

**Political Science 313**  
**The American Presidency**  
**University of Dayton**  
**Spring 2019**

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*Class:* T/TH 11:30 AM – 12:15 PM, Fitz Hall 624  
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*Office Hours:* By appointment

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### **Course Description**

This course examines the American presidency, with particular emphasis on: the presidency's purpose and functions, under the U.S. Constitution; the exercise of executive powers, in historical and contemporary contexts; presidential versus parliamentary systems of government; and social scientific methods of studying the presidency. Students will develop their understanding of these topics through reading assignments, in-class discussions, and experiential learning opportunities. Also, students will complete a series of projects designed to develop the skills necessary to analyze and articulate a scientific understanding of presidential leadership.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Through this course, students will develop the ability to:

- identify and explain the sources and limitations of presidential power, under the U.S. Constitution;
- evaluate U.S. presidents' effectiveness in achieving relevant political and/or social ends, individually and in comparison to leaders in other (e.g., parliamentary) systems of government;
- conduct original research using social science methods;
- be clear and analytically articulate, in writing and oral presentation.

### **Course Expectations**

Class Participation & Attendance: Students are expected to attend class regularly, attentively, and on time. *Students who are absent from 7 or more class sessions will fail the course*; excused absences do count toward this total. Also, excessive tardiness may be counted toward this total. Students who behave in a distracting way – including sleeping or using a phone or computer – may be asked to leave, and if so will be counted as absent.

Late Assignments: Once the deadline for a written assignment has passed, 10% of the maximum point total will be subtracted from the student's grade; an additional 10% of that total will be subtracted for each subsequent 24 hour period in which the assignment is not submitted. For the final paper, the relevant late penalties will be 25% for the first 24 hour period, and 50% for the second 24-hour period. After 48 hours, I will not accept final paper submissions. Exceptions to the late submission policy will be made only for excused absences, as documented by the relevant university administrators and with the instructor's approval.

### **Course Texts (required):**

Buckley, F.H. 2014. *The Once and Future King: The Rise of Crown Government in America*. New York: Encounter.

Bush, George W. 2010. *Decision Points*. New York: Crown.

Goodwin, Doris Kearns. 2013. *The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

## **Honor Pledge, University Resources, and Policies**

### University of Dayton Honor Pledge

I understand that as a student at the University of the Dayton, I am a member of our academic and social community. I recognize the importance of my education and the value of experiencing life in such an integrated community. I believe that the value of my education and degree is critically dependent upon the academic integrity of the university community, and so in order to maintain our academic integrity, I pledge to:

- Complete all assignments and examinations by the guidelines given to me by my instructors;
- Avoid plagiarism and any other form of misrepresenting someone else's work as my own;
- Adhere to the Standards of Conduct as outlined in the Academic Honor Code.

In doing this, I hold myself and my community to a higher standard of excellence, and set an example for my peers to follow.

Students are expected to abide by the University of Dayton Honor Pledge.

### Cheating and Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any student suspected of either cheating or plagiarism will be referred to appropriate administrative proceedings at the University of Dayton. Additionally, the student will receive a zero for the assignment.

### Learning Support and Writing Resources

A wide range of support and resources are available to UD students and I strongly encourage students to avail themselves of these opportunities. The LTC's Office of Learning Resources (OLR) is a learning resource for all students and it offers a wide variety of services to assist you in achieving academic success at the university, including study skills classes and workshops, tutoring and consultations, disability screenings, and a website with many resources (<http://learningsupport.udayton.edu>). Please contact OLR at 937-229-2066 or visit their office on the ground floor of Roesch Library (LTC 023) if you would like to talk about how you could be a more effective learner.

The Write Place is a free service available to all UD students that offers peer-to-peer writing support on any writing assignment and at any stage of the writing process. Students can drop-in to the Write Place without making an appointment. It is located in Roesch Library Room 502. Contact Christina Klimo, Write Place Coordinator, if you have any questions at [klimochm@notes.udayton.edu](mailto:klimochm@notes.udayton.edu) or 229-2066.

### Students with Disabilities

If you feel you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, please contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Formal disability-related accommodations are determined through the Learning Teaching Center's Office of Learning Resources (OLR). It is very important that you be registered with OLR and notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations with a signed SLS Self-Identification Form. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations. For more information, please contact OLR at 937-229-2066, by email at [disability.services@udayton.edu](mailto:disability.services@udayton.edu), or stop by the OLR office in LTC 023.

