Course Overview

This course covers the American presidency. After a brief overview of how we study the presidency, we explore presidential leadership of the public and the media, and leadership of others in a system of institutions sharing powers, particularly its interaction with Congress, the courts, and the bureaucracy. During the second half of the course, we will place the presidency in an historical and constitutional context, cover the presidential selection process, and underscore the inner workings of the White House and limited influence that individual presidents have on the office of the presidency. Throughout the course, we will discuss some findings of the scholarly community and apply our understanding to current events.

Course Goals

1) Evaluate the role of the presidency as a key institution in the American political system.
2) Analyze the effectiveness of presidential leadership.
3) Think critically and communicate effectively about the topics presented in this course.

Readings


Course Assignments

1. Book Review 15 %
2. First Exam 25 %
3. Final Paper 25 %
4. Second Exam 25 %
5. Class Participation 10 %
Course Policies and Procedures

Grading: Grading will follow a standard scale: 90% is an A, 80% is a B, 70% is a C, and 60% is a D. **I do not change grades unless I make a computational error.** Moreover, I do not reveal grades via e-mail or telephone and there are no opportunities for extra credit, except those mentioned herein or announced by me in class. I will submit your final grades, for view at my.unt.edu, shortly after I grade final exams. We will use blackboard (learn.unt.edu) for any quizzes, some assigned readings, and announcements.

Communications: If you have any questions about the class, please see me during my office hours or schedule an appointment to see me. E-mail directly to the address listed on the syllabus. As a reminder, I do not reveal grades or schedule makeup exams via e-mail. If you need to discuss your grade or schedule a makeup exam, you must see me in person. Finally, if you choose to e-mail me instead of speaking with me in person, it is your responsibility to check e-mail for my response.

If you do poorly on any of the assignments or exams, I advise you to see me as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to seek my help if you need it. Pleading for a higher grade after you complete all assignments and exams will not avail you.

Exams: The first and second exams will test your understanding of assigned readings and lecture material. Both exams will consist of a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. You must write answers in blue or black ink on the paper provided. As there is no comprehensive final exam, the second exam will test your understanding of all material after the first exam.

Make up exams will only be given in light of a university excused absence or at the discretion of the professor. Inform me of your absence before or within 48 hours after the examination date, either in person or by e-mail. I will need specific, written documentation to verify the nature and legitimacy of your absence. You must present this documentation to me, in person, during my office hours (or make an appointment). At that time, I will determine whether you are eligible to take a makeup exam and we will schedule a time for the exam. Except under unusual and equally verifiable circumstances, you must take the makeup exam before the next class period after the regularly scheduled exam. You will have one hour to complete the makeup exam, which consists of answering one essay question.

Research Paper: The final paper is a research paper that will address an individual president’s success regarding three major areas. You should begin thinking about your paper early, and may wish to glance ahead at a topic that you find interesting and review the bibliography at the end of an Edwards, Mayer, and Wayne chapter. Additional paper guidelines are outlined on the last pages of this syllabus. The paper must be submitted through Turnitin prior to the assignment due date.

Critical Book Review: You will write a critical book review of Predicting the Presidency. This book review should contain a brief summary of the book, including the authors’ question, the importance of the topic, the authors’ findings, and primary conclusions. You should be able to summarize the main points of the book in a concise and clear style. You do not want to go through the book
chapter by chapter, summarizing each, but rather offer a general overview, supplementing main points from the book as needed support. In addition, offer an insightful critique of the book, using logic and reason or data to back up your concerns. You might suggest if the authors accomplished what they set out to accomplish, or discuss how the book supports or disagrees with class lectures and other readings. The book review, which is due on February 15, should be four pages long, and follow the assignment style guidelines listed at the end of the syllabus. We will discuss this book at length on the review’s due date, another opportunity to score class participation points. Although I ask that a hardcopy be turned in to me for grading, the paper must be submitted through turnitin prior to the assignment due date.

**Class Participation:** An important component to this class is being able to discuss intelligently matters pertinent to the presidency and American politics. Therefore, we will incorporate a discussion of current events into most classes. I encourage you to read a quality newspaper, e.g., The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, or Washington Post or their web counterparts on a regular basis. You may also learn from radio news sources, such as National Public Radio, and television news, e.g., The News Hour. Keep in mind that class participation is worth one-tenth of your grade and it may be the difference in a letter grade.

