

**POLS 2998 – Making the Modern American Presidency
Fall 2019**

Course
UTEB 175
T,TH: 12:30-1:45p
Web Page: <http://lms.uconn.edu>

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This course is designed to introduce undergraduates to several historical developments that have contributed to the Making of the Modern American Presidency. First, we will explore all of the first 31 Presidents (up to FDR) as well as analyze the origins and development of the office of the presidency. Second, we will address a number of specific electoral, institutional, and policy issues prior to the modern presidency. The running theme will be a better understanding of presidential power as well as a better understanding of the configuration, opportunities, and limitations of the pre-modern presidency. Finally, the course will address fundamental questions concerning the relationship between the presidency and American democracy.

Throughout the semester, we will use examples drawn from the entire span of United States history to empirically demonstrate the concepts discussed – but, the primary focus will be on pre-1932 American politics. As such, there is significant attention paid to applying historical materials and case studies. The approach is designed to also give students a broad overview of the constitutional, political, and policy debates that have influenced American presidency history since the founding of the country.

Together, students should develop a firm understanding of a number of theoretical concepts typically employed in presidential studies as well as an ability to use empirical examples to demonstrate the theories. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, students should be able to ask critical questions about the presidency, the development of American democracy, and the relationship between them.

Texts

The following texts are required, and the reading assignments for this course are essential. Any student who intends to do well will find the readings indispensable. Because you are responsible for all the assigned material, I strongly recommend a thorough and timely reading of all assignments. I will not, however, highlight all the important points in the books and articles.

- Milkis, Sidney and Michael Nelson. 2019. *The American Presidency: Origins and Development, 1776-2018*, 8th edition. CQ Press. (ISBN: 9781544323121)
- Nelson, Michael, ed. 2015. *The Evolving Presidency: Landmark Documents*, 6th edition. CQ Press. (ISBN: 9781544323169)
- Divine, Robert A., et al. 2013. *The American Story* (Combined Volume), 5th edition. Pearson. (ISBN: 9780134057019)
- Additional readings posted on HuskyCT.
- Various websites – see Appendix for some suggestions.
- NOTE: If you plan on taking the second semester of this course, these same books are required.

Requirements

Your grade will be based on textbook quizzes, discussion posts, and exams.

The Textbooks Quizzes (TQs) test the information from the *American Stories* textbook. They are meant to ensure an overarching understanding of the historical context for the American presidency. There is one quiz for each of the 22 assigned chapter. Each quiz has 10 randomly selected questions from a larger question bank; each question is worth 2 points. The TQs, thus, are worth 440 total points. Further details can be found below and on HuskyCT.

The Discussion Posts (DP) ask each student to develop a short and precise argument about an assigned topic from the course. They are meant to ensure that you can integrate the various course material into a cogent argument about the American presidency. Overall, there are 2 required DPs assignments each is worth 80 points. The DPs, thus, are worth 160 total points. Further details can be found below and on HuskyCT.

The Exams will be in-class and will consist of multiple-choice questions that address the subjects covered in the preceding section of the course. Exam details will be provided in advance of each exam, but they are meant to test the understanding of the lectures, the presidential theories, and the other assigned readings – in particular the Milkis & Nelson textbook as well as the Nelson reader. Each of the two Exams is worth 200 points. The two exams, thus, are worth 400 total points. Further details can be found below and on HuskyCT.

The grade distribution is thus:

Course Components	Total Points	Total Weight
TQs	440	44%
DPs	160	16%
Exams	400	40%

There is a total of 1000 points for the course and final grades will be calculated as follows:

A : 925-1000 points.
A-: 900-924 points.
B+: 875-899 points.
B : 825-874 points.
B-: 800-824 points.
C+: 775-799 points.
C : 725-774 points.
C-: 700-724 points.
D+: 675-699 points.
D : 625-674 points.
D-: 600-624 points.
F : below 600 points.

