



POLS

4111

Spring 2025

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY (4111 CRN: 5436)

Time: TR 11⁰⁰am to 12¹⁵pm; Location: 216 Young Hall; Credit: 3 hours

Professor: Carl Cavalli; Office: 338 Hansford Hall

Phone: 706-864-1872; E-mail: carl.cavalli@ung.edu

Office Hours: TWR 1⁰⁰-2⁰⁰; MW 3⁰⁰-4³⁰, or by email or appointment

On some great and glorious day the plain folks of the land will reach their heart's desire at last and the White House will be adorned by a downright moron.
-H.L. Mencken

Course Description:

Prerequisite: POLS 1101

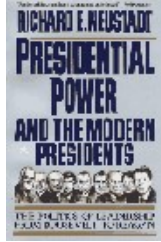
This course analyzes the role and function of the American Presidency. The objective is to provide both a historical and analytical perspective, asking "What was the presidency intended to be?" and "How has it evolved?", as well as a contemporary view, asking "What is the presidency today?"

Required Readings:

Texts:



Nelson, Michael (ed). 2021. *The Presidency and the Political System*, 12th Ed.



Neustadt, Richard E. 1990. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*.



Cavalli, Carl. 2006. *Presidential Legislative Activity*.

Web Sites:



Google News/Politics

<https://news.google.com/news/section?q=Politics>

POLITICO

<https://www.politico.com/search?q=presidency&s=newest>

(We will likely also use several other sites as article sources)

Online: *The Federalist*, Nos. 67-77 (LXVII to LXXVII) (<https://guides.loc.gov/federalist-papers/full-text>)

ONLINE: Home – <http://faculty.ung.edu/ccavalli/4111.htm>, D2L (“eLearning”) – <https://ung.view.usg.edu>, Turnitin – <http://turnitin.com>

Course Objectives and Format:

Outcomes: Students will acquire an understanding of the **history and structure** of the presidency, understand the processes by which the President directs the **administration of law**, and understand presidents’ **behaviors** as a function of their goals and environmental constraints.

This is a hybrid course which will meet part of the week, with online activities filling out the week. We will use *D2L* online (also known as *eLearning*), but I like to keep things simple. We will not use any “modules”, etc. Unless otherwise noted, all activity and communication will take place via the announcement and discussion sections. In class, we will engage in as much **discussion** possible. To that end, *you need to read the assignments before their due date*. Be able to *discuss* and answer *questions* about them. The texts lay out the basics. We will start each new topic (see Schedule) with the appropriate readings. We will examine past and current presidential/executive activities to get a “current” view. Therefore, you must also *stay informed* of the progress of these events. We will follow current events mainly as covered in the *Google News* (<https://news.google.com/news/section?q=Politics>) web site.

In addition to assigned readings, we will review *Google News/Politics* articles (or ones from other sources) most weeks. *You will present* and lead **discussions** of these online. Together, we will select articles that complement class topics¹. So in a real sense, you will help shape course content! Of course, you **all** are responsible for **all** assigned articles, text, and any other materials. In presenting articles, I would like you each to assume a particular role (e.g., presidential advisors, members of Congress, the press). This helps us gain particular insights into different perspectives on presidential issues. A list of roles appears at the end of this syllabus.

For **most weeks** (see Schedule), the class meets **Tuesdays only**. **Online discussion replaces most Thursday classes:** We will begin new topics and readings *after* each Tuesday class. You are **required** to post comments on that material to our D2L (“eLearning”) discussion site. You are **required** to post at least one **substantive response** (1. *not* just “I liked...”, or “I didn’t like” or similar words; 2. *analytical*, not judgmental) to notes I will post on D2L each week *and* at least one **substantive original comment**. Treat online discussions as required readings – you are responsible for and may be tested on them. There may be videos to view, or other activities assigned as part of these discussions.

