This course is best described as an introduction to applied theory. The objective is to evaluate theories of the modern presidency in the American constitutional system and apply them systematically to the institution and the individuals who have occupied the Oval Office. The course begins with an overview of formal and informal presidential power, followed by theories covering presidential elections, the growth of the presidency as an institution, public approval, presidential relations with the media, the legislative presidency and relations with Congress, and domestic and foreign policy. In the latter third of the course we will then apply these theories to individual presidents spanning Truman-George W. Bush, using case studies and empirical evidence to evaluate select topics of modern presidents’ leadership.

Books:


Select journal articles available electronically from Library West.

Determinants of Final Grade:

Attendance 10%
Participation 10%
Quizzes 10%
Paper 1 20% [Due Friday, 25 May in class]
Paper 2 25% [Due Friday, 8 June in class]
Paper 3 25% [Due Friday, 22 June in class]

Attendance/Participation:

Attendance for this course is mandatory. This means that you expected to come to class
on time each meeting and to have read the assigned material in advance.

The computation of the attendance grade is as follows: The number of times you attend the course will be divided by the number of meetings for the semester.

Participation in the course is inextricably linked to attendance. In other words, you cannot participate in the classroom discussions if you are not in attendance. Since much of our time in the course will involve discussion and interaction concerning assigned readings, you are expected to come to class having read the materials, ready to ask questions, and prepared to engage in critical analysis. If you cannot commit to this requirement, you should not enroll in this course.

**Quizzes:**

Quizzes in the course will be announced and unannounced and will typically cover readings assigned for the class meeting. Questions will typically be short-answer and are meant to show knowledge of basic themes of the readings.

**A Note on Films in the Course:**

In the last third of the class, we will see a number of films on individual presidents. The objective of these films is to complement the course readings. The films are not “optional” in terms of attendance and may be the subject of quizzes. The films come from Professor Conley’s personal collection and are not available for viewing outside the classroom.

**Written Assignments:**

1) Review of journal article on the presidency;
2) Expanded analysis of a topical debate from the Watson reader.
3) Leadership essay on a specific president.

You will be required to complete three writing assignments this semester. The first will be a 4-5 page review essay (excluding references) of a recent article in a presidency-related academic journal. The goal of this assignment is to introduce you to current research on the presidency, including methodological and theoretical debates among some of the nation's top presidency scholars. You must select a full-length article (not a review essay or research note) published within the past three years from one of the following journals: Presidential Studies Quarterly, Congress and the Presidency, or White House Studies (all three journals are available in Library West, and are accessible electronically). In your review of the article, you must assess the methodological approach and findings of the author(s). This is not a “book report”—you must do more than just report on the content of the article. You must develop a solid argument and provide a critical analysis on the strengths and weaknesses of the research. This essay should be typed, double-spaced, with appropriate citations.

The second assignment will be a 4-5 page paper (excluding bibliography) that is an expansion of the analysis of one of the debates in the Watson reader. Students should begin by looking at the “For Further Reading” sections of the “pro” and “con” for the
topic, and then complete research as appropriate. Students are expected to integrate course material as appropriate. Internet sources are not sufficient; journal articles, biographies, book chapters from edited volumes, and other scholarly sources are expected.

The third writing assignment will be a 5-page essay (excluding bibliography) in which you will define presidential leadership based on a specific event in one presidential administration. The goal of this paper is to answer the basic question: How did this particular event/policy shape this presidency? In doing so, you should clearly define presidential leadership (what it is and why it is important), and based on this particular event/policy, assess this president's leadership ability. What kind of leader was this president, and did he succeed or fail, in your opinion, in dealing with this particular issue? You must integrate material from the course readings in addition to outside sources. Internet sources are not sufficient; journal articles, biographies, book chapters from edited volumes, and other scholarly sources are expected. You must select one of the following topics:

- **Truman** – Aid to Greece/Turkey (Truman Doctrine); Marshall Plan; 1948 Campaign.
- **Kennedy** – Cuban Missile Crisis
- **Johnson** – The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution; Voting Rights Act of 1965
- **Nixon** – Visit to China; visit to Soviet Union; price control legislation
- **Ford** – Pardon of Richard Nixon; Mayaguez incident
- **Carter** – Camp David Accords; “Malaise” Speech.
- **Reagan** – First-Year Legislative Agenda; Iran/Contra; Invasion of Grenada
- **H.W. Bush** Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990; Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm
- **Clinton** – Budget Showdown, 1995/96; Welfare Reform; Impeachment
- **G.W. Bush** – 9/11; War in Afghanistan; War in Iraq; Creation of the Department of Homeland Security

Due dates for the assignments are fixed. Late papers will not be accepted. Emailing papers to Professor Conley is not acceptable, nor is turning the papers in to office staff in the Political Science Department after the deadline. Never leave assignments under Professor Conley’s door; he is not responsible for any assignments slipped under his office door (the cleaning people usually will discard them).