The best way to perform well in this course is to attend and be prepared for each class. The exams and papers will consist of material that may only be addressed in the assigned readings or only in lecture. If you choose to skip a reading or a class, you will likely have a more difficult time with the exams. Additionally, I encourage discussion and debate in class and on the HuskyCT discussion board. Participation (in-class *and* online) will improve your knowledge of the material, and marginal final grades of active students will be given a second consideration.

Course Requirements: Details

Textbook Quizzes

The Textbook Quizzes (TQs) on HuskyCT test student's comprehension of the chapters of the Divine, et al textbook. There is 1 quiz for each of the 22 required chapters. Each TQ consists of 10 multiple-choice questions randomly chosen from a large test bank. Each correct answer earns 2 points toward your final point total.

Each TQ is to be taken individually and independently. You may, though, refer to the chapter during the quiz. You will have 10 minutes to take each TQ; after 10 minutes, the TQ will automatically be submitted.

- There is a total of 440 total TQ points in the course.
- The TQs for each section of the course are due by the time of the respective exam. Specifically:
 - By the First Exam on October 17th by 12:30pm: Chapters 4-14.
 - By the Second Exam on F.E.D. (tba): Chapters 15-25.
- There are three recommended, but NOT required, Chapters #1-3 in Divine, et al. For each of these, I will offer a TQ with 10 questions, worth 1 extra credit point each, for a total of 30 extra credit points.
 - By the First Exam on October 17th by 12:30pm: Chapters 1-3.
- I recommend, though, that you do not wait until the deadlines.

Discussion Posts

The Discussion Posts (DPs) interactions on HuskyCT will require each student to “blindly” post an initial original answer to a provided question. “Blindly” means that each student will not be able to see any of the other student's posts until she has posted her initial answer. Then, each student is required to post a response to at least one other's student's initial post. These can be anything related to the content: questions, additional thoughts, debates, etc. Each set of posts (initial and response) is worth 80 points toward the final point total for the class. The grading rubric is provided on the course webpage.

The initial original post should be about 400 words in length (at the bottom of your original post write “Words: 400” – or, however many words are in your essay). The best posts will weave together and cite various course materials into a creative and thoughtful argument. It may be easier to craft your initial original post in a word processing program and then cut & paste it into the Discussion Board

Each DP is to be written individually and independently. You may, and are of course encouraged, to make wide use of the relevant course material.

- There is a total of 160 DP points in the course.
- The DP for each section of the course are due by the time of the respective exam. Specifically:
 - The DP #1 deadline is released on October 1st at 12:00am, and is due October 17th by 12:30pm.
 - The DP #2 is released on November 1st at 12:00am, and is due at the start of the final exam (tba).
- I recommend, though, that you do not wait until the deadlines.

Exams

The 2 Exams in class will consist of about 40 multiple-choice that address the subjects covered in the corresponding section of the course—particularly the parts not directly covered in the other assignments. That is, each of the 2 Exams will primarily cover the required the lectures, the Nelson, ed. (be prepared to recognize each reading by, at least, the author’s last name), the Milkis and Nelson textbook, as well as any additional posted readings. The questions also tend to be more conceptual in nature than the TQs or the DHQs. As such, some will find the exams more challenging than the quizzes. Each Exam is worth 200 points.

Each Exam is closed notes, books, internet, etc.

- There is a total of 400 total Exam points in the course.
- They are scheduled for:
 - First Exam on October 17th at 12:30pm.
 - Second Exam on the F.E.D. (tba)

Administrative Policies

There will be no make-up assignments for unexcused absences and late assignments will not be accepted. An absence is excused only in the case of an emergency; documentation is required. You are responsible for providing the documentation and arranging alternative plans.

Academic dishonesty is not tolerated. I will deal with it, should it occur, in the swiftest possible manner allowed by University regulations. UConn provides definitions and examples of plagiarism, the judicial process, and your rights. I strongly recommend that you review this information.

