

HSTAA 213
History of the American Presidency
University of Washington - Autumn 2019
TTh 3:30-5:20
Paccar Hall 192

Prof. Margaret O'Mara
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Office hours: Tuesday & Thursday 1:30-2:30
Office location: 204B Smith Hall

This is a class on the history of the American presidency and of the men who have occupied the office, from George Washington to Donald Trump. Through lectures, readings, research and writing, and discussion, we explore the office's origins and evolution over time, considering the presidency and presidents in the context of economic, diplomatic, cultural, and media history, and assessing how historical understanding can better inform our present political moment.

Successful completion of this 5-credit course will fulfill the I&S requirement. Students interested in also obtaining writing (W) credit for this course can write a 12-15 page paper that revises and expands upon one of the shorter analytic essays required for the class.

LEARNING GOALS

- A refined understanding of how the office of the American presidency has changed over time in relation to broader economic, political, demographic, and geopolitical transformations;
- Sharpened critical thinking and writing about history, including ability to distinguish different types of sources (primary, secondary) and analyze their context and meaning;
- An ability to apply this historical awareness to understanding present-day political, economic, and social structures; and
- Knowing sources and methods for discerning truth and separating fact from fiction.

REQUIRED READING (at the UW Bookstore as well as on reserve at Odegaard; e-books are ok too)

Joanne Freeman, *Field of Blood: Violence in Congress and the Road to the Civil War*

Margaret O'Mara, *Pivotal Tuesdays: Four Elections That Shaped the Twentieth Century*

Ann Kornblut, *Notes from the Cracked Ceiling: What It Will Take for a Woman to Win*

We also will read book chapters, articles, and primary sources, available to registered students and auditors on Canvas in PDF form. Expect to read 100-125 pages per week.

ASSIGNMENTS

The class consists of two 110-minute sessions per week, mixing lecture time and reading, writing, discussion, and group work. Graded elements are:

1. Writing and posting three essays analyzing assigned readings over the course of the quarter (10% per post, for a total of 30%), in response to professor's prompts. Each essay should be 800-1000 words in length.
2. A midterm exam (essays, short answer, multiple choice questions) covering the first seven weeks of the quarter's lecture material and readings, to be completed online (25% of grade).
3. A final exam (essays, short answer, multiple choice questions) covering the full quarter of content, but with an emphasis on the second half, to be completed online (25% of grade).
4. Group video project that presents a major theme in American presidential history with a popular audience in mind (10% of grade).
5. Regular participation in writing and discussion activities related to class lectures: in-person, online, and weekend 'homework' (10% of grade).

If you would like a W credit for this course, you may substantially expand and revise one of your reader response essays into a more in-depth 12-15 page paper that engages additional secondary sources. The grade for this paper will make up 20% of your final grade, and other assignments will be down-weighted accordingly.

SCHEDULE

The readings listed below each lecture/week are designed to be paired with and build on lecture content during that week. Read at your own pace, but aim to complete the readings during the week in which they are assigned so that you do not fall behind. You will be asked to discuss the assigned readings in your three papers, in your midterm and final exams, and during in-class exercises in the week(s) after they have been assigned. Many weeks will feature homework assignments in addition to the reading, which typically involve online research and a short posting of findings to a class discussion string.

Week One

Thu Sept 26: George Washington and the Invention of the Presidency

* please read this syllabus thoroughly

* "How the Impeachment Process Works," *The New York Times*, September 2019,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/24/us/politics/impeachment-trump-explained.html>

Please let me know (by email) by the end of this week whether you would like to write an additional paper for W credit for this class.

Week Two

Tue Oct 1: John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and the Escalation of Partisanship

Thu Oct 3: Andrew Jackson and the Populist Presidency

* Freeman, *The Field of Blood*, Introduction, Chapters 1-3

Workgroup Assignments given Thursday Oct 3: The Washingtons, The Jeffersons, The Jacksons, The Lincolns, The Grants, The Roosevelts, The Trumans, The Kennedys, The Nixons, The Reagans

Week Three

Tue Oct 8: The Disunion of the 1850s

Thu Oct 10: Abraham Lincoln and the Unlikely Presidency

* Freeman, *The Field of Blood*, Chapters 5-7

Fri Oct 11: **Reading essay one** due online 5PM: Sectionalism, partisanship, & the antebellum Presidency

