



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
SAN ANTONIO

POLS 3312: The Executive

College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Social Sciences

Where: Online Asynchronous (we do not meet)

Who: Amanda Gatewood, Ph.D.

Email: agatewood@tamusa.edu

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Goals

This course has the following goals:

- 1 - To offer an inter-disciplinary and global introduction to some of the principal cultural and intellectual issues of the topic of the Executive Branch of the United States Government.
- 2 – To encourage students to think in a critical and analytical manner on issues raised in the course material.
- 3 – To inspire interest on the part of the student in the wider fields of political science and comparative politics, through nurturing a deeper appreciation of their importance.
- 4 – To understand how events in history can be interpreted in different ways and to appreciate how these different viewpoints came to be in light of various social factors that may not be applicable today.
- 5 – To offer a variety of source materials to help afford a more rounded understanding of history, making particular use of film interpretations of events covered in the course material.
- 6 - Acquire a perspective on and an understanding of the factors that shape human activity. This knowledge will furnish students insights into the origins and nature of contemporary issues and a foundation for future comparative understanding of civilizations.
- 7 - Develop critical thinking through the study of diverse interpretations of historical events.
- 8 - Apply critical thinking through historical analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- 9 – Develop communication and interpersonal skills through a variety of assessments

Textbook and Readings

All readings are available on blackboard. I recommend you read as much as possible; certainly, it is always a good idea to show a professor that you have put significant effort into the class.

This text is free and is useful for those who need a Federal Government refresher

Timothy Lenz and Mirya Holman “American Government”, University Press of Florida (2013) is available for free as a PDF at the following site: http://florida.theorange grove.org/og/file/2e74506d-6095-0531-a2fb-b04504b885bd/1/9781616101633_LenzHolman.pdf

Other Resources

Students may also use the following government websites:

The Whitehouse website <http://www.whitehouse.gov/>

US Senate website <http://www.senate.gov/>

US House website <http://www.house.gov/>

Federal Courts website <http://www.uscourts.gov/FederalCourts.aspx>

Congressional Record <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/LegislativeData.php?n=Record>

The Texas House website <http://www.house.state.tx.us/>

The Texas Senate website <http://www.senate.state.tx.us/>

Office of the Governor of Texas website <http://gov.texas.gov/>

Texas Judicial Branch website <http://www.txcourts.gov/>

Assessments

Discussion Activities: 20% (10 at 20 points each)

- Complete the 10 Discussion Activities before the end of the semester. The **first 5 are due by 10/27**, and the **last 5 are due by 12/1**. Instructions: write a one-page response to the prompt on Blackboard under Assignments. Reasons people lose points include:
 - Not doing the assignments before by due date
 - Not reading material assigned and citing it
 - Only summarizing now, showing that you understand the content

Four Short Papers: 80% (4 at 200 points each)

- We have three papers, which should be roughly 1,500 words.
- You must cite a range of sources.
 - It will be difficult to achieve an A if you do not cite books and/or articles that are available to you for free on the library website.

Grading scale

90-100 = A

80-89 = B

70 – 79 = C

60 – 69 = D

59 or less = F

Late Assignment Policy

Given we are still in the middle of a pandemic, I am going to implement a lenient policy for late assignments.

Your papers are due by midnight on the dates listed below. If they are not submitted by the deadline, they are late, even if they are only a few seconds late. You can use the same TurnItIn link to submit, but the papers will be marked by the online system as being late. Be smart with late assignments: if you are

unlikely to submit by the deadline, take another day to work on your paper instead of rushing something in.

Papers that are submitted late will be accepted with a 1% penalty per day. This means that once your paper is 10 days late, the maximum grade you can achieve is 90 (instead of 100). This will apply for the duration of the semester.

If there is a reason you are struggling to get your papers submitted on time, please let me know as soon as possible. It's often possible to arrange accommodations, but it becomes much more difficult the longer you wait to let me know.

Papers

There are really four key ways you can gain or lose marks in a paper: you should make good, evidence-based arguments; you should seek to cite peer-reviewed (that is to say published in books or academic journals) sources primarily (though additional sources are fine); you should stick to the target paper length, specified on the syllabus (1500 words for all papers); and you should submit on time, or else advise the professor in advance of any issue that has arisen that will prevent you from submitting on time.

	Gain Marks	Lose Marks
Arguments	Evidence-based	None given; analogies
Sources	Peer-reviewed At least 5	Aggregation websites Few sources cited
Length	Close to word limit	Significantly less
Submission date	Before due date After, but with permission	After due date

PAPER 1 DUE 9/29 by 11:59 pm.

