

The Presidency in American History

Department of History, Western University

History 2131B, Winter 2015

Tuesdays: 1:30-3:30

UCC-37

Office Hours: Tuesday 11:00-1:30

or by appointment

Professor Shauna Devine

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Course Description:

Article II of the United States Constitution says that the president will be vested with “executive power,” will be commander in chief of the nation’s military forces, and have the power to make treaties and appoint judges and executive officers with the advice and consent of the Senate. “He shall from time to time give to the Congress information on the State of the Union” and recommend measures for the legislature’s consideration. The President shall also receive ambassadors and will “take care that the Laws be faithfully executed.” The Framers of the Constitution otherwise had almost nothing to say about what the president would do or what qualities the person should have to fulfill the office.

The presidency is, however, perhaps the most original feature of the Constitution, and the president has long justified presidential programs in constitutional terms by consistently linking policies and agendas with the first principles, even as the office attempted to infuse new meaning into the institution. The Constitution of 1787 provided a broad outline of powers, leaving considerable leeway for individual presidents and future events to shape the executive office. During the last two centuries, some presidents have adopted a strict interpretation of the Constitution while others have made a powerful case for a broad construction, creating congressional as well as presidential partisans. Within this context, this course examines the origins of the American presidency, the development of this office and how it has taken shape during the more than two centuries of its existence. We will examine what has remained constant (due to constitutional design) and the innovations leading to the development of the modern presidency.

But the major change in office did not only arise from the development of bureaucracy in the White House. What the president actually did mattered most. Throughout most of American history the presidency has been much more than a simple instrument of executive power. Many presidents have contributed to the most significant shifts in public policy, political ideology and even social and cultural roles in the life of the country. And yet as Arthur Schlesinger Jr. warned decades ago, with the rise of presidential dominance the executive office could perhaps overstep reasonable limits of power leading to an “imperial” presidency. With the development of heightened partisanship, some presidents have indeed been increasingly accused of non-democratic and unconstitutional governance, ignoring the will of the people and abusing executive power. This course will consider the expanding role of the president in response to

national and world pressures and key historical events including the Constitutional Convention, the expansion of democracy, slavery, political and presidential parties, Civil War, the impact of the Progressive Era, the expansion of the importance and power of the president domestically and internationally, the presidency and war, the constitutional balance of power between the legislative and executive branches, the Great Depression, Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam, the Watergate Scandal, the War on Terrorism, NSA surveillance scandal, concluding with an assessment of the Obama administration.

The office of the presidency is distinct from individual presidents, so while each president will be examined, those that have had a larger impact on the office and events will be given greater attention. The approach is chronological but within it certain themes, which have critically shaped the office will be emphasized.

Eras:

Early Republic
Jacksonian Democracy
Sectional Conflict
Gilded Age
Progressive Era
Depression and World Conflict
Social Change and Soviet Relations
Globalization

General Themes:

Statements of Administration Policy
Presidents and Congress
Presidents and Foreign Policy
Presidential Cabinets
Presidents and Wars and the Military
Campaigns and Elections
Presidential and Political Parties
Presidents and Society
Presidents and National Security
Office of the Vice President

Course Learning Outcomes and Objectives:

1. Students will identify and analyze the main events, trends, persons and development of the Office of the Presidency from the Early Republic to Globalization.
2. Students will demonstrate competence in using historical methods to research, speak and write about the history and institution of the American presidency.
3. Students will demonstrate understanding of the presidency, public policy and political history.
4. Students will develop critical thinking ability through the examination of primary and secondary sources.

5. Students will develop historical and political understanding of the American Presidency through lectures, reading, writing and discussion of the primary themes.
6. Students will develop communication competence through class discussion of the course readings and critical essay writing.

A list of lecture topics and reading assignments for each week follow below.

Required Text:

Sidney M. Milkis and Michael Nelson, *The American Presidency: Origins and Development, 1776-2001*, 6th ed. (Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 2012)

Michael Nelson (ed.), *The Evolving Presidency: Landmark Documents, 1787-2008*, 3rd edition (Washington: CQ Press, 2008).

Required Readings:

(See lecture schedule).

Recommended Reading:

Louis L. Gould, *The Modern Presidency* (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2003)

Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 2005)

On-line Resources:

Please see OWL for a complete list of on-line resources along with some general articles of interest.

