

# **The American President**

**GOV 330K 38905**

*Fall 2021*

**Instructor:** Shannon Bow O'Brien, Ph.D.

**Meeting Time:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11am-noon

**Location:** JGB 2.324

This class is in a room which has Lectures Online enabled. All lectures will be recorded and available via Lectures Online (or taped if necessary, by professor) on Canvas. You do not have to attend class if you are uncomfortable doing so.

**Student Hours:** Online: I will have scheduled (booked) 15-minute appointments on Tuesday/Thursday from 10:30-noon.

Information for scheduling them will be available on Canvas

Any in person office hours will be in MEZ 3.226 by email appointment

Note: I will add more times if deemed necessary and they will be announced on canvas.

**Email:** shannonbow@utexas.edu

*Be sure to include something about the American Presidency class in the subject line. I am teaching American Government and American Presidency this semester so an email saying 'question about class' needs to be more specific since I will have about 600 students between the three classes.*

**Teaching Assistant:** TBA

Your TA will hold hours to meet with you. These will be posted on Canvas when available.

Unless your question/problem directly involves my teaching assistants, I expect you to contact them first for any class assistance.

Please routinely check Canvas for this class. I post Powerpoint slides, notes and information I feel are important to the class. In addition, we will post your grades online.

## **Course Description:**

The American Presidency can be taught in a number of ways. This semester, I have selected to teach the class through a historical approach. The presidency has changed in many dramatic and significant ways since its inception. If Joe Biden (with all his presidential powers) were to suddenly be dropped into 1789, the citizens of the day would be shocked at the amount of presidential power he wields. However, as citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, most do not consider the size and scope of the presidency to be unreasonable. In fact, though some people think he has too much power, many others would be willing to grant him greater authority.

In short, the office of the presidency acted and reacted to changes in politics and society. This course will start with George Washington and end with Joe Biden. While I will likely touch on every administration, we can break them into specific eras for study. Changes in the presidency result from tumultuous events (e.g., Garfield's assassination helped spur the creation of the civil service system in federal government) which lead to governmental growth. This is not a history course where we will learn in detail about every administration. However, we can use history to better understand why certain eras of presidency are forgettable and others unforgettable. I do not expect you to be well versed on American history (if you are getting worried) because we are looking at how the presidency drives history. The core point of most topics in this class will revolve around: How was the presidency changed? How did the presidency change society? How did the presidency increase or decrease in power?

## **Required Readings:**

**The American Presidency: Origins and Development 1776-2018**, Sidney M. Milkis and Michael Nelson, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1544323121

I also reserve the right to assign additional readings from time to time if I feel they are needed. Any additional readings will be added Canvas and also announced in class.

### **Grades:**

*Grades will be based on the following:*

<b>Test 1</b>	<b>Released: October 15 (Friday)</b> <b>Due: October 18 by 11:59pm(Monday)</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Test 2</b>	<b>Released: December 1 (Wed)</b> <b>Due: December 3 by 11:59pm(Friday)</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Short Assignment #1</b>	<b>September 15 (Wednesday)</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Submission of Topic for Longer Paper</b>	<b>October 1 (Friday)</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Short Assignment #2</b>	<b>October 6 (Wednesday)</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Longer Paper Assignment</b>	<b>November 15 (Monday)</b>	<b>29%</b>

### **All Tests & Paper Assignments will be ONLINE in Canvas this semester**

I also reserve the right to make any changes to the grading system I see fit during the semester. This may include, but is not limited to additional paper assignments (if I determine they are needed), or moving the test dates to accommodate unforeseen circumstances (think hurricanes and natural disasters, not doctor's appointments). I am not requiring attendance this semester, but I reserve the right to start using it if attendance/participation gets extremely low. If I choose to use it, I will announce it in class and post on Canvas.

### **Grade Scale:**

This semester, the University will begin to utilize a plus/minus system. Here is the scale I will use for the class for grades. Because of the plus/minus system, grades are NOT rounded up or down. You earn your grade based on performance.

