

HIS 2131A/B The Presidency in American History

**Department of History
The University of Western Ontario
Fall/Winter 2011/2012**

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Course Outline:

The President of the United States is the single most influential figure within the American government. In times of economic, political and military crisis, Americans look to their president for strong leadership. At the same time, the seeming expansion of presidential power that accompanies this quest for guidance leads to concerns among some that the executive branch of the United States government is becoming too large and infringing on Americans' basic rights. This tension between the need for a strong centralized authority to guide the American people and their concern that it not infringe excessively upon their individual liberties has been present since the founding of the Republic and has been integral in the development of the presidency.

When the United States Constitution was written, it provided a broad outline of the powers and duties of the president, but left considerable leeway for individual presidents and future events to mold the executive office. This course will highlight the major developments that have shaped the idea of presidential power in American history, including some of the debates about the proper definition of executive authority and the institutional changes that have followed as successive presidents have used the office to advance their particular visions of what the United States represents both at home and in the world.

It traces the evolution of the presidency from its early days, when the president played a less dominant role in the affairs of the nation to the modern era, when the president became the main symbol of the American government. It will explore the various roles presidents have come to play in the history of the United States including Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, steward of the public welfare, chief diplomat and popular celebrity. It considers the impact of phenomena like "Manifest Destiny," the Civil War, the Progressive Era, the Great Depression, the rise of the United States as a world power and the Vietnam War on the expansion and contraction of presidential power, while assessing how they have contributed to the political environment the current president finds himself in today.

Outcomes:

Upon completing the course, students will be able to:

- Identify and describe key figures, events and trends that have defined the American presidency
- Connect present day issues to historical events and place them in a broader historical context.
- Discuss, from a historical perspective, contemporary issues that facing the President of the United States

Course Requirements:

Midterm Exam 40%

Final Exam 60%

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

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PLAGIARISM

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either

by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of Publication and page number. Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writer's ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source; these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction, your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases, in their suspension from the University.

MEDICAL ACCOMMODATION

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Please go to https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_accommodations_link_for_OOR.pdf to read about the University's policy on medical accommodation. Please go to <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medicalform.pdf> to download the necessary form. In the event of illness, you should contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible. The Academic Counsellors will determine, in consultation with the student, whether or not accommodation is warranted. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once a decision has been made about accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for term tests, assignments, and exams.

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact, Rebecca Dashford, Undergraduate Program Advisor, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84962 or rdashfo@uwo.ca