THE AMERICAN EXECUTIVE
POLS 3203
Spring 2015

Classroom: Brewster C-101
Class time: Mon. & Wed., 2 to 3:15 p.m.
Office hours: Tues., 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1 to 4 p.m.,
or by appointment

Instructor: Dr. Peter L. Francia
Office: Brewster A-101
Telephone: 252-328-6126
E-Mail: franciap@ecu.edu

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course provides a broad examination of the American presidency. It examines five major areas: (1) the historical development of the presidency and the presidential election process; (2) the influence of public opinion and the media on the presidency; (3) presidential styles and decision-making; (4) the president’s relationship with Congress and the judiciary; and (5) the president’s role in policymaking. As we cover each of these subjects, I encourage you to think critically about several important questions concerning the presidency: Why did the framers of the Constitution create an executive branch and why did they limit its power? How do presidential elections affect a president’s ability to govern? What leadership skills and personal qualities are necessary for a successful presidency? How do the media, the Congress, the courts, and the bureaucracy limit the power of the White House? What situations and circumstances provide opportunities for the president to shape and influence the policy-making process?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The general learning objective in this course is for you to gain a broad understanding of the presidency. To complete this class successfully, you will need to demonstrate factual, applied, and conceptual knowledge of the subjects covered in the course. I will expect you to be able to identify and define terms; interpret the significance of important events; apply principles to hypothetical scenarios; compare and contrast concepts; construct solutions to political problems and controversies; and assess the strengths and weaknesses of various different arguments and perspectives concerning the executive branch. Please note that I will not share my partisan affiliation to anyone in the class and pledge to present both sides of every political argument as fairly as possible. My larger and ultimate learning objective in this course is to teach each of you not what to think, but rather how to think about the issues we address in class.

READINGS


COURSE STRUCTURE

Classes begin with a lecture on the topic listed in the course outline. Everyone should come to class prepared to ask questions and to contribute to class discussions. Keeping up with the assigned weekly readings and attending class regularly throughout the semester will allow for more informed classroom discussions and for more interesting debates, as well as improve your ability to contribute to and learn from the class interactions. I also encourage everyone to read a newspaper, watch the television news, and follow current events. Doing so will broaden your interest in this course and help you better understand the importance of the material we cover. To incorporate visual learning in the classroom, and to help generate additional thought and discussion on the subjects covered in the course, I often show video material in class. This includes televised news footage of various historical events, documentaries, and political films. On occasion, I may select documentaries and films that have an “R” rating. Please see me if you have any moral, religious, political, or other objections to viewing documentaries or films with an “R” rating.

EVALUATION

Your final grade in the course will be based on your class attendance and performance on three exams. The weight assigned to each is:

(1) Exam 1 on February 23 = 25% of your overall grade.
(2) Exam 2 on April 1 = 30% of your overall grade.
(3) You have the option of choosing a take-home final exam (due April 27) or an in-class final exam (to take on May 1). The final exam is worth 35% of your overall grade. Please note that if you do not submit your take-home exam by the April 27 deadline, then you will have to take the final exam on May 1. No extensions will be granted for the paper assignment.
(4) Class attendance is worth the remaining 10% of your overall grade.

Course averages will be converted to letter grades using the scale below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Average</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Course Average</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93 and above</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>73 to 76</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 to 92</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>70 to 72</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87 to 89</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>67 to 69</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83 to 86</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>63 to 66</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 to 82</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>60 to 62</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77 to 79</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Class attendance is mandatory. I will circulate an attendance sign-in sheet at the beginning of each lecture. It is your responsibility to make sure that you sign the attendance sheet if you are present in class. If you arrive excessively late to class or if you leave class early, you will receive only partial credit for attendance. Your class attendance grade will be based on the percentage of classes that you attend (e.g., a student who attends every class will earn a 100; a student who attends half of the classes will earn a 50, etc.). Students who are active participants during class discussions will receive a bonus point added to their overall course grade.
EXAM RULES AND PROCEDURES

On all exam dates, please come prepared with an exam booklet and a pen. Failure to be present for any of the scheduled exams will result in an automatic “0.” If you cannot attend the exam, you must contact me at least 30 minutes before I have administered the test. I will grant a make-up exam only for circumstances that I deem extraordinary or for circumstances that meet university guidelines. If you miss the exam because of an illness, you are still required to contact me before the exam. You must also present me with proper verification (see below). Instructions for the take-home exam will be provided on April 20.