## Grade Calculation

Reading Responses	20%
Debate Paper	20%
Presidential Rating System	15%
Was Taft a Great President?	20%
<u>Final Paper</u>	<u>25%</u>
TOTAL	100%

### *Grading Scale:*

A: 93%-100%   A-: 90%-93%   B+: 87%-90%   B: 83%-87%   B-: 80%-83%  
C+: 77%-80%   C: 73%-77%   C-: 70%-73%   D: 60%-70%   Fail: <60%

*Note: If your final course grade falls within 0.25% of the next highest letter grade, I will round it up (e.g. 86.75% = B+, 89.75 = A-, etc.).*

## Graded Assignments

### Debate Paper

On February 26, we will hold an in-class debate on a hypothetical U.S. Senate resolution to abolish the presidency and adopt a parliamentary system of government. You will play the role of a U.S. Senator, who will participate in the debate and then vote on the resolution. In preparation for this debate, you will write a paper analyzing the relative advantages and disadvantages of presidential versus parliamentary systems, and explaining how you plan to vote on the proposed resolution. See Isidore for complete project instructions.

### Presidential Rating System

In this paper, you will develop an original presidential rating system that you will apply and revise in subsequent course projects. Specifically, you will begin by articulating a thesis regarding your conception of presidential greatness. Then, you will define relevant criteria for evaluating presidential greatness; explain the rubric that you would use to rate presidents on each criterion; and specify each criterion's relative weight in your overall measure of presidential greatness. See Isidore for complete project instructions.

### Was Taft a Great President?

Using the presidential rating system developed in your previous paper, you will rate William Howard Taft's presidency. This evaluation will be informed by our reading of *The Bully Pulpit* and our visit to his National Historic Site in Cincinnati. The primary purpose of this assignment is to test out your presidential rating system. Therefore, you will begin by rating Taft's presidency in accordance with the criteria described in the previous paper. Then, you will reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses of this rating system, and identify at least one way in which you would revise that system before applying it again in the final paper. See Isidore for complete project instructions.

### Final Paper

The final paper consists of two parts. In Part I, you will present a revised version of the Presidential Rating System paper, incorporating my feedback and your evaluation from the Taft Presidency paper. In Part II, you will apply the revised rating system to a president of *your* choosing. Your evaluation of that president will be based upon a biography that you have chosen to read, in consultation with the professor. This is an opportunity not only to learn about a president that you find particularly interesting, but also to rate his presidency using an original, scientific measure that you have developed over the course of the semester. See Isidore for complete project instructions.

### Reading Responses

You must submit **15 reading responses** over the course of the semester, on days that a *new reading assignment* is due (there are 22 such days; you will submit responses on 15 of those days, and skip responding on 7 days). When multiple readings are assigned, you may respond to one or both of the readings. However, you cannot earn credit for multiple reading responses based upon the same day's readings.

Reading responses must be typed or neatly hand-written, and at least one paragraph in length. You will submit them to the professor at the beginning of class, in hard copy format.

To receive full credit (on a 0-1 point scale), your response must:

1. **raise an insightful and well-informed question or thought** demonstrating comprehensive, substantive engagement with the day's reading assignment, and one that is conducive to generating constructive in-class discussion (0.5 points);\*
2. **include a relevant in-text citation** (e.g. quote, fact, or argument – with page number) from the day's reading, to support or amplify the substance of your response (0.25 points);\*\*
3. **be well-written and properly edited** (0.25 points).

\* If, in my judgment, your response addresses a tangential point from the reading, or does not convey a clear and thorough understanding of its substantive content, as a whole, then I will give partial credit on that basis.

\*\*If you directly cite a reading assignment but do not specify a page number (when one is available), I will subtract 0.10 from your grade.

### **Perspective on Grading**

I welcome students to discuss grades with me at any point in the semester, if concerns arise. Often, this helps a student to understand the basis for his/her grade, or to clarify something that I misunderstood when first evaluating the work.

However, let me be clear about my expectations for such conversations: It is not appropriate for a student to come to me with a general objection, such as "I thought I did better on this paper" or "I need an A." I grade your performance on assignments. I do not grade your *expected* performance, or you as a *person*. Your grade on each assignment will be broken into parts. After grading each part, I simply calculate the sum total to derive your overall grade on the assignment. The same applies to your course grade: I grade each assignment, and then sum them (in accordance with the weighting formula detailed on our syllabus) to determine your final grade. Overall grades, then, derive from a *mathematical* process – not a subjective, summary judgment of a you or your work, as a whole.

Therefore, if you want to talk with me about the possibility of changing a grade, you need to be able to tell me which specific part of that grade might be in error, and why. If you cannot tell me which part you think I got wrong/misunderstood and why, you are not ready to discuss your grade.

Finally, I do not "fix" grades. I do not offer extra assignments at the end of the semester to help you reach the grade that you wanted; if I did so, I would have to extend the same opportunity to the entire class. As a social scientist, I view grades as instruments of *measurement* – that is, they measure how much, and how well, you have learned what the course is designed to teach. If I add in other elements to your grade that do not measure actual *learning*, such as your desired GPA or your graduate school ambitions, I have corrupted the measurement (and acted unethically). Please know that I will not do so, and you shouldn't ask for that.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Assigned readings must be completed prior to class on the first date under which they are listed below. Readings are from the required texts (“Buckley”, “Bush”, or “Goodwin”), or accessible via hyperlink (“web”).

