

Political Science 3140: The U.S. Presidency  
Course Syllabus  
Fall 2017

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12:00-1:00, and by appointment.

### Course Introduction

The U.S. Presidency is a course for upper division students. Course prerequisites include Political Science 1100, and the ability to write a grammatically correct and analytically coherent university level research paper. Nonmajors are welcome in the course.

The course will focus most essentially on leadership and the exercise of political power by U.S. presidents. The course will be primarily empirical and analytical rather than normative. We will devote most class days to lectures and class discussions emphasizing the contemporary presidency. About 6 class days will be allocated to a Presidential Fantasy Draft Competition. This competition will engage students in historical research, teamwork, and strategic decision making.

Lecture, reading, and class discussion topics will include: the constitutional powers of the president, leadership in empires going back to the Romans, the modern presidency, presidential nominations and elections, the 2016 elections, presidential election debates, presidential campaign strategy, the vice presidency, personality and presidential leadership, the media and presidential leadership, Congress and presidential leadership, the Executive Branch, and future challenges for presidents.

The Fantasy Draft Competition will begin in mid October and continue through November. In this competition, I will divide the class into four teams of students and each team will draft a roster of presidents that will be evaluated on the basis of several criteria. Each student will be graded partly on the basis of how well their team performs in the competition. Details of the Fantasy Draft Competition are explained on the third page of the syllabus.

### Course Learning Objectives

1. To give students an overview of the constitutional theories of presidential power and the evolution of the office over time.
2. To consider modern theories of U.S. presidential leadership and to foster appreciation of the burdens on modern presidents and the complexity of modern leadership.
3. To examine the presidential nominating process and presidential elections.
4. To stimulate critical and independent thinking about the U.S. Presidency and the president's role in the U.S. political system.
5. To engage students in strategic decision making as a part of a team.

### Canvas

The course syllabus, course reading assignments other than the text, exam study questions,

and other course information will be available on the Canvas.

## Readings

One text, *Politics of the Presidency* 9<sup>th</sup> ed., by Joseph Pika and others, is required for purchase. It is available in the USU Bookstore. There are also required, supplemental reading assignments, taken from sources such as *Atlantic*. In the course outline, reading assignments from the text appear as chapter numbers. The supplementary readings are listed by title. The supplementary readings can be accessed through Canvas by clicking on “Files” and then on “Readings.” I may add one short, additional reading assignment to those listed in the syllabus.

## Exams

The course has 2 exams. Each will account for 25% (50 points) of each course grade. You will need to buy a large (8"x11") “blue” (standard examination) book for each essay exam. The exams consist of both short answer and longer essay questions, and will emphasize conceptual analysis and logic, not the memorization of facts.

### Exam Dates and Missed Exams Policy

Midterm Exam	Wed., October 11 or Friday, October 13, in class
Final Exam:	Wed., December 13, 11:30-12:20

The Midterm will cover course lectures through October 11-13, *Politics of the Presidency* ch. 1 and 3, “Would the Framers Approve of the Modern Presidency?” and “Apparent Perfection.” The Final Exam will cover lectures after October 11-13, *Politics of the Presidency*, ch. 2, and ch. 4-7, and *The Presidents Club*, 475-503.”

Students will not be permitted to take early exams under any circumstances. Students who miss an exam as the result of required participation in a university activity, a death in the immediate family, hospitalization, or a comparable personal emergency, will be given a make up exam. Students who miss an exam for other reasons--such as the weddings of friends, car problems, or alarm clock failures--will fail the exam missed. If a student misses an exam and does not contact me within 24 hours, I will presume there is no justification for a make up exam, and unless there are extraordinary circumstances, this will result in the student failing the missed exam.

## Exam Preparation

I will distribute exam study questions 7-10 days prior to each exam. The questions will cover both lectures and readings, and each exam will be based entirely on that group of study questions. Although exam questions will not be taken verbatim from study questions, they will cover the same material. I strongly recommend that students reserve sufficient time prior to each exam to outline a complete answer for each study question, and to work together in groups with the questions.

## Paper

Each student will write a 1250-1750 word research paper on a president selected by the

student's team in the Presidential Fantasy Draft. These papers will be integral to the competition between the teams. Each paper will account for 25% (50 points) of each course grade. I will provide a detailed explanation of the assignment in October. The paper will be due Friday, Nov. 3.

### Presidential Fantasy Draft Competition

Team participation in the Presidential Fantasy Draft Competition will account for 25% (50 points) of each student's grade, with grade insurance provided to students who land on a team that does not fare well in the competition. The competition is designed to encourage research, thinking, and discussion about effective presidential leadership. It also puts students in a position where they will be required to make a number of strategic decisions as part of a team, something presidents must face every day in the White House.

