The American Presidency
POL 305-01
T/R, 9:30am-10:45am
(Compressed Schedule: 11:10am-12:10pm)
Misericordia University
INS 029
Fall 2018

Instructor
Dr. Robert Lucas Williams
Assistant Professor
Email: rwilliams1@misericordia.edu
Office: MER 375
Phone: (570) 674-3047
Office Hours: Wednesday 11:00am-12:00pm, Thursday 2:00pm-3:00pm, or by appointment

Course Description
The primary goal of this course is to impart a comprehensive understanding of the basic concepts related to the American presidency and the general theories regarding executive branch operations. By examining various leadership styles and uses of presidential power, the course will also assess how presidents differ in their abilities to reach their own goals. The president’s relationship with the public, Congress, the bureaucracy, the courts, states, and the international community will be topics in the course.

Learning Objectives
1. Students will engage a political science perspective on the American presidency.
2. Students will communicate key concepts and ideas related to the American presidency effectively through oral dialogue, discussion, presentation, and written essays.
3. Students will be able to look at the American presidency critically, recognize various approaches to running an executive branch, and identify solutions.
4. Students will learn about U.S. presidents’ role in key policy making and administrative issues facing Americans today.
5. Students will understand methodological approaches to studying the executive branch.
6. Students will be familiar with various institutional processes that govern executive branch politics in the U.S.

Required Text


3. Other texts will be available on Blackboard.

Suggested Text

Supporting Resources and Materials
1. **Supplemental Media** There will be required and suggested readings and materials posted to Blackboard throughout the semester. Please monitor these documents, links, and other media as they become available. Required readings are all fair game for testing material. Suggested resources may assist you in classroom activities, dialogues, and discussions or with your project.

2. **Proprietary Material** Material such as slides that are posted on Blackboard may not be used by anyone in any fashion outside of this course. This means you may not share them with anyone outside of this course. These documents are for your study purposes only.

Classroom Expectations
- The items below are expected of you by both me and your classmates.
• **Be respectful.** We will cover contentious topics on a daily basis. Everyone possesses the ability to converse in a cordial manner. We will foster a safe space in which you can discuss sensitive topics in a productive way. Please keep in mind, **REASONABLE PEOPLE OFTEN DISAGREE.**

• **No web surfing during class.** You may type notes, but do not play around online. It is distracting to both me and your fellow students if you are not paying attention and not engaging in the material. Keep your phone on silent and out of sight.

• **Be on time.** This should go without saying.

• All of these rules will be a factor in your professionalism grade.

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**Course Requirements**

1. **Professionalism:** Professionalism includes demonstrable characteristics such as punctuality, genuine commitment, and intellectual participation. Your classmates and I expect you to be on time and meet deadlines. We also expect you to read the assigned material and generally keep up with the news regarding political events. Class discussion is incredibly important to the success of this course. As is the case in healthy democratic politics, the exchange of perspectives and ideas is essential to finding problems, exploring solutions, and locating possible points of compromise. You will gain broader perspectives through your interactions with classmates. However, everyone must be willing to open an empathetic ear where possible and a sympathetic ear otherwise. We will learn on the first day the difference between dialogue and debate. The point of a dialogue is to understand the speaker’s argument, nothing more. The point of a debate is to exchange ideas such that you may persuade someone else to your position or come to some middle ground. As a class we will always be aware of which of these modes we are in. Neither of these modes allows for hostile or incendiary language. You must earn these points by being on time and prepared for class as well as contributing to class discourse. You will find a rubric on Blackboard.

2. Read the assigned readings **PRIOR** to the corresponding class meeting in the schedule below. Come prepared to engage and ask questions.

3. We will utilize Blackboard regularly. Additionally, I will utilize the “Send Email” function in Blackboard if I need to reach you, so you MUST be sure your email address with Blackboard is correct.