**Attendance:** Attendance is expected, but not required for this class. Nevertheless, you must attend class to participate in class, just as you are responsible for all materials covered in class. If you miss a lecture, see a classmate for notes. I do not post PowerPoint slides for my upper level courses. Please do not be late to class, as it is disruptive to not only me, but also your classmates. Being on time and not leaving early (without express consent of the professor) are required. Persistent tardiness will result in a lower grade for the course.

**Dropping Courses:** Please link [http://registrar.unt.edu/registration/spring-registration-guide](http://registrar.unt.edu/registration/spring-registration-guide) for information concerning drops, withdraws, and other administrative information.

**Course Evaluations:** You will have an opportunity to evaluate this class at the end of the semester using SPOT. Consistent with unofficial University policy, if over 75 percent of the class completes the SPOT, each student will receive one percentage point of extra credit.

**Americans with Disabilities Act Statement:** The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at [http://www.unt.edu/oda](http://www.unt.edu/oda).
**Academic Misconduct:** Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the University Policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written admonition to a grade of “F” in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major violations. For policy and procedures: [http://facultysuccess.unt.edu/academic-integrity](http://facultysuccess.unt.edu/academic-integrity).

For more information on what constitutes plagiarism, please visit: [http://abacus.bates.edu/cbb/](http://abacus.bates.edu/cbb/)

**Emergency Notification & Procedures:** UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in an event of emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). The system sends voice messages (and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at [my.unt.edu](http://my.unt.edu). Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) ensuring you know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas, determining how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and identifying where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area suddenly. In the event of a university closure, your instructor will communicate with you through Blackboard regarding assignments, exams, field trips, and other items that may be impacted by the closure.

**Acceptable Student Behavior:** Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr). In short, please be considerate of others.

**Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, & Assault:** UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

UNT’s Dean of Students’ website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their needs: [http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/sexual-misconduct/reporting-sexual-misconduct#4](http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/sexual-misconduct/reporting-sexual-misconduct#4). Contact via e-mail SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by phone 940-565-2648.

**Course Materials and Copyright Statement:** The handouts, which include all materials generated for this class, are copyrighted. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless I expressly grant permission.
**Course Schedule**

**INTRODUCTION**

Week One, January 16: Introduction and Studying the Presidency
Read: Edwards, Mayer, and Wayne, Chapter 1; Appendix A

Week Two, January 23: The President and the Public
Read: Edwards, Mayer, and Wayne, chapters 5 and 6

Week Three, January 30: The President and the Media
Read: Edwards, Mayer, and Wayne, chapter 7

Week Four, February 6: The President and Congress
Read: Edwards, Mayer, and Wayne, chapter 11

Week Five, February 13: Predicting the Presidency
Read: Edwards, *Predicting the Presidency*
February 15: Book Review, Due

Week Six, February 20: The President and the Courts
Read: Edwards, Mayer, and Wayne, chapter 12

Week Seven, February 27: The President and the Bureaucracy
Read: Edwards, Mayer, and Wayne, chapter 10

Week Eight, March 6: The President and Unilateral Action, Exam Review

March 8 Exam 1 in class

March 12-16 Spring Break, No Classes
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<th>Week Nine, March 20:</th>
<th>The Constitutional Presidency and Presidential Power</th>
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<tr>
<td>Read:</td>
<td>Edwards, Mayer, and Wayne, chapter 2</td>
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<th>Week Ten, March 27:</th>
<th>Presidential Leadership in Historical Context</th>
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<th>Week Eleven, April 3:</th>
<th>Presidential Nominations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Read:</td>
<td>Edwards, Mayer, and Wayne, chapter 3</td>
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<th>Week Twelve, April 10:</th>
<th>Presidential Elections</th>
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<td>Read:</td>
<td>Edwards, Mayer, and Wayne, chapter 4</td>
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<th>Week Thirteen, April 17:</th>
<th>Presidential Decision Making</th>
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<tr>
<td>Read:</td>
<td>Edwards, Mayer, and Wayne, chapter 9</td>
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<th>Week Fourteen, April 24:</th>
<th>The Institutional Presidency</th>
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<td>Read:</td>
<td>Edwards, Mayer, and Wayne, chapter 8</td>
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**Trump Readings**