Week Four

Tue Oct 15: The Reconstruction-Era Presidency: *this will be an online lecture with reading and research exercises embedded within, available for viewing Monday morning October 14. You should view and complete associated exercises by class time on Thursday October 17.*

Thu Oct 17: The Gilded Age Presidency

* Case study documents on the Andrew Johnson impeachment,

https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Impeachment_Johnson.htm

* Watch or listen: Eric Foner on Reconstruction (37 min lecture), <https://youtu.be/49McwjKZmlw>

* Richard White, "Information, Markets, and Corruption: Transcontinental Railroads in the Gilded Age" (PDF on Canvas)

Week Five

Tu and Thu Oct 22 and 24: William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and the Art of Modern Campaigning

* O'Mara, *Pivotal Tuesdays*, Introduction, Chapters 1&2

* Four speeches from 1912 (audio/transcript): T. Roosevelt, "The Liberty of the People"; Wilson, "On Labor"; Taft, "On Popular Unrest"; Debs attacks "the monstrous system" of capitalism,

<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5722/>

Week Six

Tu Oct 29: The New Deal Presidency

Thu Oct 31: America at War

* O'Mara, *Pivotal Tuesdays*, Chapters 3&4

* Read/listen: Franklin D. Roosevelt, First Inaugural Address (1933), <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/march-4-1933-first-inaugural-address>

* Read/listen: Roosevelt, Fireside Chat on "Court-Packing" (1937), <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/march-9-1937-fireside-chat-9-court-packing>

* Read/listen: Roosevelt, Fireside Chat "On Sacrifice" (1942), <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/april-28-1942-fireside-chat-21-sacrifice>

Fri Nov 1 – **Reading Essay Two** due online 5PM: Media & the birth of the modern Presidency

Week Seven

Tu Nov 5 and Th Nov 7: **Film pre-production week:** meet with your group, storyboard your video, assign production roles and casting, begin filming.

Fri Nov 8 – **Midterm exam** taken online, complete and submit no later than 5PM.

Week Eight

Tu Nov 12: The Cold War Presidency

Thu Nov 14: The Television President

* William Hitchcock, *The Age of Eisenhower*, Ch. 14 & 15 (PDF on Canvas)

* Theodore White, *The Making of the President 1960*, Ch. 11 (PDF on Canvas)

* John E. Miller, "The Making of Theodore White's 'Making of the President 1960'" (PDF on Canvas)

Week Nine

Tu Nov 19: Richard Nixon and the Imperial Presidency

Thu Nov 21: Carter to Reagan

* O'Mara, *Pivotal Tuesdays*, Chapters 5, 6, 7, & 8

Week Ten

Nov 26: The Reagan Revolution: Reagan, Bush, Clinton: *this will be an online lecture with reading and research exercises embedded within, available for viewing Monday morning November 25. You should view and complete associated exercises by class time on Tuesday December 3.*

* Kornblut, *Notes from the Cracked Ceiling*, Introduction, Chapters 1-3

Week Eleven

Dec 3: New World Order

Dec 5: Hope and Change

* Kornblut, *Notes from the Cracked Ceiling*, Chapters 4-8

Final group video projects due Tuesday December 3 at 5PM. We will screen in class on Thursday December 5.

Fri Dec 6 – **Reading essay three** due online 5PM: Gender, race, and the American presidency

Thu Dec 12 – **Final exam** taken online, complete and submit no later than 5PM.

*Fri Dec 13 – **W paper due** via email to Prof. O'Mara by 5PM.*

CLASS POLICIES

I am delighted to have all of you in this class with me, and I'm looking forward not only to sharing what I know of this subject but for you to become as engaged and excited about the study of history as I am. My intent is to work with you, wherever you might be in your learning curve, to make this a productive and information-rich experience that leaves you with new knowledge and skills that translate into multiple academic and professional environments. Assignments are designed with these goals in mind, as are the policies I have developed to guide our collective classroom experience.

NOTES: Writing helps us think, and note-taking is essential not only to remembering what you are hearing but in processing and analyzing it. Take them during lecture, either on a laptop, tablet, or by hand—whatever works best for your brain, your memory, and your penmanship. I hand out lecture outlines each day, but these are outlines only, and should be complemented by your detailed notes on the subject at hand.