A: 93-100	C: 73-76.99
A-: 90-92.99	C-: 70-72.99
B+: 87-89.99	D+: 67-69.99
B: 83-86.99	D: 63-66.99
B-: 80-82.99	D-: 60-62.99
C+: 77-79.99	F: Less than 60

### **Exams**

**Two tests will be given.** They will likely be a combination of essay and matching though I reserve the right to change the format. They will cover material presented in lectures and in the readings from the text, as well as any other material assigned/presented in class (including videos if I show any). The last exam is **NOT** cumulative and will only cover material presented since the previous exam. However, most of concepts in this course build upon each other so you will be expected to retain information from earlier portions of the class.

You will be expected to work independently on each exam with zero collaboration while taking the exam.

These tests will be ONLINE this semester and completed exams will be uploaded to Canvas.

### **Paper Assignments**

You will have **three** paper assignments. These assignments will be posted on Canvas prior to their due date.

The first two assignments will be short assignments focusing upon elements of the executive branch.

The third assignment will be a longer paper, approximately 10-12 pages double spaced.

The third assignment will be either one of two topics: presidential assassination/attempts or scandals. **Option 1:** You will be allowed to select 1 presidential assassination or attempt. If you select Lincoln, Garfield or Kennedy, you will not be allowed to use class lectures for your paper (in other words, you have to independently research it). **Option 2:** You will be allowed to write on a well-established (translation: there is reliable documented evidence backing the event up) scandal that involved a president or impacted the presidency. You will not be allowed to write on anything from the Trump or Biden presidencies. I am very hesitant to work on presidencies in motion (i.e. Biden) and we often do not know full information about administrations until well after they are over (hence, why Trump is also not allowed). However, G Washington- Obama are fair game.

If your turned in assignment is functionally identical to another student, you will both fail the assignment with a 0 (zero) regardless of which one copied it and which one is copied from.

You will upload all your assignments to Canvas.

Late papers will be penalized. For every calendar day a paper is late (including weekends, breaks, and non-class days), it will be penalized 5% of the total grade a day until 50%. Additional late penalties will not be assessed after 50% though you may be graded lower than 50% for incorrect information.

- These papers assignment days are noted on the calendar at the back of this syllabus. They will be posted to Canvas at least a week prior to their due day.
- You will be expected to fill out the form (for paper 1-2) in its entirety. Incorrect information is always wrong.
- These forms introduce you to aspects of the American presidency. They are in this format this semester to facilitate grading. The information collected on the forms would mirror what would be expected if you were to research and write a short paper for the course.

Papers will be graded on a 5 point scale (yes I will give quarter and half points). 1 will be the lowest and 5 will be full points. (5=100%, 4.75=95%, 4.5=90%, 4.25=85%, etc)

All assignment grades can only be questioned or challenged for 2 weeks after the date the grades are released back to the class. If the last assignment is returned with less than 2 weeks of the semester left, then the last day of class is the last day to challenge a paper grade. Only the professor (not the TAs) has the authority to change a paper grade (unless it is a minor or obvious calculation error). If the grade is not questioned or challenged in this time frame, it stands as recorded. This is designed to encourage students to retrieve their papers and also to not question grades in December that were handed back in September because they decide they do not like their final class grade.

**Late papers are only accepted until November 30, 2021.**

**Class Recordings:** Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

### **Academic Dishonesty/Cheating**

You will be expected to adhere to the UT Honor Code: *The core values of the University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.*

Though obvious, cheating is not allowed on any assignments. Plagiarism is prohibited. It refers to copying any work from any source (electronic, paper, etc.) without noting/citing its original source. It is important to note that using ideas (and not just quotes) from other sources without proper citation also counts as plagiarism. For

additional information on these items, see the University General Information Catalog at:

<https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/> and [https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-](https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-c/student-discipline-and-conduct/)

[information/appendices/appendix-c/student-discipline-and-conduct/](https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-c/student-discipline-and-conduct/) . **Any assignments turned in will be assumed to be the final version of the assignment and any inappropriate material will be considered intentional and not accidental.**

Any class materials may not be uploaded onto 3<sup>rd</sup> party websites without the professor's explicit permission. If you do so, it will be considered a violation of the honor code. The professor has the right (even after the class is completed) to submit these violations to Judicial Affairs for adjudication.

**Sharing of Course Materials is Prohibited:** No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, <https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-c/student-discipline-and-conduct/>

### **Canvas Stuff**

I will attempt to use Canvas as a way to provide information to the class. In the past, I have regularly made RTF versions of my Powerpoint slides available prior to class. However, if I encounter problems utilizing Canvas, I may shift my materials (including test guides and other things) to another website devoted to making material available to the class. I will announce any changes of this sort to the class.

