

**POLS 4850**  
**Seminar: Presidential Leadership**



Fall 2017  
Monday, 3:10-6:00  
139 A&S

Jim King  
jking@uwyo.edu  
Office: 327 A&S, 766-6239  
Office hours: 11:00-12:00 Monday  
11:00-12:00 & 1:00-3:00 Wednesday  
and by appointment

*“Thus, the president has two types of power:  
formal, the ability to command, and informal, the ability to persuade.”\**

This seminar examines various facets of presidential leadership within the American political system with the goal of understanding better the American governmental system in its contemporary setting. The framers of the Constitution may not have envisioned the modern presidency, but we live in the modern world and must consider the presidency in its present context. While we will examine the leadership styles and abilities of contemporary presidents, our interest is not whether George W. Bush or Barack Obama was a good president. Our interests are in the tools of leadership available to presidents and what lessons about leadership

---

\* Michael A. Genovese, *The Presidential Dilemma: Leadership in the American System* 2d ed. (New York: Longman Publishers, 2003), p. 53.

can be learned from various presidents with an eye to understanding what is necessary for presidents to achieve their goals.

POLS 4850 fulfills the Writing 3 (WC) requirement of the 2003 University Studies program and the Communications 3 (COM3) requirement of the 2015 University Studies programs. Advanced writing and communication courses provide students with opportunities to refine further ability to communicate with academic or professional audiences through writing. In such courses, students receive instruction about writing that includes the effective use of revision and editing processes to produce written work that conforms to written standards in a discipline and/or interdisciplinary field. Students engage in a substantial writing component that requires the use of appropriate research skills in order to address issues in a discipline and/or an interdisciplinary field. These courses also help students to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the manner in which writing responds to the needs and purposes of different audiences within a discipline or other professional contexts.

## **Texts**

Students are expected to obtain and read the following texts:

- Greenstein, Fred I. 2009. *The Presidential Difference: Leadership Style from FDR to Barack Obama* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Paper. ISBN: 9780691143835)
- Edwards, George C., III. 2009. *The Strategic President: Persuasion and Opportunity in Presidential Leadership*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Paper. ISBN: 9780691154367)
- Hargrove, Erwin C. 1998. *The President as Leader: Appealing to the Better Angels of Our Nature*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas. (Paper. ISBN: 9780700609963)

Additional readings are provided on the course website or will be distributed in class.

## **Grading**

Students will be evaluated on four criteria:

1. *Class Participation*. Each student is expected to come to class prepared to discuss the day's assignments. Being "prepared" means knowing the principal theme of each reading, whether the analysis presented supports the author's conclusions, and, most importantly, how this particular scholarly piece helps us understand presidential leadership. Simply attending class regularly is *not* sufficient. If necessary, I will call on specific individuals and question them about the reading assignments. I prefer, however, to have students participate voluntarily. Everyone benefits more from the class through focused discussion than from question-and-answer periods.

2. *Research Paper*. This course satisfies the third-level writing requirement under the University Studies program (WC or COM3), which requires a 20-page research paper that is revised following comments from the instructor. The research paper will be developed in stages

through a series of short papers reflecting class materials. The final paper is a compilation and integration of the short papers (revised appropriately) into a complete manuscript.

Each undergraduate student will research and analyze presidential leadership on a policy decision or policy area. In general, the assignment is to provide a comparative analysis of:

- a) the leadership of a president concerning two policy decisions (or broad policy areas), or
- b) the leadership of two presidents that focuses on a particular policy area.

Presidents whose leadership may be analyzed are those holding the between office 1945 and 2016: Harry S. Truman through Barack Obama. The analysis (assignments 2-5) should involve an application of course materials to the chosen policy decision/area. It is possible that a president did not use a particular tool of leadership in advance a specific policy. In those instances, the discussion should focus on why the particular tool was not appropriate in that instance or on how the president might have advanced his agenda by using a tool of leadership he chose not to employ.

- **Assignment #1 – Introduction** (4-5 pages). Provide backgrounds of the president(s) whose leadership will be analyzed and the policy decisions that will be the focus of your analysis. Why was there a need for policy change? What were the president's goals? What was the final outcome, that is, what changes in policy resulted from the president's leadership? Or were there no policy changes? *Due date: October 2*
- **Assignment #2 – Leadership of public opinion** (4-6 pages). How did the president attempt to direct public opinion on this question? All circumstances are different. In some instances the president is trying to raise public awareness of a problem and potential solutions (for example, George W. Bush's efforts to arouse public concern for the "axis of evil"). In other instances, the president attempts to change public opinion to conform to his preferences (for example, George W. Bush's efforts in 2005 to promote his proposal to reform Social Security). *Due date: October 30*
- **Assignment #3 – Working with Congress** (4-6 pages). How did the president attempt to gain the support of Congress? Was he successful or unsuccessful in getting Congress to enact his proposals? What factors explain the president's success/failure? *Due date: November 13*
- **Assignment #4 – Unilateral president action** (4-6 pages). Did the president attempt to achieve his goals (or some of his goals) through unilateral action? If so, why did he employ this strategy? What form of unilateral action did the president employ? Was the strategy successful? If the president did not attempt to achieve his goals through unilateral action, why not? *Due date: December 4*
- **Assignment #5 – Final paper: Analysis and lessons for future presidents** (≈20 pages). The ultimate goal of any analysis is to be instructive: What can we learn from the past to help us in the future? What lessons can be taken away from these cases of presidential leadership to help future presidents? What are the avenues to success? What are the obstacles to avoid? The final paper combines the first four papers into a comprehensive and coherent analysis of the president's/presidents' leadership on the selected policy decisions that concludes with an assessment the

