

## SOC-968: The American Presidency

### Independent Study Online Course Syllabus

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**Number of Graduate Semester Units:** 3 units  
**Target Audience:** 5<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers  
**Course Access:** <https://connect.fresno.edu>

#### Course Description

This course will explore the development of the American Presidency from its Constitutional beginnings in 1787 through the development of political parties, primary elections, and modern media-centered campaigning, and will focus on key individuals and their strengths, weaknesses, and contributions to the office that have helped make the presidency the most powerful political position in the world. Course requirements include practical application to classroom settings. Course assignments have been developed to align with Common Core State Standards for Literacy and Writing in History/Social Science.

**Note:** Required book and video resources must be acquired separately.

#### Required Texts and Course Materials

**Book:** McPherson, James M. (2000). To the Best of My Ability: The American Presidents.  
Dorling Kindersley. ISBN #0-7566-0777-9.  
[https://www.amazon.com/dp/0789450739/ref=rdr\\_ext\\_tmb](https://www.amazon.com/dp/0789450739/ref=rdr_ext_tmb)

**Video:** History Channel. (2013). The Ultimate Guide to the Presidents.  
<https://www.amazon.com/Ultimate-Guide-Presidents-DVD/dp/B00B4TAXXK>  
\*Also available on Amazon Prime Video-[https://www.amazon.com/Power-To-The-People-1824-1849/dp/B00B1OZDEW/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?crd=2ZDX9NUIINP802&dchild=1&keywords=ultimate+guide+to+presidents&qid=1610221564&s=instant-video&sprefix=ultimate+guide.instant-video.216&sr=1-1](https://www.amazon.com/Power-To-The-People-1824-1849/dp/B00B1OZDEW/ref=sr_1_1?crd=2ZDX9NUIINP802&dchild=1&keywords=ultimate+guide+to+presidents&qid=1610221564&s=instant-video&sprefix=ultimate+guide.instant-video.216&sr=1-1).

OR

The History Channel Presents The Presidents (DVD) – If available from various resources and/or vendors. (This may be harder to find, but is an alternative DVD.)

**Note:** Students are responsible for obtaining their own book and DVD, analyzing the content, and applying what they learned to the course assignments. You are welcome to purchase used, ebook, or new versions to save money.

**Online Resources:** Relevant online resources that support the course content and encourage further investigation will be available throughout the course assignments. Active hyperlinks are utilized throughout the course and will link to the appropriate information when clicked. These include videos, podcasts, worksheets, online activities, journal articles and other resources.

**Canvas:** This course will be delivered totally online. Canvas is a web-based learning management system (LMS) that provides students access to online resources, documents, videos, assignments, quizzes, forums, etc. Canvas is easy to learn and has a user-friendly interface.

## Course Dates

Self-paced; students may enroll at any time and take up to one year, from the date of registration, to complete assignments. Students may complete assignments in no less than three weeks for a 3-unit course (one week per unit).

## National Standards Addressed in This Course

### National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)

(<http://www.nbpts.org/standards-five-core-propositions/>)

First published in 1989 and updated in 2016, [\*What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do\*](#) articulates the National Board's Five Core Propositions for teaching. The Five Core Propositions - comparable to medicine's Hippocratic Oath — set forth the profession's vision for accomplished teaching. Together, the propositions form the basis of all National Board Standards and the foundation for National Board Certification. Course assignments have been designed so students can demonstrate excellence against these professional teaching standards whenever possible.

- Proposition 1: Teachers are committed to students and their learning
- Proposition 2: Teachers know the subject they teach and how to teach those subjects to students
- Proposition 3: Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning
- Proposition 4: Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience
- Proposition 5: Teachers are members of learning communities

### Common Core State Standards (CCSS) ([www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org))

The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy. College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade span.

Common Core Language Arts Standards addressed in this course include:

- Reading for Literature (RL): K-8, 9-10, and 11-12
- Reading for Information (RI): K-8, 9-10, and 11-12
- Writing (W): K-8, 9-10, and 11-12
- Speaking and Listening (SL): K-8, 9-10, and 11-12

- English Language Arts Standards (L): K-8, 9-10, and 11-12

### Continuing Education Student Learning Outcomes (CE-SLO)

CE-SLO 1	Demonstrate proficient written communication by articulating a clear focus, synthesizing arguments, and utilizing standard formats in order to inform and persuade others, and present information applicable to targeted use.
CE-SLO 2	Demonstrate comprehension of content-specific knowledge and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts.
CE-SLO 3	Reflect on their personal and professional growth and provide evidence of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and professional improvement.
CE-SLO 4	Apply critical thinking competencies by generating probing questions, recognizing underlying assumptions, interpreting and evaluating relevant information, and applying their understandings to the professional setting.
CE-SLO 5	Reflect on values that inspire high standards of professional and ethical behavior as they pursue excellence in applying new learning to their chosen field.
CE-SLO 6	Identify information needed in order to fully understand a topic or task, organize that information, identify the best sources of information for a given enquiry, locate and critically evaluate sources, and accurately and effectively share that information.