**I will try to post on Canvas review sheets prior to each exam.** These sheets should not be considered the definitive study guide for the test. Rather, they are a list of major concepts and ideas you should definitely know for the exam.

### **Additional information**

Do NOT phone or email us about a grade (i.e. "What did I get?"). We will post grades electronically as soon as practical.

If you need extra time on a test and/or require special physical accommodations, please contact 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.

**Students with disabilities:** The University of Texas at Austin provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259 (Videophone: 512-410-6644) or <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>.

**Accessible/Compliant Statement:** If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). You may refer to SSD's website for contact and more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered

with SSD, please deliver your Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations.

**Accessible, Inclusive, and Compliant Statement:** The university is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive learning environment consistent with university policy and federal and state law. Please let me know if you experience any barriers to learning so I can work with you to ensure you have equal opportunity to participate fully in this course. If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). Please refer to SSD's website for contact and more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with SSD, please deliver your Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations and needs in this course.

**Course Instructor Survey/Evaluation:**

An evaluation of the course and instructor will be conducted at the end of the semester using the approved UT Course/Instructor evaluation forms.

**Undergraduate Student Drop Policy**

From the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup> class day, an undergraduate student can drop a course via the web and receive a refund, if eligible. From the 13<sup>th</sup> through the university's academic drop deadline, a student may Q drop a course with approval from the Dean, and departmental advisor.

**Religious Holy Days:** By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence <https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/academic-policies-and-procedures/attendance/>

**Emergency Evacuation Policy**

In the event of a fire or other emergency, it may be necessary to evacuate a building rapidly. Upon the activation of a fire alarm or the announcement of an emergency in a university building, all occupants of the building are required to evacuate and assemble outside. Once evacuated, no one may re-enter the building without instruction to do so from the Austin Fire Department, University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

Students should familiarize themselves with all the exit doors of each room and building they occupy at the university, and should remember that the nearest exit routes may not be the same as the way they typically enter buildings.

Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructors in writing during the first week of class.

Information can be found here for preparedness: <https://preparedness.utexas.edu/safety/emergency-terms>

Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/emergency>

**Restricting Information:** If you want your personal information restricted in the directory, the information is located here: <https://registrar.utexas.edu/students/records/restrictmyinfo>

**Make-up exams/Excused Absences**

Absences on exam days may be excused if the student provides verifiable documentation of accident, illness, or university or legal obligation. Unexcused absences from examinations will result in a score of zero for that exam.

I **STRONGLY** encourage you not to miss an exam. The make up may be different from the exam given to the rest of the class. It may include an essay format, but the exam format is at my discretion.

**One more thing:** If a true emergency occurs that you know you can document, take care of yourself first and we will sort it out later. You do not need to call me from the ER or jail to let us know you won't be there. In those situations, you have bigger problems than this class at that moment in time.

### Class Calendar

The readings for this day are the readings I expect you to have done **PRIOR** to that day. This calendar is based on my best estimation of how long it will take to go through the material. On occasion through the semester, I *\*may\** get behind a day or two depending on how long it takes to cover the topic. However, I will try to refrain from getting ahead, and tests will **ALWAYS** only cover the chapters noted in the syllabus.

	<b>Classroom Schedule</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<b>August 25 Wednesday</b>	Classes start. Pass out Syllabus and Overview	
<b>August 27 Friday</b>	Chapters 1 & 2 Constitution Convention and Creating the Presidency	
<b>August 30 Monday</b>	Chapters 1 & 2 Constitution Convention and Creating the Presidency	
<b>September 1 Wednesday</b>	Chapters 1 & 2 Constitution Convention and Creating the Presidency	
<b>September 3 Friday</b>	Chapters 1 & 2 Constitution Convention and Creating the Presidency	
<b>September 6 Monday</b>	<b>No Class, Labor Day</b>	
<b>September 8 Wednesday</b>	Chapter 3: Bringing the Presidency to Life: George Washington and John Adams	
<b>September 10 Friday</b>	Chapter 3: Bringing the Presidency to Life: George Washington and John Adams	
<b>September 13 Monday</b>	Chapter 3: Bringing the Presidency to Life: George Washington and John Adams	
<b>September 15 Wednesday</b>	Chapter 4: The Triumph of Jeffersonianism	<b>Assignment 1</b>
<b>September 17 Friday</b>	Chapter 4: The Triumph of Jeffersonianism	
<b>September 20 Monday</b>	Chapter 5: The Age of Jackson	
<b>September 22 Wednesday</b>	Chapter 5: The Age of Jackson	