The President as a head of state

Consider how the role of the President compares to other heads of state internationally. What are the differences in power, duties, and how they are elected? Is there a more democratic method of governance? Are other leaders more effective?

PAPER 2 DUE 10/27 by 11:59 p.m.

Checks and Balances

In this paper, you are asked to assert the relationship between the White House and the other branches of government. There are many ways to tackle this paper. You could do an in-depth study of a particular President and a particular Congress (for example, the 104th Congress which was held from 1995-1997 saw the Republicans win back control of both houses for the first time since 1954 and worked alongside President Clinton); you could look at patterns of elections over time (has Congress tended to change hands at a particular time during a Presidency? How has this impacted the way that the Executive and Legislative branches have engaged?); you could look at the relationship between the President and the Supreme Court (the recent disagreements over how to replace Justice Scalia tell us a lot about how the three branches relate to one another); or another idea.

PAPER 3 DUE 11/24 by 11:59 p.m.

The Presidents and Social Media

In this paper, you are asked to examine how different Presidents have used social media. You can do a comparative study of two Presidents, examine a single President and their strategy for using different forms of social media, examine a particular issue and how the different Presidents have sought to tackle it through their social media strategy, or really any topic at all. The key issues you must address are:

- Things that scholars of Presidential communication and social media have written
 - Start with a search in the TAMUSA library
- The way/s that the President/s use these forms of social media
- The issues that they discuss using social networks
- How useful you believe this form of communication to be

Note: You can find old tweets at <https://twitter.com/search-advanced> if you search under the different usernames of the past Presidents who are active on twitter. The Trump twitter archive is also useful here: <https://www.thetrumparchive.com/>.

PAPER 4 DUE 12/6 by 11:59 p.m.

Presidential transitions

One of the major themes of Donald Trump's presidential campaign was how bad he felt Barack Obama had been in office. Using data that we have reviewed throughout this course (for example, public opinion, economics, or crime), you are asked to assess how much of an improvement any historic President has been compared to his successor.

For example, if you are doing the Obama-Trump transition you should think about things like public opinion (like where will Obama rank in the list of "best" Presidents once enough time has passed to view his presidency objectively), the economy, the relative merits of the international order under Obama. Then, look at President Trump's actions in office, consider how much he has actually done to "undo" Obama policies, and offer an assessment of how he might be viewed in the future. Use a wide variety of sources to support your arguments. It is absolutely essential that you do not just give partisan views, you must be as objective as possible.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (8/26-9/1/2024): Course Introduction and Introduction to the Presidency

Week 2: (9/2-9/8/2024) President Trump and President Biden

- An assessment of the recent transition
 - How effective has either been?
 - How do we assess effectiveness in the Presidency?
 - Presidential popularity?
 - Is it important for the President to be popular?
 - Impact on his party
 - Impact on the office
 - Impact on America's position in the world

Week 3: (9/9-9/15/2024) Presidential Power

- The limits of the constitutional presidency
 - The Executive Order over time
 - How appropriate is the use of EOs?
 - Are they necessary for effective governance?
 - Case study examples
- President vs. Prime Minister vs. Other Heads of State

Weeks 4-5: (9/16-9/29/2024) The President and the other branches of government **PAPER 1 DUE 9/29 by 11:59 pm.**

- Congressional restraints
- Enacting a legislative agenda
- The Courts
 - Electing representatives and electing judges?
- Comparative Presidencies
- Consideration of global issues and the US position in the world

Weeks 6-7: (9/30-10/13/2024) The rhetoric of the Presidents

- Presidential speeches
- What they say, when they say it, why
- Responses to Presidential statements

Browse: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu> and <http://millercenter.org/president#speeches-nav>

Week 8-10: Parties and Presidents (10/14-10/27/2024) **PAPER 2 DUE 10/27 by 11:59 p.m.**

- Primary campaigns
- Examining the track record of the parties and their presidents
- Exploring patterns in elections
- The issue of mid-term elections
- Upcoming Elections

Browse: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>

Weeks 11-12: Policy – domestic and foreign (10/28-11/10/2024)

- Domestic issues
 - How these develop over time
 - Focus on the economy, education and health
 - Discuss other domestic issues
- Foreign issues
 - Comparative foreign policy
 - Isolationism
 - Interventionism
 - The Cold War and the 21st Century

Weeks 13-14: Presidential Accountability (11/1-11/24/2024) **PAPER 3 DUE 11/24 by 11:59 p.m.**

- Public Opinion and the Presidents
- Public polls and Presidential responses

- Comparing different polls and polling agencies
- What impacts a President's popularity?
 - The Media
 - Scandals
 - Engagement
- Can Presidents be objectively assessed?