4. Read the news. Know what is going on in the world around you. We will frequently refer to news events in classroom examples. You aren’t expected to know in depth details about every current event. However, you should be able to connect class information to the real world in order to contribute in class. Are you new to the world of reading the news? Here are a few places that you might start:

   - www.nytimes.com
   - www.wsj.com
   - www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis (issue briefs, policy analysis, fact sheets, and Stateline (state politics news))

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• www.nationalreview.com (conservative publication)
• www.thenation.com (liberal publication)
• Podcasts (some of my favorites are Wait, Wait Don’t Tell Me (NPR’s weekly news quiz), NPR politics, No Jargon from Scholars Strategy Network, Politico’s Nerdcast, and many others)
• Washington Post’s Monkey Cage is a political science blog on current events, both domestic and international
• http://www.pennlive.com/politics/ (Pennsylvania politics)
• Stitcher’s app, npr.org, the NPRone app are all great customizable resources.

5. Midterm elections are in November 2018. There are events and news related to the election that you should follow. Here are the **Important 2018 Election Dates in PA**:

   • Registration Deadline - 10/9/2018
   • General Midterm Elections - 11/6/2018

6. **Writing Assignments** First, students will write a short response to the “Many Meanings of Presidential Leadership” reading, worth 5% of the course grade. Next, building on the first paper, students will write a 5-page critical response to the presidential leadership readings as a whole. This paper is worth 10% of the course grade. Then, students will write a critical synthesis of the public opinion media, and presidential action readings worth 15% of the course grade. Last, a 10-page research paper will be **due the day of the final exam**. In this paper, students will ask a research question about the presidency, conduct a literature review, produce a theory, and suggest a scientific way to assess their theory. This 10-page paper will be worth 30% of the course grade. A prompt and rubric detailing each assignment will be supplied on Blackboard.

7. **Group Project** Students will be assigned to groups on the first day of class. During the second week of class, we hold hold a presidency draft that is similar in style to fantasy sports (I will provide a handout explaining how it works). Criteria used to judge presidents’ attributes will be (foreign policy, scandals, leadership, appointments, strength of opposition, policy accomplishments, and overall). Each group will then research the different presidents to make preparations for draft day. Using your book (Taber and Taber) and other resources, each team will put a poster together displaying the team they drafted and attributes of the presidents they selected for each criterion. Then, professors will evaluate and rate each team from 0-10. Points are awarded based on having the best team. Evaluation will occur at the Constitution Day event. I will grade the overall performance based on a rubric (teamwork, overall presentation quality, content quality, and individual component of participation). This will be the team’s final grade for the project. However, other expert professors will judge the posters, with each professor being assigned a specific category related to their expertise. The results of the judging session will be awarded as bonus points on the project. Finally,
students will individually write a brief 1-2 page summary of their contributions to the project and describing the rationale for their team’s selection of presidents worth 5% of their grade for the project. The other 20% comes from their group’s performance rubric. Each class period between now and 9/18 will be devoted to completing this project (I need to give them concrete objectives to complete by the end of each class period in order to be finished in time to print the posters). On the Thursday (9/13) before the event, each group will need to provide a final version of their poster file to be printed by the print shop in time for Constitution Day (9/18). On the day of the event, each group will need to be prepared to answer questions from touring guests, including the professors who are bonus judges. Your group posters will be presented in the Banks Lobby from 8:30-noon on that day. Your team is responsible for signing up for time slots that will allow some combination of team members to be present during this whole period.

Grading
There will be no curving in this class.

1. Professionalism: 15%
2. 3 Writing Assignments: 60%
3. Group Project: 25%
4. Final Grades:

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Credit Hour Statement
For each credit hour earned in this course, the amount of work represented in the course learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement is equal to a minimum of one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week during the regular fifteen-week semester. In the case of courses scheduled in shorter time periods than the regular fifteen-week semester, the amount of direct faculty instruction is determined through the university’s “Guidelines for Instructional Time Equivalencies Across Formats.” The expectation of a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work per hour of direct faculty instruction or instructional time equivalency remains the same.
**Academic Integrity**

Any form of cheating or dishonesty, including plagiarism, is a fundamental violation of the nature and purpose of Misericordia University. Such behavior will not be tolerated and will result in at least lowered grades, possibly failure in a class, program dismissal, and, in the most serious cases, dismissal from the university.