The American Presidency Project: www.presidency.ucsb.edu/index.php

Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress:
www.thepresidency.org/publications/presidential-studies-quarterly

Miller Center: millercenter.org/

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/>

<http://www.archives.gov/presidential-libraries/>

Course Requirements:

Short Research Paper (20%)

Mid-term Exam (30%)

Final Exam (50%)

General Information:

The presidency in American history is a very engaging subject, particularly during this critical period in American politics. It is my personal goal that students both enjoy the course and be engaged with the material. I strongly encourage students to meet with me during office hours, after class or contact me via e-mail if you have any questions or would like clarification on any of the issues that we discuss in class. My aim is to facilitate a positive and productive learning environment and my hope is that students will gain a solid understanding of the American presidency and its history, the Constitution, key political developments and contemporary U.S. politics and government.

Lecture Attendance:

Students are expected to attend each lecture and complete the assigned readings before each class. The lectures will offer valuable information, which cannot be obtained from the readings. Students who do not attend regularly cannot expect to do well in the course. Although there are no tutorials, we shall endeavor to have a discussion each week in which students are strongly encouraged to participate.

February Midterm Exam (30%):

There will be a two-hour exam during the February midterm period. This will consist of short answer as well as essay questions. This will cover the first part of the course only, including lectures, discussions and readings. No aids are permitted (i.e. notes, phones, calculators, computers etc.) There will be a midterm review in class during week six of the course.

Short Research Paper (20%):

You will be asked to analyze primary and secondary documents evaluating the foreign and/or domestic policies of the American president of your choice. Your analysis should be 6-8 pages in length, and written in proper scholarly format (including notes and bibliography). Further information to follow in class. **(Due Date: March 10, 2015).**

Essays should be submitted no later than 11:59 pm via OWL.

April Final Exam (50%):

You will have a two hour exam during the April exam period. The exam will consist of short answer as well as essay questions covering material from the second part of the course only, although you are encouraged to consider the themes and broad issues from the entire course. No aids are permitted. There will be a final exam review during week fourteen of the course.

Academic Accommodation on Medical Grounds:

Academic accommodation on medical grounds can in most cases only be granted if supported by a University of Western Ontario Student Medical Certificate.

This form can be accessed at the following website:

https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_document.pdf or be picked up at the Academic Counseling Office in the students home faculty.

Further details may be found at:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

If, on medical or compassionate grounds, you are unable to meet your academic responsibilities, i.e., unable to write term tests or final examinations or complete course work by the due date, you should follow the instructions listed below. You should understand that academic accommodation will not be granted automatically on request. You must demonstrate that there are compelling medical or compassionate grounds that can be documented before academic accommodation will be considered. Read the instructions carefully. In all cases, action must be taken at the earliest possible opportunity, preferably prior to the scheduled examination, test or assignment.

1. Inform the instructor prior to the date of the scheduled time of the test or examination or due date of the assignment. If you are unable to contact the instructor, leave a message for him/her at the department office.
2. Bring your request for accommodation to the Academic Counselling Office, Room 2105, Social Science Centre, telephone 519 661-2011 or fax 519 661-3384. Be prepared to submit documentation of your difficulties.
3. Rewriting tests or examinations or having the value of the test or examination reweighted on a retroactive basis is not permitted.

Midterm Exams:

1. If you are unable to write a term test, inform your instructor (preferably prior to the scheduled date of the test). If the instructor is not available, leave a message for him/her at the department office.
2. Be prepared, if requested by the instructor, to provide supporting documentation. Submit your documentation to the Academic Counselling Office.
3. Make arrangements with your professor to reschedule the test.
4. The Academic Counselling Office will contact your instructor to confirm your documentation.

Final Examinations:

1. You require the permission of the Dean, the instructor, and the Chair of the department in question to write a special final examination.
2. If you are unable to write a final examination, contact the Academic Counselling Office in the first instance to request permission to write a special final examination and to obtain the necessary form. You must also contact your instructor at this time. If your instructor is not available, leave a message for him/her at the department office.
3. Be prepared to provide the Academic Counselling Office and your instructor with supporting documentation (see below for information on documentation).
4. You must ensure that the Special Examination form has been signed by the instructor and Department Chair and that the form is returned to the Academic Counselling Office for approval without delay.

Short Absences:

If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outlines for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate.

Extended Absences:

If you are absent more than approximately two weeks or if you get too far behind to catch up, you should consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses. This must be done by the appropriate deadlines. (Refer to the Registrar's website for official dates.) The Academic Counsellors can help you to consider the alternatives. At your request, they can also keep your instructors informed of your difficulties.

