Political Science 8150
THE U.S. PRESIDENCY
Spring 2021 (48449)
Baldwin 102
Wednesdays 3:55-6:40 p.m.

Dr. Jamie L. Carson
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Course Overview

This research 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 semester, you should have a better understanding of the nature of research on the presidency, even though it is impossible to cover all facets of the executive branch in a single graduate seminar.

Textbooks

Required:


Recommended:


Course Materials

The readings for the course will be drawn from the list of books above, in addition to several scholarly articles each week. On occasion, we may also read unpublished papers (which will generally be made available electronically). Required books are available for purchase from the usual sources or may be checked out from the library. Unless otherwise indicated, articles for a given week can be downloaded from www.jstor.org or from the UGA library (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.

Course Expectations in Light of COVID-19

Everyone has a critical role to play as we work together to protect the health and safety of every member of the Bulldog Nation. This course will be meeting in-person during the semester unless the university requires us to go online as a result of the pandemic. Check your email regularly so that you do not miss important information, and also check the University COVID-19 website for updates and resources—this website includes links from student affairs with helpful, up-to-date messages for students and parents.

Face Coverings. Like other buildings on campus, in Baldwin Hall, face coverings in all public spaces, including classrooms, are mandatory for everyone. Wearing a face covering is in addition to and not a substitute for also maintaining six feet social distancing. Anyone not using a face covering when required will be asked to wear one or must leave the area.

Keeping a Safe Distance. In all public spaces in Baldwin Hall (including stairwells, classrooms, halls, offices, bathrooms, and labs), please maintain six feet between you and others. The seating capacity in your classroom has been modified to allow for social distancing. Please sit in designated, marked seats. Do not remove signage or re-arrange furniture, even if it appears that furniture is not being used. To help maintain distance, please keep right, where possible. If you enter/exit through the front doors of Baldwin, please follow the signs (and traffic) directing you through a specific set of doors.

Do Not Congregate. If you want to spend some time chatting with someone, please take it outside or online. We are also requesting that you enter and exit Baldwin without delay, staying outside of the building as long as practicable before your class begins and then leaving once your class is finished.

Keeping it Clean. Cleaning and disinfecting of public spaces are important to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19. Classrooms are only being cleaned once-per-day. There are sanitation wipes/buckets and stands in proximity to your classroom. Prior to heading into class, you should take a wipe from the station and wipe down all high-touch surfaces associated with your seat. You should help further slow the spread of the virus by frequently washing your hands. Bathrooms will be cleaned frequently during the day. On occasions that bathrooms are closed for cleaning, you may need to use those on other floors or in other buildings. Please be conscious of the density of traffic in bathrooms and practice social distancing.

Course Evaluation

You will be required to complete a number of written assignments in this course. First, there will be three critical evaluations of the assigned readings, each for one of the weeks of the course. I would expect this to run something like 5-6 double-spaced pages. These reviews should briefly summarize, analytically synthesize, and critique the week’s literature in the particular area of emphasis. More effort and attention should be focused on analysis and criticism and comparatively less on summarization. You have some leeway in terms of when to turn in your critical evaluations, with the only restriction being that two must be completed prior to March 24th and the remaining one due before the end of the semester. The writing assignments will represent 30% of your course grade.
The other writing assignment will involve you completing a research paper on a selected topic related to the presidency by the end of the semester. These research projects will be judged by the same criteria I would apply to a paper delivered at a professional conference or one submitted to an academic journal. Your completed paper will be due on April 28th, when all students will be required to make a brief Zoom presentation. This paper will represent 40% of your overall course grade. All students will be required to turn in a brief summary of their research design in early March. I will provide more details on each of these assignments in the first few weeks of the course and I would encourage each of you to contact me as early in the semester as possible to begin planning for your research project.

The remainder of your grade (30%) will depend on your active participation in the course. On any given day, you may be asked to lead the discussion on one or more of the assigned articles or books. As such, you are expected to read all of the assigned material, to analyze it seriously, and to demonstrate that you have read and mastered that material by sharing your views and evaluations with the class (you want to understand the author’s argument, and to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the author’s theoretical framework, methodology, and substantive conclusions). If you do not do this, you will not receive a top grade in the class. Remember that this class is a collaborative enterprise. For the seminar to be a useful learning experience you must attend class and be prepared to participate in discussions. You alone are responsible for taking an active role in shaping your intellectual development and your research agenda. Both energetic and thoughtful participation in graduate seminars is a necessary step in that process.

Incompletes and Late Assignments

A survey of graduate studies directors would reveal that incompletes are one of the best predictors of failure to complete a graduate program. In addition, they cause numerous headaches for students and faculty. As such, incompletes will only be given in this course under exceptional circumstances. As a rule, late assignments will not be accepted unless approval is obtained in advance from the instructor.

Instructor Availability

If you would like to speak with me outside of class time, feel free to stop by my office (Baldwin 304B) or schedule an appointment. Keep in mind that often I have meetings during the day and may be unavailable. To ensure that I am in my office on a given day, email me (carson@uga.edu) ahead of time to set up a specific time to meet in person or via Zoom. I generally also respond quickly to email inquiries.

Academic Integrity and Special Needs

All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance of the policy is not an acceptable defense. 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.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources

- If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit https://sco.uga.edu. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services. UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga) along with crisis support or emergencies. (https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies).
- If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.
Tentative Course Schedule (Assigned readings are to be completed by the dates listed below)

**January 13 – Studying the Presidency**


**Recommended:**


**January 20 – Presidential Primaries**


**Recommended:**


January 27 – Presidents and Elections


Recommended:


February 3 – Presidents and Populism


February 10 – The Presidency as an Institution


Recommended:


February 17 – Instructional Break (No Class)

February 24 – Presidential Approval and Public Opinion


**Recommended:**


**March 3 – The President and Congress**


**Recommended:**


March 10 – Presidential Bargaining


Recommended:


March 17 – Presidents and the Judiciary


**Recommended:**


**March 24 – The Unilateral Presidency**


**Recommended:**


March 31 – Presidents and the Media


Recommended:


April 7 – Presidential Power and Leadership


Recommended:


April 14 – Presidential Rhetoric and Agenda-Setting


April 21 – Executive Branch Politics


Recommended:


April 28 – Research Presentations (Final Papers Due)