

American Presidency 790:306
Spring 2017 - Rutgers University

Instructor: Arielle Bennett, Department of Political Science, arielle.bennett@rutgers.edu

Course Location: Monday & Thursday, 11:30am – 12:50pm, Milledoler Hall 100

Office Hours: by appointment in the Art Library – please email or see me before/after class to schedule

Course Goals & Description:

The American presidency has an integral role in our political system and within the checks and balances between the three branches of government. The President has many responsibilities, but must at a minimum promote the wellbeing and economic stability of America, use her/his influence on lawmaking and as the chief of their political party, advocate America's values at home and abroad, represent America as its chief diplomat, lead the Executive Branch of the government, and take charge of the armed forces as the Commander in Chief. While our founders envisioned a more simplified role for the presidency than the powerful position that it embodies today, the ever-transforming presidency is part of the unique political climate of America. We will also examine the founding of the presidency and its constitutional parameters, as well as how the "founders' intentions" may have changed overtime.

This course will analyze each era of the American presidency, as well as the surrounding historical and current literature. Historical events, political philosophy, law, and governmental institutions and actors will help shape our understanding of the presidency. From the Federalist/Anti-Federalist debate, to the wars that have marked our history, to the social movements that have challenged the presidency, to 9/11; each new event challenges the presidency and tests its powers. We will also seek to examine the current socio-political world as it relates to the most current developments in the presidency, including from the administrations of President Obama to President-elect Trump.

Required Texts:

There are two required texts for this class: *The American Presidency: Origins and Development: 1776-2014 (7th Edition)*, Sidney Milkis and Michael Nelson, Sage Press, 2016; and *The Evolving Presidency: Landmark Documents, 1787-2015 (5th Edition)*, Michael Nelson, 2016.

How Your Grade Is Calculated:

- Participation/Attendance (20%)
- Take Home Midterm – Research Paper (40%)
 - This take home midterm is an 8 to 10 page research paper. Detailed instructions will be posted to the course page so you can prepare early. You will need to turn this paper in through www.turnitin.com to verify it has not been plagiarized.
- Final Exam – essay based, in person (40%)

Absence from Final Exam:

Absence from an exam because of travel plans will not be excused. Only a note from your Dean of Students in your college at Rutgers stipulating a medical or family emergency will be acceptable as an excuse for missing an exam. If at all possible, I need to be notified before the exam of your inability to take it.

Academic Integrity:

I do not tolerate any breach of the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy, which includes cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of deception. Penalties for violations will be strictly enforced. Please familiarize yourself with the policy: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>.

Disability Accommodations:

Rutgers encourages students with any needs for disability accommodations to get assistance from the university. This includes test and note taking services for approved students. Please see the Rutgers Office of Disability Services if you are interested: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/my-accommodations>. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Lecture and Reading Schedule

Week 1: 1/19

- Thursday, 1/19 is the first day of class
- Introductions, Syllabus, and Basics of American Government

Week 2: 1/23

- *The American Presidency* – Chapter 1, “The Constitutional Convention,” and Chapter 2, “Creating the Presidency”
- *The Evolving Presidency: Landmark Documents* – Chapter 1, “James Madison’s Notes of the Federal Convention” (1787), Chapter 2, “The Constitution” (1787)

Week 3: 1/30

- *The Evolving Presidency: Landmark Documents* – Chapter 3, “Anti-Federalist Essays: George Mason’s Objections to This Constitution of Government and Cato’s Letter No. 4” (1787), Chapter 4, “The Federalist Papers, Nos. 69-73” (1788), Chapter 5, “George Washington’s First Inaugural Address” (1789), Chapter 6, “James Madison’s Defense of the President’s Removal Power” (1789)

Week 4: 2/6

- *The American Presidency* – Chapter 3, “Bringing the Constitutional Presidency to Life: George Washington and John Adams,” and Chapter 4, “The Triumph of Jeffersonianism”
- *The Evolving Presidency: Landmark Documents* – Chapter 9, “Thomas Jefferson’s First Inaugural Address” (1801), Chapter 10, “Thomas Jefferson’s Letter to the Vermont Legislature” (1807), Chapter 11, “The Monroe Doctrine” (1823)

