galvin. 2012. "Presidential Partisanship Reconsidered: Eisenhower, Nixon, Ford, and the Rise of Polarized Politics," Forthcoming, *Political Research Quarterly*.

Apr 9-16 Presidential Politics of Foreign Policymaking

Douglas L. Kriner. 2009. "Presidents, Domestic Politics, and the International Arena," in George Edwards III and William Howell, ed. *Oxford Handbook on the American Presidency*. (New York: Oxford University Press)

Bryan W. Marshall and Richard L. Pacelle, Jr. 2005. "Revisiting the Two Presidencies: The Strategic Use of Executive Orders," *American Politics Research*, 33(1):81-105

Apr 18 (W) The Future of the American Presidency

CG, Ch 11.

Stephen Skowronek. 2011. "Is Transformational Leadership Still Possible?: Barack Obama in Historical Perspective," in *Presidential Leadership in Political Time*, 2nd ed. (Lawrence: the University of Kansas Press), 167-194.

Apr 23-25 Student Presentations I

"Battleground Strategies of the 2012 Presidential Election"

Apr 30 (M) Student Presentations II (Last Day of Classes)

May 2 (W), 3pm FINAL EXAM (15%)

VII. COURSE REQUIREMENTS BREAKDOWN

1) Three In-Class Exams (50%)

There will be two midterms (35%) and a final exam (15%). Format is a combination of multiple choice, short identification, and short essay. All readings materials and lectures notes will be a fair game on the exams (50-50!).

2) President Report (5%)/Presentation (5%)

Choose one president in history and write a 2-page, single-spaced report on three dimensions of his presidency: person, politics, and policy. In every Monday class, students will present his or her report before class (15 minutes). Inform the instructor of your president and presentation Monday by Jan 18, (W). First-come, First-served! Your report is due by the class of your presentation and grades on late submission drop one third of a grade for each day they are late.

3) Debate Presentation (10%) and Debate Participation (10%)

In every Wednesday class, we will have debate leader(s) presenting debate topic (15 minutes) and managing class debate (15 minutes). Special note: this debate class has **two allowed absences** during the semester for any reason. More than two absences of debate classes will result in a **zero** for debate participation grade, which is 10% of course grade. Please refer to suggested debate topics on next page.

4) Campaign Memo (10%)/Presentation (5%)

Throughout the course, we will focus on a limited number of "battleground states" in the 2012 presidential election campaigns. Construct a campaign memo for your boss (i.e. presidential candidate) on how to win a specific swing state. Then, present your campaign strategies before your classmates during the final classes week. Campaign memo is due by your presentation date and grades on late submission drop one third of a grade for each day they are late. More details will be discussed in class.