

# History 50:512:384

## War and the American Presidency

Fall 2016  
Wednesdays, 5:15 – 7:55 PM  
Location: Rutgers at Camden  
County College Blackwood / Halpern 221

Instructor: Dr. Martin G. Clemis  
E-Mail: martin.clemis@rutgers.edu  
Phone (215) 380-0075

**Course Description:** This course explores the historical experience of the President of the United States in times of war and global crisis. It examines the leadership and decision-making of past presidents, the relationship between the Executive Branch and the uniformed services, the role the White House has played in shaping national security policy and military strategy, and the influence past wars and military affairs have exerted on the Chief Executive. The course also examines the theory and practice of American civil-military relations and civilian control of the military, paying particular attention to the close interaction and working relationship between the commander-in-chief, his political advisors, and the generals that serve them. Overall, the course is designed to underscore the powerful impact past presidents have had on military affairs and vice versa.

**Assignments:** In order to receive a satisfactory grade in this course, students must complete the following assignments:

- 1. Attendance /Course Engagement:** Do the reading and participate in class discussions. Each unit will consist of both lectures and discussions. Participation in these discussions of the reading and lecture material and completion of any homework assignments are essential to helping you understand the themes of the course. They are therefore an important part of your grade. Of course, good attendance is also part of this assignment as well, since you can't participate if you aren't there. Attendance is required in this class, and will be regularly taken. I am well aware that missing a class may happen occasionally, but **excessive absences will be noted and affect your class participation grade.**
- 2. Précis (3) – Students are required to select, read, review, and discuss three outside historical texts** germane to the topic of this course. Reviews must be 1-2 single-spaced pages and include the book's thesis, method, sources, strengths, and weaknesses. The instructor will provide a rubric that details exactly how précis are to be constructed. The instructor will create a schedule for class presentations on the first day of class. Students will be required to submit to the instructor hard copies of their review on the day that they present their findings to the class.
- 3. Reflective Essay / Research Paper:** You are required to hand a 10- to 12-page research paper on a president of your own choosing. The final paper **must achieve the following:** 1) Address the national security crisis a particular president faced – describe the specific conflict situation and the leadership challenges it posed; 2) Evaluate presidential leadership during

that particular conflict – identify and assess the choices / decisions the president made during that conflict; 3) Describe and assess the immediate and long-term impact that president made on military affairs and national security. The final paper is due **Wednesday, December 21**.

**Grading** – Grades will be based on the following percentages:

- Course Engagement / Weekly Discussion: 25%
- Book Reviews: 3 x 15% =45%
- Final Paper: 30%

**Reading list:**

- Andrew J. Polsky. *Elusive Victories: The American Presidency at War*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Edward J. Lordan, *The Case for Combat: How Presidents Persuade Americans to Go to War*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010.

**Sakai** – Additional materials for this course, including a complete syllabus, course policies, additional required readings, grades, and assignments will be posted on Sakai. Students must be able to access Sakai on a regular basis. You will not pass the class without Sakai.

**Course Schedule:** The dates listed below are tentative and may change as the semester progress. For assignments, check the Sakai and the assignment sheets themselves; Actual due dates for assignments will be listed there. Check this page often or contact your instructor for more information.

### **Introduction / The American Presidency at War**

**Weeks 1-2 (9/7 & 9/14)**

Readings:

- Polsky, Introduction
- Hoxie, “The Office of Commander in Chief: An Historical and Projective View” (Available on Sakai)

### **George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and War in the Early Republic**

**Week 3 (9/21)**

Readings:

- Staude, “Forging the Eagle’s Sword: President Washington, The Congress, and the Army” (Available on Sakai)
- Symonds, ““A Squadron of Observation’: Thomas Jefferson and America’s First War Against Terrorism” (Available on Sakai)

## **Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War**

### **Week 4 (9/28)**

Readings:

- Polsky, Chapter 1

## **William McKinley and the Spanish-American War**

### **Week 5 (10/5)**

Readings:

- Bloodworth, "For Love or For Money?: William McKinley and the Spanish-American War" (Available on Sakai)
- Strathman, "War Counsel: Military Advice in the White House" (Available on Sakai)

## **Woodrow Wilson and World War I**

### **Week 6 (10/12)**

Readings:

- Polsky, Chapter 2

## **Franklin Roosevelt and World War II**

### **Week 7 (10/19)**

Readings:

- Polsky, Chapter 3

## **Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower and the Cold War**

### **Week 8 (10/26)**

Readings:

- Schuessler, "Absorbing the First Blow: Truman and the Cold War" (Available on Sakai)
- Carter, "Eisenhower Versus the Generals" (Available on Sakai)

## **John Kennedy and the Cold War**

### **Week 9 (11/2)**

Readings:

- Bernstein, "Looking Back: Reconsidering the Perilous Cuban Missile Crisis 50 Years Later" (Available on Sakai)