president's/presidents' success at providing leadership and highlights the lessons learned about presidential leadership from the analysis. A word of caution: Assignment #5 is more than tacking together the first four papers and adding a conclusion. You must *integrate* the previous papers and conclusion into a coherent, well-presented paper. ***Due date: Finals Week.***

Class papers are to be submitted electronically as Word documents. The file name used includes the class number, the student's last name and the assignment number: **4850 Smith paper 1** Papers must be sent in Word format via email to [jking@uwyo.edu](mailto:jking@uwyo.edu).

Reminder: In this class students are expected to behave as *political scientists*, not politicians. That is, you are to analyze how presidents provide leadership and the extent to which they are successful in achieving their goals. You are not to commend or to condemn a particular president or a particular president's policies based on partisanship. Whether you agree or disagree with the goal of the policy or believe the policy benefited or harmed the nation is irrelevant. You are an analyst of the policy-making process. Identifying what worked in advancing ideas in the past provides clues to what will work in the future. A strategy for avoiding the trap of becoming an advocate for a president or policy rather than an analyst is to select as your subjects a president (or presidents) and policy (or policies) with which you have no emotional attachment. It is easier to analyze how a president conducted the office when you do not hold an opinion about whether the person was a good or bad president or about whether a president's policies reflected wisdom or folly.

3. *Group presentation.* Class members will be divided in groups of three or four students with each group making a presentation on the topic: "What advice do you give the president for achieving a policy agenda?" Rather than specific policies, the focus of the presentations is the general advice your group would give a president about achieving a policy agenda in light of what you have learned in this class. The objective is to have you come full circle as students: learn new material, use that knowledge to explain past events, and use that knowledge to develop strategies for achieving presidential goals in the future.

Course grades for undergraduates will reflect the following weighting of the assignments:

1. Class Participation                      45 percent
2. Research paper                            50 percent (5% each assignments 1-4, 30% assignment 5)
3. Group presentation                        5 percent

All assignments must be completed to receive credit for the course. Any student who does not participate in class discussions, does not submit a research paper, or does not participate in the group presentation will receive a failing grade for the course.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated and will result in a grade of "F" for the course. Anyone uncertain about what constitutes academic dishonesty or the accompanying penalties should consult University Regulation 6-802 or the Political Science

Department's policy (<http://www.uwyo.edu/pols/courses/index.html> and click on "Department Academic Dishonesty Policy").

## Disability Statement

If you have a physical, learning, sensory or psychological disability and require accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. You will need to register with, and possibly provide documentation of your disability to Disability Support Services (DSS), room 109 Knight Hall. You may also contact DSS at (307) 766-3073 or [udss@uwyo.edu](mailto:udss@uwyo.edu). Visit the DSS website for more information: [www.uwyo.edu/udss](http://www.uwyo.edu/udss).

## Final thoughts

The presidency evokes strong opinions (or perhaps more accurately, certain presidents evoke strong opinions). Class discussion will be conducted on a professional basis. All students are expected to discuss the presidency and presidents as *political scientists*, not as partisans. Additionally, respect for others' opinions, either intellectual (related to points of discussion) or political (related to presidents), are to be respected. Be respectful of others and they will be respectful of you. Be disrespectful of others and you must deal with me.

The only prerequisite for this course is POLS 1000. Students are expected to have a basic understanding of the American political system and the American presidency. Excellent texts on the U.S. presidency include:

- Cronin, Thomas E., Michael A. Genovese, and Meena Bose. 2018. *The Paradoxes of the American Presidency* 5<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Edwards, George C., III, and Stephen J. Wayne. 2013. *Presidential Leadership* 9<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Cengage/Wadsworth.
- Pika, Joseph A., and John Anthony Maltese. 2014. *The Politics of the Presidency* revised 8<sup>th</sup> edition Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press.

All of these have been published in earlier editions; any is appropriate for background information. Please see me if additional sources or references would be helpful.

The first book assigned for the class, Fred Greenstein's *The Presidential Difference: Leadership Style from FDR to Barack Obama*, provides background information on individual presidents and their administrations appropriate for the first writing assignment.\*

---

\* Another recent book that achieves a similar purpose and can provide background material for students' papers, is Erwin C. Hargrove, *The Effective Presidency: Lessons on Leadership from John F. Kennedy to Barack Obama* 2d edition (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2014).