All written work should be double-spaced and done in standard, 12-point font. Proper citations are always required (see instructions below). Proper use of English is also expected; assignments with spelling/grammatical/syntactical errors will be marked lower. Use of the “first-person” and the active voice in your work is acceptable and encouraged rather than the use of the passive voice.

**General Criteria for Grading**

*Students who get top grades (A, B+) generally:*
--Turn in high-quality written work which reflects careful research, good planning, well-conceived arguments, originality, clarity of thought, and integration of course material, where appropriate. They stay within stated page limits. Their bibliographies are
solid and their footnotes carefully used. Their final product is typed and readable. Written
work submitted is in nearly flawless English grammar and spelling.
--Complete all assigned readings on time, and reflect this in their exams, written work,
and class participation. They review carefully and productively.
--Attend class regularly.
--Participate actively and enthusiastically in class discussions. They ask questions on a
regular basis, and their ideas are original and stimulating. They challenge the
conventional wisdom.
They summarize each author’s principal argument and their reaction to it when
discussing the course material.

Students who get middle grades (B, C+) generally:
--Turn in acceptable written work with no serious deficiencies in writing. They meet
deadlines generally. Their work is readable and typed.
--Attend class, complete the assigned readings and participate in class discussions, asking
occasional questions.

Students who get low and failing grades (C, D, E) generally:
--Do not turn in their assigned work, or turn it in late with penalty. Their work is of poor
quality and shows inadequate research, documentation, thought, and originality. It is
poorly presented (untidy and/or handwritten rather than typed).
--Complete only part of the required readings. --Do not attend class and avoid
participation. When called upon, they are obviously not familiar with the material. They
ask no questions and accept new ideas and opinions without challenging them.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Plagiarism (using someone else’s ideas without giving him proper credit) is a serious
offense. Students are expected to comply with the University of Florida’s Student Code
of Conduct. Questions should be directed to the Dean of Students Office, Judicial
Affairs.

The written assignments for this class are to be your own work. Discussing your ideas or
general approach with me, other students or faculty, revising your work in response to a
colleague’s criticism, or using words or ideas from a text or another source with proper
attribution or referencing is acceptable, and is, in fact, an important aspect of intellectual
discourse. Plagiarism and other forms of dishonesty, including the failure to cite proper
references, are unacceptable at all times. Cheating on examinations and plagiarism are
violations of the academic honesty standards of the University of Florida, will have a
serious effect upon your grade in this course, and will be referred to the appropriate
University authorities for disciplinary action.

Students with Handicaps or Special Needs

If there is any reason why you require special physical accommodation during our time in
class, please see me in confidence as soon as possible at the beginning of the course.
Every effort will be made to accommodate your needs within the guidelines set forth by
the University.
Creating a Dynamic and Rewarding Classroom Atmosphere

Much of our class time will be spent in discussion. It is therefore important that you bring your ideas and questions to class with you and share them with others. I will strive for an atmosphere in which every student participates and receives constructive and respectful response of me and other students. Through this interaction, you will strengthen your critical skills and heighten your enjoyment of the literature and we will learn from each other.

Office Hours

I keep regular office hours to ensure that I am available to assist you. I encourage you to consult with me on course readings, assignments, or any problems you may be having with the course. You may also reach me via email or by leaving a message on my office phone.

Readings Schedule

**Monday, 14 May** > Presidency & the Founding
Course introduction

**Tuesday, 15 May** > Historical Origins
Edwards/Wayne, Ch. 1.

**Wednesday, 16 May** > Presidential Elections
Edwards/Wayne, Chs. 2-3; Edwards, Ch. 2.
Watson/Freeman, Debates 6-8.

**Thursday, 17 May** > Presidential Elections
Film: Campaign Commercials

**Friday, 18 May** > Presidential Elections
Film: Campaign Commercials

**Monday, 21 May** > Public Presidency
Edwards/Wayne, Ch. 4.

**Tuesday, 22 May** > Public Presidency
Watson, Debate 18; Edwards, Ch. 7.

**Wednesday, 23 May** > Media Relations
Film: Sam Kernell, “Going Public”
Edwards/Wayne, Ch. 5; Edwards, Chs. 8-9.
Watson, Debates 10, 16.