Plagiarism is using someone else's ideas or words and claiming them as one's own. Students who use another person's words must copy them accurately, enclose them in quotations marks, and identify the source clearly. If another person's ideas are used in a student paper, the source must still be identified and the author of the ideas given credit. Students are responsible to make sure they are using sources properly and documenting them properly.

The responsibility for maintaining personal integrity and honor in academic activities rests with the student. Each faculty member will provide information on academic integrity to students in the course outline at the beginning of the semester, including any necessary explanation of violations, possible infractions of academic integrity and the scope of sanctions, e.g., warning, lowering of the grade on the assignment or course, course failure, or dismissal from the program or university.

Should a violation of academic integrity occur, the faculty member must inform the student of the violation before imposing any sanction. Should the violation be considered serious enough to merit any grade of D or lower on any major assignment, or a more serious penalty, such as course failure or dismissal from the program, the faculty member must notify the vice president of academic affairs (VPAA) and supply any supporting evidence. In the case of multiple violations, the VPAA will discuss this issue with the student and may impose additional sanctions up to and including dismissal from the university. In a case where dismissal from the university is contemplated, the VPAA will consult with the faculty member, students advisor, department chair/program director, and college dean.

In cases where the student contests the accusations of academic dishonesty, the student may file a grievance under either the undergraduate or graduate grievance procedure, whichever one is applicable.

**Emergency Response Policy**

To be prepared in the event of an emergency situation, students should keep their cell phone on vibrate during class to receive any message from the emergency alert system (EAS). However, checking your phone for non-EAS messages or texting during class will be treated as a refusal to participate in class and will affect your participation grade. In the event that you need to receive a call for a personal emergency, please notify me before class to receive permission to answer your phone outside the classroom.

In the event of an emergency, I will inform students and coordinate the response recommended by public safety. I expect students to comply with my instructions to ensure the safety of all.
**Tutorial Assistance**

Peer Tutoring Program: Misericordia University offers a variety of tutorial options to assist students in achieving academic goals. Individual and group peer tutoring is provided in most core curriculum courses and some professional courses dependent on student tutor availability. The Peer Tutoring Program services are provided by the Student Success Center, which is located in the lower level of Alumnae Hall. All tutoring services are free of charge.

Smarthinking is an online tutoring service available to all students. Students can drop in on a live tutoring session, submit papers, or schedule private sessions in many subject areas, such as statistics, economics, biology, physics, chemistry, and many others. Smarthinking registration and log in information can be found on the Student Success Center channel found under Student Services.

**Mental Health Support**

The Counseling and Psychological Services Center (CAPS) provides free counseling services to students. If students find their studies are suffering due to mental health concerns, please contact CAPS directly for support.

**Disability Statement**

Misericordia University is committed to creating an environment where all are welcome and does not discriminate in the recruitment, admission, educational process, or treatment of students. In the spirit of hospitality and justice, we comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended. In order to receive services, students must self-identify their disability and provide documentation from a healthcare professional. Eligibility for accommodations such academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aides is determined through an individualized, interactive process in the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD).

The OSD is located in the SSC, on the lower level of Alumnae Hall. Individuals seeking accommodations may call 570-674-6408 or email Kristen Ricardo, Assistant Director SSC/Office for Students with Disabilities at kricardo@misericordia.edu.

**Tentative Course Calendar**

- **Tuesday August 28:** Course Overview
  - Syllabus and assignments introduction
  - Group assignments
  - **Group goal:** Start draft planning & divide research tasks among group members

- **Thursday August 30:** Constitution Day Work
– **Group goal**: Complete ranked list for Draft Day

- **Tuesday September 4**: Presidency Draft Day
  - Draft your team of presidents in class
  - **Group goal**: Divide project tasks among group members

- **Thursday September 6**: Poster Work

- **Tuesday September 11**: Poster Work
  - **Group goal**: Finalize project poster & sign up for Constitution Day timeslots

- **Thursday September 13**: Poster Work
  - Deadline to submit poster materials to Print Shop

- **Tuesday September 18**: Constitution Day
  - Meet in Banks Lobby at the time you signed up to represent your group

- **Thursday September 20**: The Roots of the Presidency
  - Read: Article 2 of Constitution prior to class
  - Listen: Washington Post podcast “Presidential” episode Andrew Jackson
  - **Discussion Question**: What contents of Article 2 surprised you? What was surprising about what it doesn’t say?