See: <http://lib.uconn.edu/help/writing/plagiarism-resources/>
http://web.uconn.edu/irc/PlagiarismModule/intro_m.htm

For discrimination and sexual harassment policies,

See: <http://policy.uconn.edu/?p=2884>
<http://sexualviolence.uconn.edu/>

Finally, we are here to facilitate your learning. I encourage you to take advantage of the course by keeping up with the readings, visiting the web site, thinking about the material, and discussing it in class, with me, with the TA, and with your colleagues.

Course Outline

- Week 1 & 2 Introduction
- Divine et al, Chapters 1-3. (recommended).
- (Pre) Constitution and Ratification
- *Declaration of Independence*. Posted online.
 - *Articles of Confederation*. Posted online.
 - Milkis and Nelson, Chapters 1-2.
 - Milkis and Nelson, *U.S. Constitution*: Articles I through VII. In the Appendix.
 - Milkis and Nelson, *U.S. Constitution*: Amendments I - X. In the Appendix.
 - Nelson, ed., Documents #1-4.
 - Divine et al, Chapters 4-6.
- Week 3 & 4 The Federalists
- Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 3.
 - Milkis and Nelson, *U.S. Constitution*: Amendment XI. In the Appendix.
 - Nelson, ed., Documents #5-8.
 - Divine et al, Chapter 7.
- Week 5 The Jeffersonians
- Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 4.
 - Milkis and Nelson, *U.S. Constitution*: Amendment XII. In the Appendix.
 - Nelson, ed., Documents #9-12.
 - Divine et al, Chapter 8.
- Week 6 The Jacksonians and Whigs
- Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 5.
 - Nelson, ed., Documents #13-14.
 - Divine et al, Chapters 9-14.
- Week 7 Presidential Powers: Formal and Character
- Calabresi, Steven G., and Christopher S. Yoo. 1997. "The Unitary Executive During the First Half-Century." *Case Western Reserve Law Review* 47 (4): 1451-1562.
 - Nelson, Michael. "The Psychological Presidency" in Michael Nelson, ed. *The Presidency and the Political System*, 10th edition. CQ Press. Posted online.
- Week 8 First Exam
- October 17th: First Exam.**

- Week 9 & 10 Lincoln Era
- Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 6.
 - Milkis and Nelson, *U.S. Constitution: Amendments XIII - XV*. In the Appendix.
 - Nelson, ed., Documents #15-20.
 - Divine et al., Chapters 15-16.
- Week 11 National Republicans and Democrats
- Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 7.
 - Nelson, ed., Documents #21-22.
 - Divine et al, Chapters 17-19.
- Week 12 & 13 Realignments of 1890s
- Burnham, Walter Dean. 1981. "The System of 1896: An Analysis." In Paul Kleppner, ed. *The Evolution of American Electoral Systems*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. Posted Online.
 - Divine et al, Chapters 20-21.
- Progressives vs. Conservatives
- Milkis and Nelson, Chapters 8 and 9.
 - Milkis and Nelson, *U.S. Constitution: Amendments XVI - XIX*. In the Appendix.
 - Nelson, ed., Documents #23-25.
 - Divine et al, Chapters 22-25.
- Week 14 Thanksgiving Break
- Week 15 Presidential Power: Political Time and Informal
- Skowronek, Stephen. "The Development of Presidential Power: Conservative Insurgency and Constitutional Construction." in Michael Nelson, ed. *The Presidency and the Political System*, 9th edition. CQ Press. Posted online.
 - Tulis, Jeffrey. "The Two Constitutional Presidency" in Michael Nelson, ed. *The Presidency and the Political System*, 10th edition. CQ Press. Posted online.
- Week 16 Final Exam
- F.E.D. (tba): Second Exam.**

Appendix

Some useful website for your presidential briefs – among other things.

<http://millercenter.org>

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>

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

<http://www.ipl.org/div/potus/>

<http://uselectionatlas.org>

<http://www.biography.com/tv/classroom/us-presidents-in-order>