Course Overview

This honors seminar is intended as a broad survey of the literature on presidential and executive branch politics. The central focus of the course will be on the U.S. Presidency, but much of what we discuss will have direct relevance for the study of executive politics more generally. As such, we will focus on the role of the president in the U.S. political system, presidential selection, executive politics, inter-branch relations, presidential power, and executive policymaking. Throughout the course, we will pay attention to current political and scholarly controversies in terms of identifying important research questions as well as examining and improving upon existing research designs. By the end of the course, you should have a better understanding of research on the presidency.

Required Texts


Course Materials

The readings for the course will be drawn from the list of books above, in addition to scholarly articles each week. Required books are available for purchase from the usual sources or may be checked out from the library. Unless otherwise indicated, assigned articles can be downloaded from [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org) or from the UGA library ([http://www.libs.uga.edu/ejournals/](http://www.libs.uga.edu/ejournals/)). Please keep in mind that assigned readings or the course schedule may be altered at the discretion of the instructor.

General Expectations

I expect all students to behave professionally in this class. You are expected to attend class regularly, to show up on time, and be prepared to participate in discussions. You are responsible for all material in the readings and lectures, even if you are unable to attend class. It is your responsibility to remain aware of specific deadlines or dates posted on the syllabus and to be sure that assignments are completed on time.
Course Requirements and Grading

Your grade in this course will be based on the following components:

1. Attendance/Participation (20%)
2. Short Writing Assignment (10%)
3. Final Paper (20%)
4. Midterm Exam (20%)
5. Final Exam (30%)

In terms of final grades in light of the +/- grading system, an A will be given to anyone receiving 93 or more points, an A- to those receiving 90-92 points, a B+ to those receiving 87-89 points, a B to those receiving 83-86 points, a B- to those receiving 80-82 points, a C+ to those receiving 77-79 points, a C to those receiving 73-76 points, a C- to those receiving 70-72 points, a D to those receiving 60 to 69 points, and an F to anyone receiving fewer than 60 points in the course.

Attendance/Participation
Your grade in this area will be based on class attendance and the quality of your classroom participation. You are allowed one unexcused absence without penalty. After one absence, your attendance grade will be penalized unless you have a legitimate excuse for missing class. Since this is an upper division honors seminar, each student will be expected to present the assigned material and lead the class discussion at least once during the semester starting in mid-January. Students are expected to actively participate through asking questions and answering inquiries raised in class even on days they are not responsible for leading class discussion. Keep in mind that this class is a collaborative enterprise. For the seminar to be a useful learning experience, you must come to class and be prepared to participation in discussions.

Short Writing Assignment
Each student will be required to submit a short writing assignment on the day that you are responsible for leading class discussion. This assignment should briefly summarize and critically analyze the assigned readings. The paper should be approximately 2-3 pages in length in a typed, double-spaced format with one-inch margins. Be sure to spell check and read over your paper before submitting it for a grade.

Final Paper
Everyone will be required to submit a final paper near the end of the semester (more details to follow in the coming weeks). These papers should be approximately 5-7 pages in length in a typed, double-spaced format with one-inch margins. Your final grade on the project will be penalized if there are grammatical or spelling errors in the completed paper.

Exams
There will be a midterm and a final exam in this course. Exams are closed book and will include both short answer and essay questions. The final exam is cumulative and will include material covered in the class lectures and the assigned reading. A blue book will be required for each exam.

Incompletes and Make-Up Policy
A final grade of “Incomplete” will only be given in this course under exceptional circumstances and is solely at the discretion of the instructor. If an incomplete is given, it is the student’s responsibility to complete the necessary requirements as early in the following semester as possible. Legitimate excuses for absence from an exam (e.g., a university-sanctioned activity, religious holiday, medical emergency, or illness) must be accepted prior to the exam when feasible to allow a make-up to be scheduled. As a rule, late assignments will not be accepted unless approval is obtained in advance from the instructor.
**Miscellaneous**
No “extra credit” will be assigned under any circumstances. *Final grades may only be changed in the event of a clerical error* (e.g., points summed incorrectly). Keep in mind that information pertaining to course grades cannot be discussed over the telephone or via email. The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

**Instructor Availability**
If you would like to speak with me outside of class, feel free to stop by my office during scheduled office hours. Occasionally I have meetings during the day and may be unavailable. To ensure that I am in my office on a given day, email me ahead of time to set up a specific time to meet.

**Special Needs and Academic Honesty**
Students with special needs that require accommodation should notify me and the Office for Disability Services as soon as possible so the appropriate arrangements can be made. All information as well as documentation is considered confidential. All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The link to more detailed information about academic honesty can be found at: [http://www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/culture_honesty.htm](http://www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/culture_honesty.htm).

**Emergency Preparedness**
Emergencies during the course of the semester are rare, but it is important to be as prepared as possible should one occur. If the fire alarm sounds, we will exit the building and reassemble in front of Baldwin Hall to make sure everyone exited the building. If there is a tornado warning, we will move to the shelter location in the lowest level (basement) of Baldwin Hall and account for everyone. If you have concerns about other emergency scenarios or if you have special circumstances that I need to know about in case of an emergency, please speak to me after class.

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**Course Schedule** (Assigned readings are to be completed by the dates listed below.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/8</td>
<td><strong>Studying the Presidency</strong>&lt;br&gt;Howell, <em>Thinking About the Presidency</em> (pgs. 1-70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/13</td>
<td>Howell, <em>Thinking About the Presidency</em> (pgs. 71-143)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/15</td>
<td><em>No Class, Southern Political Science Association Meeting (New Orleans, LA)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1/27</td>
<td><strong>Presidential Elections</strong>&lt;br&gt;Vavreck, <em>The Message Matters</em> (pgs. 1-66)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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1/29  Vavreck, *The Message Matters* (pgs. 67-166)

2/3  **Presidential Approval**


2/10  **The President and Congress**


2/19  **The President and the Courts**


2/26  **Midterm Exam**

3/3  **The Unilateral Presidency**
Howell, *Power Without Persuasion* (pgs. 1-100)


3/10  *No Class, Spring Break*

3/12  *No Class, Spring Break*

3/17  **Presidents and the Media**


3/24  **Presidential Power and Leadership**
Cohen, *Going Local* (pgs. 1-121)

3/26  Cohen, *Going Local* (pgs. 122-222)
3/31  Presidential Rhetoric and Agenda-Setting


4/9  The “Two Presidencies”


4/16  No Class, Midwest Political Science Association Meeting (Chicago, IL)

4/21  Political Film – TBA

4/23  Political Film (cont.)
*Final Papers Due

4/28  No Class, Reading Day

4/30  Final Examination, 3:30 - 6:30 p.m.