EXCUSED ABSENCES AND VERIFICATION

I will excuse absences, including those on exam dates, for the following reasons: (1) participation in an authorized activity as an official representative of the university (this includes athletic events, university-sponsored performances, or academic conferences); (2) participation in other activities deemed by the Dean of Students to warrant an excused absence; (3) an extreme personal emergency; (4) the death of an immediate family member; (5) participation in a religious holiday; and (6) health reasons such as an incapacitating or contagious illness or unavoidable surgery. DO NOT schedule non-emergency doctor’s appointments (such as an annual check-up visit or a dental visit) or any other personal commitments during our class time. If your absence meets any of the criteria mentioned above, I will need you to present me with some form of verification no later than one week after the absence if you wish to have your absence excused. Some acceptable forms of verification include the following: a note from Student Health Services; a note from a doctor or medical office; an obituary; or official documentation from the athletic department indicating your travel schedule. In the event of severe weather, please call the University Emergency Telephone Number at 252-328-0062 or visit the ECU emergency alert website (http://www.ecu.edu/alert) to check on whether the university has canceled classes. If the university has not canceled classes, but you commute to campus from a considerable distance and believe driving conditions may be hazardous, I will consider excusing your absence.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is a fundamental value of higher education shared by all at East Carolina University. Consistent with this principle, I expect all students to complete their academic work honestly. I will not tolerate any student’s involvement in cheating, plagiarism, falsifying work, submitting the same assignment for more than one course, or other acts that would be in violation of the university’s academic integrity standards. If I become aware of or suspect a potential academic integrity violation, I will meet with the student under suspicion following the procedures outlined in the university’s academic integrity policy. Should I determine that an academic integrity violation has occurred, I reserve the right to assign a grade penalty up to and including an “F” for the assignment or the course. If it also comes to my attention that the student involved in such an incident has had a prior academic integrity violation, or if there are other aggravating circumstances, I will refer the case directly to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Should the Academic Integrity Board determine that the accused student committed an academic integrity violation, the penalties, as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, may include a grade penalty and up to suspension from the university. For more information, please see: http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/currentfacultymanual/part6section2.pdf.
CLASSROOM RULES

The classroom is a learning environment. I expect all students to observe some basic rules of courtesy and respect, which include the following: (1) please address me as “Dr. Francia” or “Professor Francia” (upon graduation, you are welcome to address me by my first name, “Peter”); (2) arrive to class on time and do not leave before class is dismissed; (3) do not pack up your things early; it is disruptive to others around you; (4) turn off cell phones and keep them put away during class; (5) no laptop use during video screenings; (6) no eating during class; (7) no reading the newspaper or listening to music through headphones during class; (8) no sleeping during class; (9) no carrying on private conservations with others in the classroom while someone else is speaking; and (10) please be courteous to your classmates and respectful of your fellow students’ views, comments, and questions. Classroom discussion is meant to allow us to hear a variety of viewpoints, and this can only happen if we respect each other and our differences. Failure to follow these rules will negatively affect your class attendance and participation grade. Repeated or extreme offenses could result in your expulsion from the class.

E-MAIL

E-mail is a valuable tool for me to communicate announcements and information to the entire class. Please check your ECU e-mail at least once a day (weekends excluded). E-mail is also a good way for you to contact me. Please feel free to use e-mail to set up one-on-one meetings with me if my office hours conflict with your schedule. If you have specific questions about the course material, I am happy to answer them through e-mail; however, I would encourage you to set up a one-on-one meeting with me if you are having general difficulty with your understanding of the course material. I am also happy to answer any specific questions concerning academic or career advising through e-mail, but again I would encourage you to set up a one-on-one meeting with me if you need more general academic or career advice. Please do not use e-mail to request information already listed in the syllabus, such as an exam date or the weight assigned to a specific exam.