April 26, No Class, Research Paper Workday

May 1 | Final Paper due

May 3: Course Review

May 10 | Exam 2, at 8am

**Assignment: Research Paper**

The purpose of this paper is for students to learn more about the many explanations related to presidential leadership and success. To do this, choose one US President (likely since Eisenhower) and analyze the president’s success in at least three areas. This could include the president’s success leading the public, media, and Congress (focusing on a specific instance in each), or the paper could focus on presidential leadership of Congress, explaining the president’s success in three separate
instances. The idea is for you to underscore your understanding of a key area of the literature and support a hypothesis with data from a specific presidency. For example, you may choose to test the hypothesis that presidential success in Congress is driven by party control of Congress. You would review the literature that has already provided support for this hypothesis, and then you would find specific evidence from a single presidency. You could demonstrate support for this hypothesis by illustrating, for example, that President Obama was more successful on a major initiative in his first year in office rather than in his fifth year given differences in party control of Congress.

The paper should be organized in the following way. Aside from an introduction that will cleverly and concisely introduce your paper topic as well as its importance, you should build a survey of the available literature, answering “what we know” about your topic. The next section will develop a hypothesis, effectively applying “what we know” to your president of choice. Further, explain why you chose the president you have chosen, paying particular attention as to why this president will help you to test your hypothesis. The penultimate section of the paper will analyze your data across your three instances. The ultimate and concluding section of the paper will reflect on why you found what you expected to find, why (or why not), how your results fit into the literature you reviewed and, perhaps, what other questions might future scholarship attempt to answer.

The research paper is an 8 to 10-page paper. Please see “paper guidelines” for spacing and format issues. You must use at least 8 peer-reviewed sources to complete this paper. (This means you must cite and incorporate them within the paper!) Peer-reviewed sources are scholarly works, such as university press books or journal articles, on the presidency and American politics. To learn about your president and your cases, Congressional Quarterly Almanac is highly recommended. Your paper MUST include at least four journal articles from The American Journal of Political Science, American Political Science Review, Journal of Politics, Political Research Quarterly, Presidential Studies Quarterly, or Congress and the Presidency. Although in some instances, quality periodicals such as the National Journal or The New York Times may supplement your research, they do not count toward the 8-source minimum. Wikipedia is not a peer-reviewed source. Avoid them. If you are unsure as to what counts as a peer-reviewed source, please ask.

Please use APSA citation style: http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPSA.html

The first step to writing a good paper is organization. Use headings. Headings will allow you to break up a lengthy paper into several smaller papers. This will also make writing easier, especially if you have not yet written an 8 to 10 page paper in college.

**Paper Guidelines:**

1. The paper must be typed and double-spaced in 12-point font (in the ballpark of Times New Roman or Garamond), and with one-inch margins.

2. All papers must include a title page. A title page contains the following information: The title of the paper, your name, and the date.

3. The title page, references, or endnotes do not count toward the paper’s page total.
4. You must staple each paper in the upper left-hand corner, and number all pages except the title page. No other binding, please.

5. Please use appropriate headings which not only break up a lengthy paper into several shorter papers, they are also nice visual cues for the reader. And you want the reader to be pleased with your paper.

ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE AS ASSIGNED, IN HARD COPY, AND ARE ONLY ACCEPTED LATE AT 10 PERCENT PER CALENDAR DAY LATE. If I do not have your paper by the deadline, it is late. I do not accept e-mailed paper assignments.

Paper Grading
I will grade your book review on the following criteria:

1. Adherence to “paper guidelines,” or paper’s overall presentation (10 points)
2. Paper organization and writing: a well-organized and written paper is a good paper (25 points)
3. References: incorporating 8 peer-reviewed sources into your research paper (15 points)
4. Research: ask a thoughtful question, integrate your sources into your research paper, discuss them accurately, frame a hypothesis, test it, and raise criticisms and questions (50 points)

An A paper, for example, will follow the paper guidelines almost perfectly; will be well-organized with a clear introduction (tell me what you are going to discuss) and thesis (your research question or topic), body (tell me), and conclusion (tell me again); will be well-written with minimal grammatical and spelling mistakes; and will be researched well, integrating all eight sources into a coherent, interesting, and clear argument that stays focused on your thesis.

You will not receive an A if you rely too heavily on one source, cite less than the minimum sources, do not organize your paper well, or do not write well.