Week 15: Final papers due (11/25-12/6/2024) PAPER 4 due 12/6/2024 by 11:59 p.m. (Thanksgiving break 11/28-11/30)

Keys to success in class

1 - Participation – This is a very simple way to give yourself a good grounding in this class. Simply do the readings, which are entirely available online, log in to the discussion forum, and participate. I understand that occasionally things come up that mean you will not be able to participate. Please do let me know as far in advance as possible if something arises and we can work together to ensure it does not affect your grade.

2 – Completing class readings – We are all here to learn and it's important that you give class your full effort. Everything I assign for you to read is important you should complete readings, though not necessarily ALL readings, ahead of class. One of the skills you will develop in this class is critical reading, something that is useful for a number of future career paths. Your papers will be better if you are able to read outside of the required readings so do try to make the best possible use of available online material.

3 – Timely submission of assignments - Each assignment has very clear submission deadlines and the penalties for late submission are detailed above. Full preparation for and participation in class discussions will, again, facilitate the development of your paper.

4 – Communication – Please contact me if you are having issues with the course material, particularly if you are unable to submit assignments on time. I will endeavor to answer all emails within 24 hours. When you send me an email, please include the course number in the subject field. I teach four courses and doing this will allow us to resolve any issues much more quickly.

5 - Plagiarism – This is basically the act of copying the work of someone else and passing it off as your own. It is easy to tell when an essay has been plagiarized (all submissions go through a similarity check online) and is punishable by a mark of zero for the assignment. You can avoid this by simply referencing all the work you have examined in your research. We will have an in-class discussion on referencing prior to the submission of essays.

Citations – If you are unfamiliar with how to cite in your papers, you should read the following link: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

You should either cite by using footnotes (in word, go to insert and footnote) or author date bracketed references (Name, Year) and these should correspond to the bibliography at the end of your paper.

Please do not cite websites by simply copying and pasting the URL in the bibliography. Website citation is explained in the above link, which is also on blackboard.

Wikipedia and encyclopedia policy – One of the skills you need to develop through studying political science is the ability to conduct independent research. I encourage you to use Wikipedia and encyclopedias to enhance your understanding of any given subject. Please do not reference or quote from them in your submissions, though. When you do this, it suggests that you are not able to do your own research.

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us <https://www.tamusa.edu/Disability-Support-Services/index.html> or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

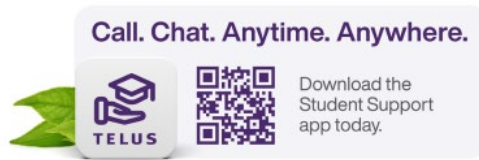
Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the *Tools* section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information on SCC services visit tamusa.edu/studentcounseling

Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option '2').

Additionally, the TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including support for in the moment distress, an anonymous peer to peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.



Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>.

More information about Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/about-us/emergency-management/>.

Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on "Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center" to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/>.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to submit a CARE referral (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/Student->

[Rights-and-Responsibilities/file-a-report.html](#)) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots' Casa building, room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military.va@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or course work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual

harassment, sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students: Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide such reasonable accommodations to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784-2061; CAB 439K).

Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, on our website, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or disability. Conduct that infringes on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/documents/Student-Handbook-2022-23.pdf>) or visit the resources available in the OSRR website (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academic-integrity.html>).

Broader Use of Generative AI Permitted Within Guidelines

Use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, is permitted in this course for students who wish to use them. To adhere to our scholarly values, students must cite any AI-generated material that informed their work (this includes in-text citations and/or use of quotations, and in your reference list). Using an AI tool to generate content without proper attribution qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.

NOTE: Guidance for how to cite AI-generators, like ChatGPT, can be found here <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
SAN ANTONIO

Important Dates:

August 26	First day of class
September 2	Labor Day Holiday
November 11	Last day to drop with an automatic "W"
November 19	Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the University
November 27	Study Day – No classes
November 28-30	Thanksgiving Holiday – No classes
December 5	Last day of classes
December 6	Study Day – No classes
December 7-13	Final exams

The complete academic calendar is available online: <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/index.html>.