Documentation:

Personal Illness: If you consulted Student Health Services regarding your illness or personal problem, you should complete a Records Release Form allowing them to notify Academic Counselling (the form is available in the Academic Counselling Office, 2105). Once your documentation has been assessed, the academic counsellor will inform your instructor that academic accommodation is warranted. If you were seen by an off-campus doctor, obtain a certificate from his/her office at the time of your visit. The off-campus medical certificate form must be used.

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medicalform.pdf>. The doctor must provide verification of the severity of the illness for the period in question. Notes stating "For Medical Reasons" are not considered sufficient.

In Case of Serious Illness of a Family Member: Obtain a medical certificate from the family member's physician. **In Case of a Death:** Obtain a copy of the newspaper notice, death certificate or documentation provided by the funeral director. . **For Other**

Extenuating Circumstances: If you are not sure what documentation to provide, ask an Academic Counsellor.

Academic Concerns:

You need to know if your instructor has a policy on late penalties, missed tests, etc. This information may be included on the course outline. If not, ask your instructor. You should also be aware of attendance requirements in courses such as Business and English. You can be debarred from writing the final examination if your attendance is not satisfactory. If you are in academic difficulty, check the minimum requirements for progression in your program. If in doubt, see your Academic Counsellor.

If you are registered in Social Science courses but registered in another faculty (e.g., Arts or Science), you should immediately consult the Academic Counselling Office in your home faculty for instructions

Course Lectures:

January 6: Course Introduction

The American Revolution; Forging a National Republic; Constitutional Convention; Opposition and Ratification

Readings:

Milkis and Nelson, Chapter One
Nelson, pp. 1-14.

January 13: The Development of the American Presidency

The Early Republic: The Presidencies of George Washington and John Adams; The Early Vice Presidency

Readings:

Milkis and Nelson: Chapters two-three; 487-489.
Nelson, pp. 15-68.

January 20: The Triumph of Jeffersonianism:

The Jeffersonian Era

Readings:

Milkis and Nelson: Chapter Four
Nelson, pp. 69-80.

January 27: The Politics of Jacksonian America:

Manifest Destiny and Expansionism, The Peculiar South? The Slavery Controversy and the Twilight of the Jacksonian Presidency

Readings:

Milkis and Nelson: Chapter Five
Nelson, pp. 86-94.

February 3: The Crisis of the Union

Abraham Lincoln and Disunion; Two Societies at War, 1861-1865; Prerogative Power during the Civil War; Presidential Reconstruction; The Congressional Reconstruction Plan.

Class discussion of the mid-term.

Readings:

Milkis and Nelson: Chapter Six
Nelson, pp. 95-110.

Week of February 9-13

Mid-term (30% of final grade)

February 16-20, 2015

Reading Week, No Class.

February 24: The Presidents of the Late Nineteenth Century

Reconstruction Reversed: Andrew Johnson and Ulysses S. Grant

Theories of Presidential Power: James Garfield, Chester Arthur, Grover Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison; The Vice Presidency in the Nineteenth Century

Readings:

Milkis and Nelson: Chapter Seven; pp. 490-492.

Nelson, pp. 111-125.

March 3: Expansion and Intervention: Progressive Politics, Executive Power and the Emergence of the Modern Presidency

William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, William Taft, Woodrow Wilson

Readings:

Milkis and Nelson: Chapter Eight

Nelson, pp. 126-137.

March 10: The Modern Presidency Recedes

Warren Harding to Herbert Hoover

Readings:

Milkis and Nelson: Chapter Nine

The Vice Presidency: Political Status of the Office Evaluated

Milkis and Nelson: pp. 493-496.

Nelson, pp. 138-148.

******Short Essay Due**** (worth 20% of the final grade)**

March 17: The Modern Presidency Revives and Grows

Franklin D. Roosevelt to Dwight Eisenhower; The Twenty-second Amendment

Readings:

Milkis and Nelson: Chapter Ten

Nelson, pp. 149-176; 187-189.

March 24: Personalizing the Presidency

The emergence of presidential celebrity and its effect on the institution:

John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson

The Modern Presidency Under Siege:

Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford

Readings:

Milkis and Nelson: Chapter Eleven

Nelson, pp. 190-248.

March 31:

The Modern Presidency in a Republican Era:

Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush

Perils of the Modern Presidency:

Bill Clinton

The Modern Vice Presidency

Readings:

Milkis and Nelson: Chapter Twelve-Thirteen; 497-510.

Nelson, pp. 249-254; 265-282.