- **Tuesday September 25**: Envisioning the Presidency - Ellis CH. 1
  - **Discussion Question**: How far have we strayed from the Founders’ conception of the executive? What are the theories about how this development occurred?
  - Overview of Neustadt’s thesis

- **Thursday September 30**: Presidential Power and Political Science
  - **Discussion Question**: What are the political resources for leadership? What impact do presidents’ individual characteristics have on leadership? What role does management play in presidential leadership? How does the Constitution help and hinder presidents’ ability to assert influence over government?

- **Tuesday October 2**: No Class - Take Home Writing Assignment
  - Short Writing Assignment 1 - The Many Meanings of Presidential Leadership
  - Write a 2-3 page essay answering the following questions: What is presidential leadership? What institutional leadership powers does the president possess? Why do perceived powers matter?
• Thursday October 4: Evidence of the Public Demand for Presidential Leadership
  – *Discussion Question:* By what 3 criteria do voters evaluate sitting presidents? What is the most important type of presidential performance according to the author? Do you agree or disagree?

• Tuesday October 9: Presidential Leadership in Political Time - CH. 1
  – *Discussion Questions:* What are the various approaches to studying presidential leadership? What are the limitations of these approaches?

• Thursday October 11: No Class - Fall Recess

• Tuesday October 16: Presidential Leadership in Political Time - CH. 2
  – *Discussion Questions:*

• Thursday October 18: Presidential Leadership in Political Time - CH. 3
  – *Discussion Questions:*

• Tuesday October 23: Presidential Leadership in Political Time - CH. 4-5
  – *Discussion Questions:*

• Thursday October 25: Presidential Leadership in Political Time - CH. 6
  – *Discussion Questions:*

• Tuesday October 30: President and Public Opinion - Can He Tweet That? (podcast)
  – *Short Paper (Presidential leadership) Due Beginning of Class*
  – *Discussion Question:*

• Thursday November 1: Electoral College - Loomis and Schafer
  – *Discussion Question:*

• Tuesday November 6: Primary Campaign - Ellis CH. 2 (pages 57-62)
  – *Discussion Question:* How do the Democratic and Republican parties differ in their selection of nominees?

• Thursday November 8: General Campaign - Ellis CH. 2 (pages 62-72)
  – *Discussion Question:*

• Tuesday November 13: President and the Media - Obama (author) and Press Freedom
- Discussion Question: What is the role of the media in democracy? Do we even need it?

- Thursday November 18: Cohen and Kumar
  - Discussion Question: How has the role of the media changed in the modern era?
  - Professor presentation on Going Public and Going Local

- Tuesday November 20: How Presidents Get Things Done
  - Ellis CH. 6 (pages 257-266, 271-304)
  - Discussion Question:

- Thursday November 22: No Class - Thanksgiving Recess

- Tuesday November 27: How Presidents Get Things Done
  - Trump’s Risky Approach to the West Wing (short article)
  - Trump’s Shadow Cabinet (short article)
  - Do Power Struggles Make Trump a More Effective President? (podcast)
  - Discussion Question: What is similar/different about how Trump approaches the executive office?

- Thursday November 29: No Class - Take Home Writing Assignment 2
  - Short Writing Assignment 2
  - This assignment is due Sunday 12/2 by 11:59PM

- Tuesday December 4: President and Congress
  - Congress, Trump, and Russia
  - Ellis CH 4 (pages 137-145, 180-196)
  - Discussion Question:

- Thursday December 6: President and Foreign Policy
  - How America Goes to War
  - The Disturbing Paradox of Presidential Power
  - Ellis CH. 5 (pages 197-200, 241-256)

Caveat

The aforementioned weekly schedule and assignments in this course are subject to change.