Week 5: 2/13

- *The American Presidency* – Chapter 5, “The Age of Jackson,” and Chapter 6, “The Presidency of Abraham Lincoln”
- *The Evolving Presidency: Landmark Documents* – Chapter 15, “Abraham Lincoln’s Message to Congress in Special Session” (1861), Chapter 17, “The Gettysburg Address” (1863)

Week 6: 2/20

- *The American Presidency* – Chapter 7, “The Reaction against Presidential Power: Andrew Johnson to William McKinley,” and Chapter 8, “Progressive Politics and Executive Power: The Presidencies of Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson”
- *The Evolving Presidency: Landmark Documents* – Chapter 20, “Articles of Impeachment against Andrew Johnson” (1868), Chapter 22, “Lord James Bryce, Why Great Men Are Not Chosen President” (1888), Chapter 23, “Theodore Roosevelt’s and William Howard Taft’s Theories of Presidential Power” (1913, 1916)

Week 7: 2/27

- *The American Presidency* – Chapter 9, “The Triumph of Conservative Republicanism,” and Chapter 10, “The Consolidation of the Modern Presidency: Franklin D. Roosevelt to Dwight Eisenhower”
- *The Evolving Presidency: Landmark Documents* – Chapter 26, “Franklin D. Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address” (1933), Chapter 29, “Franklin D. Roosevelt’s ‘Court-Packing’ Address” (1937), Chapter 31, “Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Executive Order on Japanese American Internment” (1942), Chapter 34, “Dwight D. Eisenhower’s Little Rock Executive Order” (1957)

Week 8: 3/6

- **Take home midterm research paper due 3/6, Monday, 11:00am on Sakai and in class today.**
- No other assignments or reading due this week

Week 9: 3/13

- **SPRING BREAK THIS WEEK - NO CLASS**

Week 10: 3/20

- *The American Presidency* – Chapter 11, “Personalizing the Presidency: John F. Kennedy to Jimmy Carter”
- *The Evolving Presidency: Landmark Documents* – Chapter 35, “John F. Kennedy’s Inaugural Address” (1961), Chapter 39, “Lyndon B. Johnson’s “Equality of Result” Speech” (1965), Chapter 47, “Jimmy Carter’s “Crisis of Confidence” Speech” (1979)

Week 11: 3/27

- **No class Monday, 3/27**
- *The American Presidency* – Chapter 12, “A Restoration of Presidential Power? Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush”
- *The Evolving Presidency: Landmark Documents* – Chapter 48, “Ronald Reagan’s First Inaugural Address” (1981)

Week 12: 4/3

- *The American Presidency* – Chapter 13, “Bill Clinton and the Modern Presidency”
- *The Evolving Presidency: Landmark Documents* – Chapter 50, “Articles of Impeachment against Bill Clinton” (1998)

Week 13: 4/10

- *The American Presidency* – Chapter 14, “George W. Bush and Unilateral Presidential Power”
- *The Evolving Presidency: Landmark Documents* – Chapter 52, “George W. Bush’s War on Terrorism Address” (2001), and Chapter 53, “The Bush Doctrine” (2002)

Week 14: 4/17

- *The American Presidency* – Chapter 15, “Managing Alone: Barack Obama and the Dilemma of Modern Presidential Leadership”
- *The Evolving Presidency: Landmark Documents* – Chapter 57, “Barack Obama’s Health Care Address” (2009)
- Article – Barack Obama, “The President’s Role in Advancing Criminal Justice Reform” (2017)
<http://harvardlawreview.org/2017/01/the-presidents-role-in-advancing-criminal-justice-reform/>

Week 15: 4/24

- **Last class of the semester is Thursday, 4/27**
- No other assignments or reading due this week
- Please study for your exam – we will be reviewing in class as well

Final Examination:

- **Date to be announced (on Sakai).** Rutgers final exams may occur anytime from May 4-10, or check your personal final exam schedule on <https://finalexams.rutgers.edu/>
- **Remember, please do not book any travel until you have confirmed your final exam schedule, as we will not accommodate different test dates for travel.**