April 7:

George W. Bush:

The 2000 Election, War on Terror, The Bush Doctrine (2002), “Unitary Executive Theory”

Barack Obama and the Dilemma of Modern Presidential Leadership:

“Change comes to America”; Red vs. Blue?; The President and National Security
Barack Obama Evaluated: difficulties of globalization, terrorism, environmental change and health care reform

Readings:

Milkis and Nelson: Chapters 14-15

Nelson, pp. 283-312.

Discussion of the Final exam.

Final Exam Period: April 11-30, 2015.

**THE UNIVERSITY
OF WESTERN
ONTARIO
FACULTY OF
SOCIAL SCIENCE
PLAGIARISM**

In writing scholarly papers, you must keep firmly in mind the need to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged borrowing of another writer's words or ideas. Different forms of writing require different types of acknowledgement. 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.

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Adopted by the Council of the Faculty of Social Science, October, 1970. Revised after consultation with Department of History, August 13, 1991

General Information

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1. Check the course outline to see if the instructor has a policy for missed tests, examinations, late assignments or attendance. The course outline should include the preferred method of contact (e-mail, phone, etc.).
2. Inform the instructor prior to the date of the scheduled time of the test or examination or due date of the assignment. If you are unable to contact the instructor, leave a message for him/her at the department office.

3. Bring your request for accommodation to the Academic Counselling Office, Room 2105, Social Science Centre, telephone 519 661-2011 or fax 519 661-3384. Be prepared to submit documentation of your difficulties.
4. If you decide to write a test or an examination you should be prepared to accept the mark you earn. Rewriting tests or examinations or having the value of the test or examination reweighted on a retroactive basis is not permitted.

TERM TESTS and MID-TERM EXAMS

1. If you are unable to write a term test, inform your instructor (preferably prior to the scheduled date of the test). If the instructor is not available, leave a message for him/her at the department office.
2. Be prepared, if requested by the instructor, to provide supporting documentation (see below for information on acceptable forms or documentation). Submit your documentation to the Academic Counselling Office.
3. Make arrangements with your professor to reschedule the test.
4. The Academic Counselling Office will contact your instructor to confirm your documentation.

FINAL EXAMINATIONS

1. You require the permission of the Dean, the instructor, and the Chair of the department in question to write a special final examination.
2. If you are unable to write a final examination, contact the Academic Counselling Office in the first instance to request permission to write a special final examination and to obtain the necessary form. You must also contact your instructor at this time. If your instructor is not available, leave a message for him/her at the department office.
3. Be prepared to provide the Academic Counselling Office and your instructor with supporting documentation (see below for information on documentation).
4. You must ensure that the Special Examination form has been signed by the instructor and Department Chair and that the form is returned to the Academic Counselling Office for approval without delay.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Advise the instructor if you are having problems completing the assignment on time (prior to the due date of the assignment).
2. Submit documentation to the Academic Counselling Office.
3. If you are granted an extension, establish a due date.
4. Extensions beyond the end of classes must have the consent of the instructor, the Department Chair and Dean. A Recommendation of Incomplete form must be filled out indicating the work to be completed and the date by which it is due. This form must be signed by the student, the instructor, the Department Chair, and the Dean's representative in the Academic Counselling Office.

SHORT ABSENCES

If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outlines for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate.

EXTENDED ABSENCES

If you are absent more than approximately two weeks or if you get too far behind to catch up, you should consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses. This must be done by the appropriate deadlines. (Refer to the Registrar's website for official dates.) The Academic Counsellors can help you to consider the alternatives. At your request, they can also keep your instructors informed of your difficulties.

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- **In Case of Serious Illness of a Family Member:** Obtain a medical certificate from the family member's physician.
- **In Case of a Death:** Obtain a copy of the newspaper notice, death certificate or documentation provided by the funeral director.
- **For Other Extenuating Circumstances:** If you are not sure what documentation to provide, ask an Academic Counsellor.

Note: Forged notes and certificates will be dealt with severely. To submit a forged document is a scholastic offense (see below) and you will be subject to academic sanctions.

ACADEMIC CONCERNS

- You need to know if your instructor has a policy on late penalties, missed tests, etc. This information may be included on the course outline. If not, ask your instructor.
- You should also be aware of attendance requirements in courses such as Business and English. You can be debarred from writing the final examination if your attendance is not satisfactory.
- If you are in academic difficulty, check the minimum requirements for progression in your program. If in doubt, see your Academic Counsellor.
- If you are registered in Social Science courses but registered in another faculty (e.g., Arts or Science), you should immediately consult the Academic Counselling Office in your home faculty for instructions.