We will divide the class into four teams of seven or eight students each for the Draft Competition. On Monday, October 16, each team will draft a roster of either seven or eight presidents—one for each team member. Members of each team will be assigned to a team president through a lottery. Each student will then write a paper on their assigned president, assessing the president as a candidate in the fantasy draft competition.

There will be five rounds of competition, each accounting for a proportion of each team's overall score and grade. The five rounds of competition are likely to be: 1) leadership and accomplishments of the team's presidential roster taken as a whole; 2) the most Machiavellian president; 3) the least narcissist president; 4) the president most closely resembling a successful Roman Emperor; 5) the president whose opponent deserved most to be elected.

### Presidential Fantasy Draft Grade Insurance

Students who attend class faithfully and who consistently remain *engaged* in the Presidential Fantasy Draft Competition, will never receive a Fantasy Draft grade lower than their average grade on the exams and the paper, regardless of what their team grade in the competition may be.

### Course Grading Policies

In Political Science 3140 grading, certain students do not receive special consideration for any reason. Although teams can earn bonus points Presidential Fantasy Draft Competition, there will no extra credit otherwise. In addition, there are no grade quotas, and overall course grade distributions vary from semester to semester. Students who at least 90% of the time attend class, pay attention, take notes, complete reading assignments, and study diligently for exams usually receive course grades of "A" or "B." Unfortunately in a typical semester, 20-40% of the class fails to attain this 90% effort standard, and most of these individuals receive "C," "D," or "F" grades.

Many students find the exam grading standards in P.S. 3140 to be quite rigorous. Please do not conclude that college instructors establish their grading standards to make students feel inferior, or to intimidate them. We simply want you to prepare you for careers in which you will be required to think logically and to write intelligibly. The "grading standards" that you will encounter in your postgraduate careers will be far more rigorous than the grading standards in Political Science 3140.

## Exam Grading Criteria

1. Responsiveness to the assignment: addressing the questions that have been asked
2. Command of information: demonstrated knowledge of the relevant concepts and facts.
3. Analysis: putting concepts and facts in logical cause-and-effect relationships.
4. Specificity: presenting concepts and facts exactly.
5. Organization: clarity and coherence of the overall essay.

I strongly encourage students to meet with me to question the evaluation of an exam or a paper, or to seek further explanation of the reasons for a grade, or to get advice about how to improve in the future. I ask, however, you do so as soon as possible after an exam is returned to you, as I can do much more to help you if you come to me sooner rather than later.

## Tape Recording and Laptop Computers

The tape recording of lectures is not permitted. Occasionally I will make exceptions to this policy for a disabled student. Students can use laptop computers in P.S. 3410 only for note taking and only with the instructor's approval.

## Classroom Civility

Regrettably, a small minority of USU students demonstrate insensitivity to other students and to instructors by disrupting classes unnecessarily. Students who repeatedly demonstrate insensitivity to others by disrupting P.S. 3140 will receive one firm warning, and will be dismissed from class permanently if they cause any further problem.

## Disabled Students

Students with disabilities that are likely require accommodation by the instructor must contact the instructor and document the disability through the Disability Resource Center during the first week of classes. Requests for special consideration must be approved by the instructor.

## Course Outline

I may deviate from this outline. I have reorganized the course since last year.

Week	Lecture Topics	Readings
August 28- Sept. 1	The Presidency in P.S. 1100 What is a Good President?	
Sept 6-8	What is a Good President? The Constitutional Debate Over the Presidency	Chapter 1
Sept 11-15	Three Constitutional Theories of Presidential Executive Power	

*Marbury v. Madison*

Sept 18-22	The Leadership of Empires: The Roman Emperors, Machiavelli, Winston Churchill	
Sept. 25-29	The Modern Presidency: Impossible Burdens	“Would the Framers Approve of the Modern Presidency?”
Oct. 2-6	Five Modern Theories of Modern Presidential Leadership	Chapter 3
Oct. 9-13	The Modern Presidency: JFK	“Apparent Perfection”
Oct 16-19	The Presidential Fantasy Draft Presidential Nominations I: Candidates Presidential Nominations II: The Formal Process	Chapter 2
Oct. 23-27	Presidential Nominations III: The Invisible Primary and the Early Primaries The Electoral College	
Oct. 30- Nov. 3	General Election Strategy The 2016 Presidential Election	
Nov. 6-10	Personality in Presidential Leadership The Vice President	Chapter 4 “I Wrote <i>The Art of the Deal</i> ” <i>The Presidents Club</i> , 475-503.
Nov. 13-17	Presidential Fantasy Draft Presentations	
Nov. 20	Presidential Fantasy Draft Presentations	
Nov. 27- Dec. 1	Congress and Presidential Leadership, The Executive Branch	Chapter 5 Chapter 6
Dec. 4-8	The Media and the Presidency The President and Economic Policy The Future of the Presidency and Possible Reforms: The Nominating Process, The Electoral College, and the 22 <sup>nd</sup> Amendment	Chapter 7