**Thursday, 24 May** > Institutional Presidency/Executive Branch
Edwards/Wayne, Chs. 6-7, 9, 15; Edwards, Ch. 4.
Friday, 25 May > Institutional Presidency/Executive Branch
Watson, Debate 12; Edwards, Ch. 12.

Monday, 28 May > No Class – Veterans Day

Tuesday, 29 May > Congressional Relations
Edwards/Wayne, Ch. 10; Edwards, Chs. 3, 11.

Wednesday, 30 May > Congressional Relations
Watson, Debates 11, 14.

Thursday, 31 May > Judicial Relations
Edwards/Wayne, Ch. 11; Edwards, Ch. 13.
Watson, Debate 13.

Friday, 1 June > Domestic & Economic Policymaking

Monday, 4 June > Foreign & National Security Policy
Edwards/Wayne, Ch. 14.
Edwards, Ch. 5, 10.

Tuesday, 5 June > Foreign & National Security Policy
Watson, Debates 3, 4, 15.

Wednesday, 6 June > Psychological Presidency
Edwards/Wayne, Ch. 8; Edwards, Ch. 6.
Watson, Debate 17

Thursday, 7 June > Leadership Evaluation
Edwards, Ch. 1.

Friday, 8 June > Truman
Film

Monday, 11 June > Eisenhower
Film

Tuesday, 12 June > Kennedy
Film

Wednesday, 13 June > Johnson
Film

Thursday, 14 June > Nixon
Film

Friday, 15 June > Carter
Film
Monday, 18 June > Reagan
Film

Tuesday, 19 June > GHW Bush
Film

Wednesday, 20 June > Clinton
Film

Thursday, 21 June > George W. Bush
Readings TBA

Friday, 22 June > Discussion/Final Papers Due
Appendix 1

Citations for written work:

All written work for this course must contain proper references. Proper referencing is critical for exemplary analytical writing. *Students who fail to properly cite references will receive lower evaluations of their work.* The general rule for citations is that any material that is not “common knowledge” should be referenced, in addition to specific citations to direct quotations and specialized commentary/works/etc. *Do not plagiarize* (see reference in the syllabus on academic dishonesty).

The Library West web page offers excerpts of the Chicago Manual of Style that you may find helpful for common questions about proper referencing (http://web.uflib.ufl.edu). Footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical references in text (with an accompanying bibliography at the end of the paper) are ALL acceptable. However, you must choose one style and keep to it throughout your work. Footnotes place the reference at the bottom of the page; endnotes place the reference at the end of the paper; both styles are easily employed using common word processing software such as WordPerfect or Microsoft Word and will automatically number your references.

Examples of footnote/endnote references:

**Books:**

**Journal articles:**

**Articles in edited volumes** (make sure you cite the author of the article first, then the editor(s):
Newspaper articles:

Articles on the Internet/Web Pages:

Parenthetical referencing:
If you choose parenthetical (in-text) referencing, you might have the following paragraph you have written (text is from R.S. Conley, “George Bush and the 102nd Congress: The Impact of Public and ‘Private’ Veto Threats on Policy Outcomes, Presidential Studies Quarterly 33 (December 2003):

Changing institutional and electoral dynamics in Congress in the last several decades have placed greater limitations on presidents’ ability to influence roll-call outcomes. Presidents’ floor success rates have been a casualty of the interaction of split-party control of the presidency and Congress, or “divided government,” with heightened intraparty cohesion on Capitol Hill (Fleisher and Bond 2000). Recent presidents who have confronted assertive opposition majorities in Congress have adapted to these conditions by turning to a powerful tool in the bargaining process: the veto. Although critics may contend that “frequent use of the veto is difficult to reconcile with the Neustadtian imperative to govern by persuasion” (McKay 1994, p. 449), presidents’ veto success was exceptional in the closing decade of the twentieth century. President George Bush sustained twenty-eight of the twenty-nine regular vetoes he cast from 1989-92. Similarly, only one of William Clinton’s thirty-six regular vetoes was successfully challenged in Congress from 1995-2000.

At the end of the article you would give the full reference of the in-text citations. The references should be in alphabetical order by last name of the author:

References


Appendix 2  
Select Readings on Individual Presidents

Truman


Eisenhower

Kennedy

Johnson

Nixon

Carter

Reagan
GHW Bush

Clinton