## **Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon and the Vietnam War**

### **Week 10 (11/9)**

Readings:

- Polsky, Chapter 4

## **Ronald Reagan and the End of the Cold War**

### **Week 11 (11/16)**

Readings:

**\*Note: There will be no class on November 23 due to Thanksgiving. Students follow Friday schedule.**

## **Bill Clinton, George H.W. Bush, and post-Cold War Conflict**

### **Week 12 (11/30)**

Readings:

## **George W. Bush & Barack Obama**

### **Week 13 (12/7)**

Readings:

- Polsky, Chapter 5 & 6

### **Week 14 (12/14) – Wrap Up / War and the American Presidency**

Readings:

- Polsky, Conclusion

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

All written assignments must be type-written, double-spaced, with one inch margins in Times New Roman 12-point font.

All assignments submitted in paper form must be stapled, clipped, or otherwise bound.

Effective communication of your idea(s) is a part of every assignment. Therefore, grammar and spelling count. Use those spell-checkers and proofread your assignments assiduously.

Requirements regarding the length of assignments are STRICT. Papers not within 10% of the stated limit will lose points for failing to satisfy the terms of the assignment.

Computer mishaps are no excuse. Finish your papers early so that dry ink cartridges, crashing computers, and long lines for printing at the computer labs don't cause you to miss a deadline.

Keep the graded copy of your assignment until final grades are posted at the end of the semester.

### **CITATION**

The reflective essays require properly footnoted citations. For citations use the "Note" format

described in the Chicago-Style Citation Quick Guide at:  
<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

### **SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

Assignments must be submitted both in hard and digital copy on the due date. Digital copies can be emailed directly to your instructor or placed in Sakai's "Dropbox"

All assignments must be in Microsoft Word (doc), plain text (txt), or rich text format (rtf).

Filenames MUST include your last name and unit title (ie. **clemis.Antietam.doc**).

You must retain both a copy of the paper and that email confirmation or your Sakai log to prove that you submitted an assignment in case there is a problem later.

### **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

All due dates are strict. Under most circumstances, I will accept late assignments, but they will lose one or more letter grades, depending on how late they are submitted. Any late assignments MUST be submitted before I return the rest of the assignments to the class (normally one week after the regular due date).

No makeups for in-class assignments are allowed except for compelling reasons and ONLY with sufficient prior notice.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is mandatory at all class meetings. Attendance will be taken regularly. I do take into account that everyone misses class once in a while, so I require no excuses for absences. Sports, family emergencies, car trouble, etc. affect everyone, but I must calculate grades based solely on class performance.

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

During in-class quizzes, exams, and discussions, the use of electronic devices (including laptops, cell or smartphones) to access notes, the internet, or other resources is prohibited unless specifically allowed by the terms of the exercise. Many in-class exercises are designed to test your comprehension of course materials, so access to such materials would constitute academic dishonesty (see below).

As a courtesy to me and your fellow students, please set your phones on silent mode and refrain from extraneous activities such as surfing the internet, texting, or reading the newspaper during class time. Students engaging in disruptive behavior of this sort will be asked to leave and be marked absent for the day.

### **WHAT IS "COURSE ENGAGEMENT?"**

"Class participation" is not used as a grading category because "engagement" better describes what instructors are looking for in successful students. Students often confuse "participation" with "talking." A student who is "engaged" attends all class meetings, is consistently prepared to discuss the readings, and turns in all assignments complete and on time. An "engaged" student responds appropriately and intelligently to questions asked during class, provides leadership in small group activities, and takes the initiative during class discussions to provide insightful comments that spark further discussion. "Engaged" students draw connections among classes

they have taken or ideas they have encountered outside of the classroom in books, newspapers, movies, or elsewhere. Though it is not a requirement to attend office hours, "engaged" students usually seek out the professor to clarify the terms of assignments, to refine paper topics, to go over study questions, and even to discuss grades.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT:** Academic integrity is essential to the success of the educational enterprise and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the academic community. Violations of academic integrity include but are not limited to cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying others access to information or material, and facilitating others' violations of academic integrity. The instructor assumes students will familiarize themselves with the policies and information posted by Rutgers at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/> at the earliest opportunity.

**DISABILITY SERVICES STATEMENT:** Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 508 of the Disabilities Act of 1998, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008. These mandate that reasonable accommodations be provided for qualified students with disabilities and accessibility of online information. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodation, please contact the instructor early in the semester so that he can provide or facilitate in providing accommodations you may need. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Office of Disability Services, the designated office on campus to provide services and administer exams with accommodations for students with disabilities. The Rutgers-Camden Office of Disability Services can be contacted by phone at 856-225-6442 or on the web at <http://learn.camden.rutgers.edu/disability-services>. The instructor looks forward to talking with you soon to learn how he may be helpful in enhancing your academic success in this course.