Exams	Written exercises	Other		90+ = A
Exam #1	15% Bibliography/Outline	5% Online Discussions		80 to 89 = B
Exam #2	15% Project	10% ...including role playing		70 to 79 = C
Final	15% Presentation	10% ...and general participation	20%	60 to 69 = D
	Revision	10%		Grand Total:
Total:	45%	35%	20%	100%

There are **two ‘mid-term’ exams and a final**. Each is 15% of your grade. They consist of three essay questions. A few days *before* the exam, I will give you five essay questions. On the *day* of the exam, I will select three of these questions for you to answer. *Please do not miss exams* (you know *our* schedule *now*, so plan *your* schedule well ahead). *I will not give makeups unless you 1) notify me or the department in advance (no exceptions); and 2) verify a family/medical emergency in writing.* **Note:** I will *not* give any makeups *after* the graded exams are *handed back* in class. An **individual or group project** of 12+-21+ pages (depending on group size), due no later than *April 25th*, is another 10% of your grade. The format and topics are covered on our web site, but you must consult me before proceeding. To prepare you for the project, an **annotated bibliography** is due by *April 3rd*, and an **annotated outline** is due by *April 11th*. Together, these are worth 5% of your grade. A **revision** worth 10% of your grade is due *during the last two weeks* (see schedule). *Do not turn in late papers!* If I accept them (and I may not!), you will lose either 5% or 1 point of your paper grade (whichever is *greater*) for each *day* late. Your **online posts** are another 20% of your grade. Finally, a **presentation** of your project during the last two weeks is another 10%.

I do not **grade** on a curve (You earn what you earn...*I hope* you all earn “A”s!). A typical class average is about a mid- to upper-“C” (“C” is *average* — *not* below average...“B” is *above* average). Just completing the requirements most likely earns a “C” (70-79). “B” (80-89) requires effort *beyond* just requirements. “A” (90-100) requires *extraordinary* performance. *Notes on “attendance”:* 1. The

¹ Each week, we will select articles for discussion for the *following* week’s class. Links to articles will be posted in the appropriate D2L discussion topic.

UNG attendance policy (see the latest UNG Student Handbook, or Bulletin) applies to this course; 2. Any D2L announcements are considered sufficient notice. So, attendance matters, and please check your email and D2L often.

Course Schedule:

Legend: **Nelson** = *The Presidency and the Political System*, 12th ed.; **Neustadt** = *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*; **Cavalli** = *Presidential Legislative Activity*. **Numbers** following the names are chapters. **Other names** refer to articles. **Articles** = Google News articles (selected in class—see <http://faculty.ung.edu/ccavalli/4111.htm>). Items in **Bold type** are activities or assignments. *Italicized* items are videos. **Outside content** **Exams**

Tuesday class: Class discussion, articles, videos		Outside: D2L discussion due noon Monday	
1/14	Introduction ("Hello, my name is...")	1/16	Refresher lecture ; <i>West Wing</i> excerpt; Drop/Add ends Friday
1/21	Lecture (cont'd); Why Study the Presidency?— Nelson 2	1/23	Framers— Nelson 1 ; Neustadt 1 ; <i>Federalist 67-77</i>
1/28	<i>Federalist 67-77</i> (cont'd); <i>Liberty!</i> episode VI excerpt		Outside Power: Elements— Nelson 3 ; Neustadt 2 ; Cavalli 1
2/04	Discussion; RP (role playing) articles; Exam questions		Outside Power: Psychology— Nelson 5, 6
2/11	—Exam #1 (material through 2/04)—		Outside Power: Persuasion— Neustadt 3 ; Cavalli 2, 3
2/18	Discussion; RP articles		Outside Power: Reputation/Prestige— Neustadt 4, 5
2/25	Discussion; RP articles		Outside Power: Choice— Neustadt 6 ; Cavalli 7 ; Cavalli 2015
3/04	Discussion; RP articles; Exam questions		Outside Politics: Media— Nelson 9, 10 ; Withdrawal deadline Friday
3/10-14	—Spring Break: Beaches! Bikinis!! Beer!!!...Hangovers! Headaches!! Home!!!—		
3/18	<i>Press Secretary</i> ; Discussion; RP articles		Outside Politics: Groups, Parties— Nelson 11, 12
3/25	—Exam #2 (material through 3/18)—		Outside Government: Executive— Nelson 13, 14 ; Neustadt 7
4/01	<i>The Presidents' Gatekeepers</i> ; Project Workshop		Outside Government: Congress— Nelson 15 ; Cavalli 8 ; Bibliog. due Friday 5pm
4/08	Discussion; RP articles; Project Workshop		Outside Conclusion I— Nelson 18 ; Cavalli 9, 10 ; Outline due Friday 5pm
4/15	<i>Trump's Takeover</i> ; Discussion; RP articles		Outside Conclusion II— Neustadt 10, 12 ; Cavalli 2013
4/22	Discussion; RP articles; Presentations (if needed)		Outside Present. (if needed) ; Concl. III— Neustadt art. ; Project due Friday 5pm
4/29	Presentations	5/01	Presentations ; All Project Revisions due Monday 5/5, 8pm
Cancellations: we will pick up where we left off—and add Thursday classes if needed. Final Exam: Tuesday, 5/06, 10:20am-12:20pm			