<b>September 24 Friday</b>	Chapter 5: The Age of Jackson	
<b>September 27 Monday</b>	Chapter 6: The Presidency of Abraham Lincoln	
<b>September 29 Wednesday</b>	Chapter 6: The Presidency of Abraham Lincoln	
<b>October 1 Friday</b>	Chapter 6: The Presidency of Abraham Lincoln	<b>Submission of topic for longer paper due</b>
<b>October 4 Monday</b>	Chapter 7: The Reaction Against Presidential Power	
<b>October 6 Wednesday</b>	Chapter 7: The Reaction Against Presidential Power	<b>Assignment 2</b>
<b>October 8 Friday</b>	Chapter 8: Progressive Politics and Executive Power: Roosevelt, Taft, Wilson	
<b>October 11 Monday</b>	Chapter 8: Progressive Politics and Executive Power: Roosevelt, Taft, Wilson	
<b>October 13 Wednesday</b>	Chapter 8: Progressive Politics and Executive Power: Roosevelt, Taft, Wilson	
<b>October 15 Friday</b>	Chapter 9: The Triumph of Conservative Republicanism <b>Test 1 (1-8) Released</b>	
<b>October 18 Monday</b>	Chapter 9: The Triumph of Conservative Republicanism <b>Test 1 (1-8) due October 18 by 11:59pm</b>	
<b>October 20 Wednesday</b>	Chapter 9: The Triumph of Conservative Republicanism	
<b>October 22 Friday</b>	Chapter 10: The Consolidation of the Modern Presidency: FDR to Eisenhower	
<b>October 25 Monday</b>	Chapter 10: The Consolidation of the Modern Presidency FDR to Eisenhower	
<b>October 27 Wednesday</b>	Chapter 10: The Consolidation of the Modern Presidency FDR to Eisenhower/Chapter 11	
<b>October 29 Friday</b>	Chapter 11: Personalizing the Presidency JFK to Carter	
<b>November 1 Monday</b>	Chapter 11: Personalizing the Presidency JFK to Carter	
<b>November 3 Wednesday</b>	Chapter 11: Personalizing the Presidency JFK to Carter	

<b>November 5 Friday</b>	Chapter 12: A Restoration of Presidential Power? Ronald Reagan and GHW Bush	
<b>November 8 Monday</b>	Chapter 12: A Restoration of Presidential Power? Ronald Reagan and GHW Bush	
<b>November 10 Wednesday</b>	Chapter 12: A Restoration of Presidential Power?/Chapter 13	
<b>November 12 Friday</b>	Chapter 13: Bill Clinton and the Modern Presidency	
<b>November 15 Monday</b>	Chapter 13: Bill Clinton and the Modern Presidency/Chapter 14	<b>Long Paper Due</b>
<b>November 17 Wednesday</b>	Chapter 14: George W. Bush and Unilateral Presidential Power	
<b>November 19 Friday</b>	Chapter 14: George W. Bush and Unilateral Presidential Power/Chapter 15 if time	
<b>November 22 Monday</b>	Chapter 15: Barack Obama and Presidential Leadership in Polarized Times/Chapter 16 if time	
<b>November 24 Wednesday</b>	<b>No Class, Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	
<b>November 26 Friday</b>	<b>No Class, Thanksgiving Day</b>	
<b>November 30 Monday</b>	Chapter 15: Barack Obama and Presidential Leadership in Polarized Times/Chapter 16 if time Catch up (if necessary)	<b>Last day to turn in any missing assignments</b>
<b>December 1 Wednesday</b>	Discuss aspects of Chapter 16 (if the class prefers) <b>Release Test 2 (Chapters 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)</b>	
<b>December 3 Friday</b>	Catch up (if necessary) <b>Test 2 due by 11:59pm</b>	
<b>December 6 Monday</b>	<b>Last Day of Classes</b> Catch up (if necessary)	