THE PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

While this course will focus on a variety of topics, there are six major areas of concern which underlie it: (1) Presidential Selection. Operating on the assumption that the kind of president we get depends in part upon how we choose him or her, it is essential that we consider how we go about selecting our presidents. Specifically, we shall be concerned with how effective the selection process is in yielding candidates who have the requisite skills and experience necessary to govern. (2) Presidential Powers. We shall examine the President's relationship with other power centers (Congress, Court, Bureaucracy, Public and Media) in the political system and attempt to ascertain what factors enhance and constrain his leverage over them. (3) Presidential Decision-Making. To govern is to choose. Presidents are, above all else, elected to make choices, and it is by those choices that history will judge them. We shall consider how presidents organize themselves to make decisions and also how their decision-making styles can help us to understand some of the great successes and failures in presidential decision-making. (4) Presidential Personality. Here we shall focus upon whether the nature of a president's personality can help us to understand the tone and style of his presidency and also whether it is possible to identify certain personality types which are especially suited or unsuited for the office. (5) Presidential Leadership. Although this topic will necessarily insinuate itself at various points, we shall address it more directly at the end of the course. We tend to view leadership as being synonymous with the presidency and yet experience has shown that some presidents have led better than others. In addressing the matter of leadership, we shall consider if it is possible to identify a set of objective criteria by which the leadership performance of presidents can be evaluated.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will finish this course having learned several things. First, they will understand how the selection process shapes the final product. Second, they will understand the range of and limits on presidential power and be able to explain how presidential power varies with the partisan composition of Congress, the Courts, and the state governments. Third, they will understand how the structural of the presidential administrative offices shape the decision-making process. Secondary course objectives will shed light on the role of personality and theories of leadership.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Robert E. DiClerico, The Contemporary American President
2. Additional reading selections posted to Sakai

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

GRADING

Your final grade is a product of three components:

1) Participation (25%): Watch/listen to weekly PowerPoints and participate in weekly threaded discussions (details below):
a. Discussion questions for each week will be uploaded to the course site at the beginning of the semester  
b. Post substantive responses (approx. 300 words each) to three (3) of the posted discussion questions by 12PM Wednesday each week  
c. Substantively comment (approx. 300 words each) on the responses of two (2) of your peers by 12PM Friday each week  
   1. **NOTE**: Additional relevant comments / discussion beyond the two comment minimum is welcome and encouraged  
d. Instructor will respond on the discussion thread throughout the week, and will provide summary comments to close out the discussion by 5PM Sunday

2) **Spontaneous Short Paper Exams (25% each)**: Two (2) timed essay exams will serve as the mid-term and final exam. 
   a. A choice of essay questions will be posted **48 hours** before the essay is due  
   b. Respond to the question of your choice with a **minimum 1500** word essay  
   c. Submit the essay prior to the close of the 48 period

3) **Critical Analysis Paper (25%)**: Students are required to complete a 5 – 7 page (double-spaced) paper which critically analyzes a topic related to the American Presidency. Paper topic to be submitted to instructor for approval by **June 10th**.

**MAKE-UP EXAMS**
As this is an online class, all exams will be of the take home variety. Thus, you should have ample time to complete them prior to the deadline. However, if a legitimate emergency should arise, please contact me as soon as possible so that we may determine alternate arrangements / deadlines as appropriate.

**CLASS CONDUCT**
The same rules of respect and decorum that apply in the physical classroom apply in the online discussion room. The classroom is a special environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that respect for the right of others seeking to learn, respect for the professionalism of the instructor, and the general goals of academic freedom are maintained. Student conduct, which disrupts the learning process, will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action or removal from class per university policy.

**COURSE WEBSITE - SAKAI**
Our class Sakai website will serve as our virtual classroom for this course. Here you will find assigned readings that are not in the text book, lectures, weekly discussion questions, and assignment information (found in the “Resource” section). The Sakai site also contains the discussion forum which will serve as the location for our weekly discussions, as well as the chat room. Please use the chat room to post materials you may find to be helpful to others as well as any questions you may have about the course. If you have a question, chances are that other people will as well, so please post them in the chat room so everyone can benefit from them. I check the chat room regularly and will answer any questions then. Please also scan through the chat room to see if others have already asked your question.
To access the class Sakai website, (1) sign on to sakai.rutgers.edu, (2) sign in using your RU screen name, and (3) click on the class tab at the top of the page.

**COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS**
Week 1
PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION / FOREIGN POLICY POWERS OF THE PRESIDENT

Required Readings
DiClerico, Ch. 1, Ch. 2 (through page 60 only)

Selections from The Federalist Papers, on Sakai

Week 2
PRESIDENTIAL POWERS – THE PRESIDENT, CONGRESS & BUREAUCRACY

Required Readings
DiClerico Ch. 3, Ch. 5

Matthew Beckman, Pushing the Agenda, Chapter 2 (on Sakai)

Week 3

Required Reading
DiClerico, Ch. 4

Samuel Kernell (2006), Going Public, Chapters 1 & 2 (on Sakai)

Essay Exam 1 – THIS WEEK.

Week 4
PRESIDENTIAL DECISION MAKING

Required Readings
DiClerico, Chps. 6 & 7

Week 5
PRESIDENTIAL PERSONALITY & LEADERSHIP

DiClerico, Chps. 9 & 10

ESSAY EXAM 2 THIS WEEK

Week 6
COURSE WRAP-UP/CRITICAL RESPONSE PAPERS DUE