## Weekly Topics and Readings

- Assigned textbook
- Available on the WyoCourses page for POLS 4850/5850
- ✓ Written assignment due

### Week 1

September 11 Leadership by Modern Presidents: FDR to Obama

- Greenstein, *The Presidential Difference* (all).

### Week 2

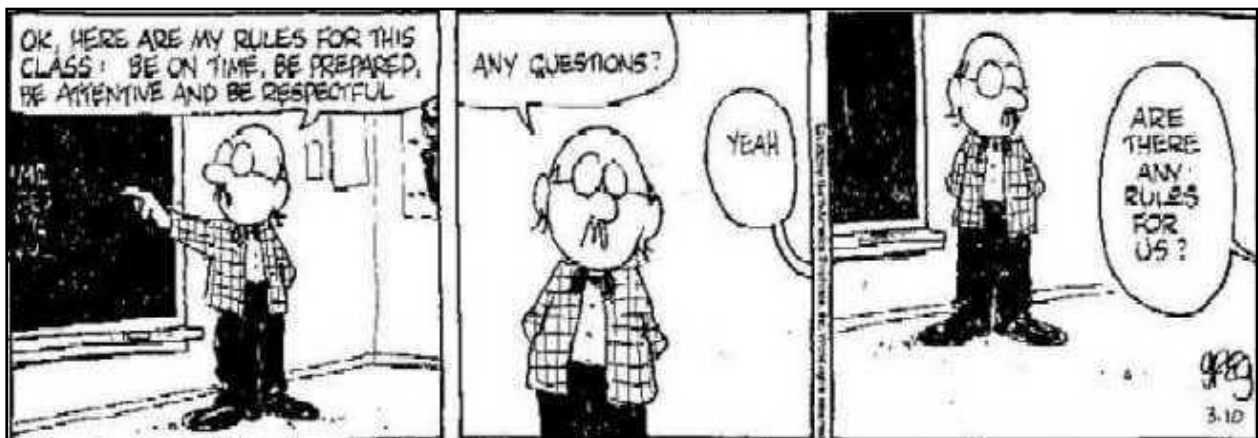
September 18 Writing workshop: Selecting cases for analysis in the research project and expectations of professional writing.

- No reading assignment

### Week 3

September 25 The Classic Theory of Presidential Power

- Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1960).<sup>\*</sup> Neustadt provided several updates of his book (1964, 1968, 1980, 1990), always leaving intact the original text while adding commentary on later presidents and changes in the presidency. Our interest is in the original theory, presented in chapters 1-8 of the original and subsequent editions. Focus your attention on chapters 1, 3, and 7, as these contain the principal elements of Neustadt's theory. In particular, do not get bogged down in the case studies of chapter 2. These are ancient history for today's students and a detailed knowledge of them is not necessary.



---

<sup>\*</sup> Copies of Neustadt's book are also on reserve in Coe Library under POLS 4850.

- Week 4  
October 2 Presidential Lies and Their Consequences
- James P. Pfiffner, "Presidential Lies," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29 (December 1999): 903-917.
  - James P. Pfiffner, *The Character Factor: How We Judge America's Presidents* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M Press, 2004), chapter 6.
  - ✓ **Undergraduate assignment #1 due**
- Week 5  
October 9 The Popular Factor: Mandates and Public Opinion
- Charles O. Jones, *The Presidency in a Separate System* 2d ed. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2005), chapters 4 & 5.
- Week 6  
October 16 Can a President Lead Public Opinion?
- Edwards, *The Strategic President*, chapters 1-3
- Week 7  
October 23 Presidential Leadership and Congress I
- Jon R. Bond and Richard Fleisher, *The President in the Legislative Arena* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), chapters 1-4 and 7.
  - Edwards, *The Strategic President*, chapters 4-5
- Week 8  
October 30 Presidential Leadership and Congress II
- Continued discussion of readings for October 23
  - ✓ **Undergraduate assignment #2 due**
- Week 9  
November 6 Unilateral Presidential Action: Leadership or Usurpation?
- William G. Howell, "Unilateral Powers: A Brief Overview," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 35 (September 2005): 417-439.
  - Adam L. Warber, "Public Outreach, Executive Orders, and the Unilateral Presidency," *Congress and the Presidency* 41 (#3, 2014): 269-288.
- Week 10  
November 13 Preparation for student presentations: Expectations for the assignment, designation of group membership, and initial consideration of arguments to be presented.
- No reading assignment
  - ✓ **Undergraduate assignment #3 due**

Week 11

November 20 Preparation for student presentations: Continued group work on presentations  
➤ No reading assignment

Week 12

November 27 What Makes a Good Leader?  
• Hargrove, *The President as Leader* (all).

Week 13

December 4 **Group presentations I:** “What advice do you give the president-elect preparing to take office?”  
✓ **Undergraduate assignment #4 due**

Week 14

December 11 **Group presentations II:** “What advice do you give the president-elect preparing to take office?”

Week 15

Finals week **Final papers (assignment #5) due** (on day designated by the Registrar for the final exam for this class)