PAPER: Please bring paper and pen/pencil to class each day so that you can use and turn in for in-class writing assignments. I assign them frequently, as a tool to reinforce what you have just learned as well as provide an opportunity for commentary and analysis of class material.

ELECTRONICS: If you rely on a laptop for note-taking, you may use one, but the WiFi must be turned off. Please do not take notes on your phone. Keep phones on silent/do not disturb mode. When you are online during class, you distract and disrupt not only your learning process but also that of your peers. Yes, the internet may be a terrific complement to something I've just said in lecture, but take a note of it and save the Google searches for later.

WRITING GUIDELINES, RESEARCH RESOURCES, & OTHER HELPFUL STUFF: I have a number of handouts and links available on my web site at www.margaretomara.com/resources. Some of these are by me, others are by other professors and university centers. They can be helpful in answering questions you have about work in this class and in other classes. Please read and refer to these as needed, and feel free to share with others as long as you note where you found it.

FAIR USE: A number of the things I ask my students to do in class involve pulling digital materials from other places online. When repurposing this content, especially when using for a graded class assignment and *especially* when you plan to also publish online, do so with copyright law and fair use guidelines in mind. The UW Libraries has a useful and comprehensive guide for this: https://guides.lib.uw.edu/research/copyright/fair_use.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: In all assignments you are expected to adhere to the standards of academic integrity outlined by the University of Washington Student Conduct Code. In an age of internet-based research and writing, the standards for plagiarism and academic dishonesty can become unclear, and I strongly encourage all students to read UW statements and guidelines that outline acceptable practices and procedures: <https://www.washington.edu/cssc/for-students/student-code-of-conduct/>.

ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATIONS: Your experience in this class is important to me. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course. If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or uwdrs@uw.edu or disability.uw.edu. DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and DRS. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES: Assignments submitted late on Canvas will be penalized 5%, with an additional 5% penalty added for every 12 hours of tardiness after that. This policy exists as a matter of

fairness and equity to all the students in the class: how would you feel about crunching to make a deadline and then discovering that others had a few additional hours to work on an assignment? The answer to most deadline crises is good planning. Allow enough time before deadlines to avoid any technical/computer problems that might make your assignment late. If you have a medical or personal situation that you realize will affect your ability to submit the assignment on time, email me directly as soon as possible with an explanation.

ABSENCES: Success in this course will depend on your being present and engaged in class. I also realize that life can get in the way. Please alert me to any expected absences well ahead of time so that we can make arrangements for makeup assignments. In cases of unexpected absences (illness, family emergencies), you must contact me within a week of the absence to be considered for makeup credit.

ILLNESS: Please follow common-sense guidelines in order to protect yourself and your fellow students. Stay home if you have a fever or any malady that might be easily communicated to those sitting near you in the lecture hall. Doctor's notes are not required for occasional absence.

DISCUSSION/PARTICIPATION STANDARDS: In all lectures, I expect consistent participation—this means answering questions I pose in class, working actively in pairs and small groups, and submitting ungraded writing assignments. You learn more when you are learning actively, which means thinking, writing, and talking, not just listening.

OFFICE HOURS: These are a great way for me to more easily get to know you all individually, and vice versa. I hold them every week at a regular time, and I'm happy to make an individual arrangement with you if my usual office-hour slot conflicts with your class or work schedule. Come see me to talk about questions you have about class content or assignments, or because you'd like an opportunity to talk further about the topics of this class. You do not have to have a problem or question to come to office hours, and you also are welcome to bring a friend if you'd like to talk to me together.

FINAL GRADE SCALE: Each assignment is worth a certain percentage, totaling 100%. I convert the total into a four-point scale at the end of the quarter following this rubric:

$\geq 95\% = 4.0$	88 = 3.3	81 = 2.6	74 = 1.9	67 = 1.2
94 = 3.9	87 = 3.2	80 = 2.5	73 = 1.8	66 = 1.1
93 = 3.8	86 = 3.1	79 = 2.4	72 = 1.7	65 = 1.0
92 = 3.7	85 = 3.0	78 = 2.3	71 = 1.6	64 = 0.9
91 = 3.6	84 = 2.9	77 = 2.2	70 = 1.5	63 = 0.8
90 = 3.5	83 = 2.8	76 = 2.1	69 = 1.4	62 = 0.7
89 = 3.4	82 = 2.7	75 = 2.0	68 = 1.3	61 \geq no credit