This schedule is subject to change, at the professor’s discretion. I will notify you of any changes in class and/or via announcements on our Isidore course page.

### **Introduction**

Jan. 15 (Tue.) Syllabus

Jan. 17 (Thu.) U.S. Constitution, Article II ([web](#))  
R.E. Neustadt, “Three Cases of Command” (Isidore)

### **Constitutional Design**

Jan. 22 (Tue.) F.H. Buckley, Ch. 2 (pp. 17-61) & Appendix A (pp. 294-307)

Jan. 24 (Thu.) F.H. Buckley, Ch. 4 (pp. 87-120)  
T. Kustra, “7 insights into the surprising results from the Canadian election” ([web](#))

### **Presidential Power**

Jan. 29 (Tue.) F.H. Buckley, Ch. 5 (pp. 121-139 & 148-151)

Jan. 31 (Thu.) F.H. Buckley, Ch. 5 (pp. 139-142)  
G.W. Bush, Ch. 14 (pp. 439-472)

Feb. 5 (Tue.) G.W. Bush, Ch. 5 (pp. 126-151) & Ch. 6 (pp. 152-182)

Feb. 7 (Thu.) F.H. Buckley, Ch. 5 (pp. 142-148)  
G.W. Bush, Ch. 8 (pp. 223-271)

Feb. 12 (Tue.) F.H. Buckley, Ch. 5 (pp. 151-164)  
G.W. Bush, Ch. 4 (pp. 106-125)

### **The Presidential System**

Feb. 14 (Thu.) F.H. Buckley, Ch. 6 (pp. 167-180) & Appendix B (pp. 309-314)

Feb. 19 (Tue.) F.H. Buckley, Ch. 7 (pp. 181-204)

Feb. 21 (Thu.) F.H. Buckley, Ch. 8 (pp. 205-234) & Ch. 9 (pp. 235-256)

### **Debate Paper**

Due Monday, February 25 @ 11:55 PM (Isidore)

Feb. 26 (Tue.) In-class debate

### **Presidential Greatness?**

- Feb. 28 (Thu.) Sienna College, “Sienna’s 6<sup>th</sup> Presidential Expert Poll 1982-2018” ([web](#))  
A. Rudalevige, “Rating the Presidential Rankings” ([web](#))  
J.E. Cohen, “The Historical Memory of American Presidents in the Mass Public” ([web](#))
- Mar. 5 (Tue.) J. Azari, “Presidential Ratings are Flawed. Which Makes It Hard to Assess Trump” ([web](#))  
J.E. Uscinski & A. Simon, “Partisanship as a Source of Presidential Rankings” (Isidore)  
J.L. Curry & I.L. Morris, “Explaining Presidential Greatness” (Isidore)
- Mar. 7 (Thu.) In-class discussion

### **Presidential Rating System**

Due Thursday, March 7 @ 11:00 AM (Isidore)

*Mar. 12 (Tue.) & Mar. 14 (Thu.) No class – Spring Break*

### **Becoming the President**

- Mar. 19 (Tue.) D.K. Goodwin, pp. 11-20; 21-34; 50-63; 87-108
- Mar. 21 (Thu.) D.K. Goodwin, pp. 143-154; 214-221; 264-278; 287-290; 300-305
- Mar. 26 (Tue.) D.K. Goodwin, pp. 385-400; 410-414; 424-436; 516-556
- Mar. 28 (Thu.) G.W. Bush, Ch. 2 (pp. 35-64), Ch. 3 (pp. 75-81), & Ch. 9 (pp. 287-296)

### **The Taft Presidency**

- Apr. 2 (Tue.) D.K. Goodwin, pp. 557-604
- Apr. 4 (Thu.) D.K. Goodwin, pp. 605-671
- Apr. 9 (Tue.) D.K. Goodwin, pp. 671-750
- Apr. 11 (Thu.) Field Trip: William Howard Taft National Historic Site (Cincinnati)

### **Was Taft a Great President?**

Due Sunday, April 14 @ 11:55 PM

- Apr. 16 (Tue.) B. Hufbauer, “Turning Presidents Into Pharaohs” ([web](#))

*Apr. 18 (Thu.) No class - Easter Break*

### **The Vice Presidency**

- Apr. 23 (Tue.) J. Uscinski, “Smith (and Jones) Go to Washington” ([web](#))

Apr. 25 (Thu.) TBA

### **Conclusion**

Apr. 30 (Tue.) & May 2 (Thu.) TBA

### **Final Paper**

Due Wednesday, May 8 @ 4:20 PM (Isidore)