POLS 4111 Roles:

Article presentations and other class discussions will use *Socratic Dialogues*, requiring class members to assume various roles during discussions.

What is a Socratic Dialogue? The Socratic Dialogue format uses role playing, hypothetical case studies, and a roving inquisitor to compel panelists to confront what they would do in situations where the "right" choice is not clear. The question "What would you do?" is different from "What do you think?" in that it drives a participant to reveal how he or she would confront a specific problem. The exercise is designed to identify the perceptions and decision-making processes of all sides and to enable participants to better understand both their own positions and the imperatives driving others' actions. As panelists wrestle with the hypothetical situations, the drama created helps illuminate complex issues in an enlightening way. [Viewer's Guide, Beyond Black and White: Affirmative Action in America. 1999. PBS. [WWWdocument]. URL <http://www.pbs.org/pov/tvraceinitiative/beyondblackandwhite/viewer.html#socratic>]

Executive Branch	Legislative Branch		Outside Actors
The President: Carl Cavalli	House majority Republicans	Senate majority Republicans	Interest Groups
White House Advisors	House minority Democrats	Senate minority Democrats	The Press
The Cabinet			The Public

STAY INFORMED: UNG Political Science and International Affairs on social media! Blog: <http://blog.ung.edu/psia-news/>



CHEAT = FAIL. Cheating or plagiarizing will result in an automatic zero for the exam or assignment, a zero for participation and attendance, AND forfeiture of all extra credit. At my discretion, it may ALSO result in academic integrity charges and an "F" for the course.

UNG Integrity Code: "I will not lie, cheat, steal, plagiarize, evade the truth or tolerate those that do."

All students in this class are bound by the above Integrity Code. For information on Academic Integrity as defined by UNG, see the *UNG Undergraduate Catalog* (http://catalog.ung.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=252#Academic_Integrity_Policy). See also <http://www.plagiarism.org/>.

Plagiarism in any form is a violation of UNG Academic Integrity policies and will not be tolerated:

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Use posted on the Turnitin.com site.

The use of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) is prohibited by the student code of conduct. This includes ChatGPT, Grammarly, Microsoft Copilot, and all other A.I., and applies to all written/online work.

For additional policies, see: <http://ung.edu/academic-affairs/policies-and-guidelines/supplemental-syllabus.php>

Accessibility Statement: If you need this document in another format, please email me (carl.cavalli@ung.edu) or call 706-864-1872.

Find more information here: <https://ung.edu/web-communications/web-accessibility/accessible-documents.php>



Accommodations for disabilities: <https://ung.edu/student-accessibility-services/>

The University of North Georgia is committed to equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an accommodation, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the instructor and the Office of Student Accessibility Services. In this case, contact Student Accessibility Services, in the Stewart Student Success Center, Room 233 (706-867-2782, accessibility-dah@ung.edu).