APPOINTMENTS

My office is located in the Brewster Building, Room A-101. My office hours are from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. every Tuesday. If you cannot meet with me during my office hours, please see me after class or contact me by telephone or e-mail to schedule an appointment. I am also happy to have lunch with anyone who wishes to join me on Tuesdays at noon. If you wish to schedule a Tuesday lunch, please contact me at least one day in advance.

DISABILITY SERVICES

East Carolina University seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a covered disability must go to the Department for Disability Support Services located in Slay 138 to verify the disability before any accommodations can occur. The telephone number is 252-737-1016.
COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1. Overview of the Presidency
January 12, 2015. Overview of the course / Importance of the presidency
January 14, 2015. Creation and constitutional powers of the executive branch

- Required reading for Week 1: Presidential Leadership, chapter 1

Week 2. Running for President: The Campaign for Resources
January 21, 2015. Campaign finance laws and presidential campaign fundraising

- Required reading for Week 2: Blackboard reading, “Campaign Finance”

Week 3. Running for President: The Nomination Campaign
January 26, 2015. Party nomination rules
January 28, 2015. Campaigning for the nomination

- Required reading for the Week 3: Presidential Leadership, chapter 2

Week 4. Running for President: The General Election Campaign
February 2, 2015. The Electoral College and the general election campaign
February 4, 2015. Voting behavior in presidential elections

- Required reading for Week 4: Presidential Leadership, chapter 3

Week 5. The Aftermath of the Presidential Election: Leading the Public
February 9, 2015. Presidential mandates and public expectations of the president
February 11, 2015. How the president tries to lead the public

- Required reading for Week 5: Presidential Leadership, chapter 4

Week 6. The President, the Media, and Information Control
February 16, 2015. How the president tries to control the media
February 18, 2015. Press coverage of the president and media effects

- Required reading for Week 6: Presidential Leadership, chapter 5

Week 7. The President’s Advisers
February 23, 2015. EXAM 1
February 25, 2015. The Vice President, First Lady, and the cabinet

- Required reading for Week 7: Presidential Leadership, chapter 6, pp. 214-236

Week 8. The Executive Branch and Presidential Decision Making
March 2, 2015. The president and the bureaucracy
March 4, 2015. Organization and decision making styles

- Required reading for Week 8: Presidential Leadership, chapters 7-8

Week 10. Presidential Character and the Modern Presidency
March 16, 2015. Psychological characteristics
March 18, 2015. Understanding the modern presidency


Week 11. Presidential Leadership Styles from FDR to Nixon
March 23, 2015. Assessing the leadership styles of F. Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower
March 25, 2015. Assessing the leadership styles of Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon

- Required reading for Week 11: The Modern American Presidency, chapters 4-7

Week 12. Presidential Leadership Styles from Regan to Clinton
March 30, 2015. Assessing the leadership styles of Reagan, Bush, and Clinton
April 1, 2015. EXAM 2

- Required reading for Week 12: The Modern American Presidency, chapters 9-10

Week 13. The President’s Relationship with Congress
April 6, 2015. The president’s legislative powers
April 8, 2015. Checks and balances: the executive branch and the legislative branch

- Required reading for Week 13: Presidential Leadership, chapters 9

Week 14. The President and the Courts
April 13, 2015. The president’s judicial powers
April 15, 2015. Checks and balances: the executive branch and the judicial branch

- Required reading for Week 14: Presidential Leadership, chapters 10

Week 15. Domestic and Economic Policy
April 20, 2015. The president’s role in shaping and influencing domestic policy
April 22, 2015. The president’s role in shaping the federal budget

- Required reading for Week 15: Presidential Leadership, chapters 11-12

Week 16. Homeland Security, Defense, and Foreign Policy
April 27, 2015. The president and national security / Take-home final exam due

- Required reading for Week 16: Presidential Leadership, chapter 13

FINAL EXAM
May 1, 2015. If you decided not to complete the take-home final exam, you must take the in-class final exam. The in-class final exam is cumulative, covering all of the material listed above. It is scheduled from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Brewster C-101.