

University of Arkansas – Fort Smith
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General Syllabus

PLSC 31233 The American Presidency

Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Laboratory or other types of hours: 0

Prerequisite: PLSC 27533 American National Government

Effective Catalog: 2019-20

I. Course Information

A. Catalog Description

The study of the American Presidency.

B. Additional Information

This course is an upper level course for the Minor in Political Science.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Subject Matter

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Explain the constitutional basis of the office of president.
2. Examine the contribution of presidents who have significantly changed the office over time.
3. Analyze the evolution of presidential power.
4. Appraise the political processes of presidential elections.
5. Evaluate the components of the modern executive branch.
6. Evaluate the development of presidential authority over the other branches of government.
7. Analyze the role of the modern president as a shaper of world policy.

B. University Learning Outcomes

This course enhances student abilities in the following areas:

Analytical Skills

Critical Thinking Skills

Students will analyze major issues/features related to the history, development, and exercise of the presidency.

Communication Skills (oral and written)

Students will use a formal documentation style for written presentation of research projects. Students will discuss particular aspects of the presidency in their writing and clearly articulate and defend their opinion in front of their peers as well as during the exams and through assignments.

Ethical Decision Making

Students will explore the moral quandaries that presidents face in exercising the various aspects of their functions, and interpret their meaning in everyday life.

Global and Cultural Perspectives

Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the relationship between the American presidential policy and our standing with other nations of the world.

III. Major Course Topics

- A. The constitutional basis of presidential power.
- B. Expansion of presidential powers.
- C. The relationship of the Congress to the presidency.
- D. The relationship of the Supreme Court to the presidency.
- E. Presidential elections and the Electoral College.
- F. The structure of the modern executive branch.
- G. The president and domestic policy.
- H. The president and foreign relations.