### Course Student Learning Outcomes (C-SLO)

Student Learning Outcomes for This Course By the end of this course student will be able to:		National Center for History in Schools*	CE-SLO Addressed**
C-SLO 1	Explain the Constitutional basis for the office of President and the requirements involved for election to that office.	NCHS Standard 3A and 12.4	1, 2, 4, 6
C-SLO 2	Assess the strengths and weakness of our American Presidents.		1, 2, 4
C-SLO 3	Analyze the role that religious belief has played in the lives of presidents.		1, 5
C-SLO 4	Articulate the changes that have taken place in presidential politics in the nomination, campaigning, and election processes.	NCHS Standard 12.4 and 12.6	1, 2, 4, 6
C-SLO 5	Evaluate the ways in which presidential power has grown over the years.	NCHS Standard 12.4	1, 2, 4, 6
C-SLO 6	Track the growing influence of “first ladies” in American presidential politics.		1, 2, 6
C-SLO 7	Describe the variety of leadership styles, and their respective effectiveness, evidenced by America’s presidents.	NCHS Standard 12.6	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
C-SLO 8	Describe key, recurrent issues with which American presidents have had to deal.	NCHS Standard 12.6	1, 2, 4, 6
C-SLO 9	Develop meaningful lesson plans related to the American presidency.		1, 4

C-SLO 10	Demonstrate political literacy.	NCHS Standard 3A, 3D, 12.6	1, 2, 4, 6
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\* Please refer to the section on National Center for History in Schools Standards (NCHS) - <https://phi.history.ucla.edu/nchs/united-states-history-content-standards/>; United States History Content Standards for Grades 5 -12

## Topics, Assignments, and Activities

Module Title	Module Assignments and Activities	Points Possible
<b>Home Page</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome Video</li> <li>Course Syllabus</li> <li>Policies and Procedures</li> <li>Introduce Yourself Forum</li> </ul>	
<b>Module 1 – Historical Overview of the Presidents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1.1: Read the Book / Watch Videos, <i>To the Best of My Ability: The American Presidents</i>.</b> Also watch the History Channel DVD series, <i>The Presidents</i>. Interact with the material presented by responding to each of the assigned questions per the instructions (and options) in Moodle Module 1.</li> <li><b>1.2: Discussion Forum</b> – Share three things that you learned for the first time, were surprising to you, or things that you agree or disagree with.</li> </ul>	100 pts  10 pts
<b>Module 2 – Application activities for use in the classroom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>2.1: Application activities for use in the classroom</b> Indicate in no more than two pages <u>per assignment</u> (double spaced, using proper APA formatting, and include learning objectives) how you might use or modify any <u>three</u> of the 10 assignments from module 1, to fit a classroom setting appropriate to your students. Also In the same document, based on the material covered in the book and DVD series, come up with <u>two additional</u> assignments (not included in assignment questions in module 1 above) appropriate for your students. Also include learning objective for each of the two additional assignments. These are not intended to be fully developed lesson plans, but ideas for lessons.</li> <li><b>2.2: Discussion Forum</b> – Briefly share in this discussion forum, at least one of your original ideas for applying module 1 ideas to classroom learning.</li> </ul>	15 pts  10 pts
<b>Module 3 – American Political Parties and the Presidency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>3.1: Origins of two early American political parties</b> Describe the differing political views of Jefferson and Hamilton and how their positions on key issues formed the basis of two early political parties. See options for completing this assignment in Moodle Module 3.</li> <li><b>3.2: Development of the early Democratic and Republican Parties</b> Discuss how the early Democratic Party took shape under Jackson’s presidency, and what factors helped form the new Republican Party in the 1850’s including Lincoln’s</li> </ul>	20 pts  20 pts

Module Title	Module Assignments and Activities	Points Possible
	<p>role in the party's formation. See further instructions and options in Module 3 of Moodle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>3.3: How the Republican and Democratic Parties have changed</b>            Explain how these two major political parties have changed their views on significant issues from the end of the Civil War to the present. See further instructions and options in Moodle Module 3.         </li> </ul>	20 pts
<b>Module 4 -</b> Presidential Elections of Special Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>4.1: The controversial presidential elections of 1876 and 2000</b>            Explain what happened in these two elections, examining their significance and how the two elections were similar and different. See Module 4 of Moodle for further instructions and options.         </li> <li> <b>4.2: Two additional presidential elections to which you ascribe special significance for the nation.</b>            Explain and compare the significance and key aspects of the two elections you select. See Module 4 of Moodle for further instructions and options.         </li> <li> <b>4.3: Discussion Forum</b> – Briefly share how you think the 2020 presidential election could be used in a classroom setting to discuss American democracy. Your personal political views will not be judged by your professor in evaluating this assignment.         </li> </ul>	30 pts  30 pts  10 pts
<b>Module 5 -</b> The Role of First Ladies and Presidential Libraries in the American Presidency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>5.1: Two First Ladies</b>            Write an essay covering key aspects of the life and contributions of First Lady Frances Cleveland (wife of Grover Cleveland) and another First Lady of your choice who served in the White House after 1900. This is a short two-part essay limited to 600-700 words total.         </li> <li> <b>5.2: Three Presidential Libraries</b>            Report on visits to three Presidential Libraries of your choice, including when and where each library was established, and what are key features of each library. Personal visits are welcome, if made no more than a year before enrolling in this course. See Module 5 of Moodle for further instructions and options.         </li> <li> <b>5.3: Discussion Forum</b> – Share which of the three presidential libraries you selected was your favorite, and why.         </li> </ul>	30 pts  30 pts  10 pts
<b>Module 6 –</b> The Presidency, the Electoral College, and Mass Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>6.1: Arguments For and Against the Electoral College</b>            Prepare a PowerPoint (or similar program) presentation of 3-5 slides presenting arguments for and against the Electoral College in presidential elections. Conclude with your own personal opinion.         </li> <li> <b>6.2: The Presidency and Mass Media</b>            Briefly cover the history and roles played by Theodore Roosevelt (motion pictures), Franklin Roosevelt (radio),         </li> </ul>	20 pts  25 pts

Module Title	Module Assignments and Activities	Points Possible
	<p>televised presidential debates, and widespread use of social media by Barack Obama in the 2008 election. See Moodle Module 6 for additional instructions and options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>6.3: Discussion Forum</b> – Share your opinion (with reasons) about whether there should be restrictions on social media usage in future presidential elections, or if free speech should be allowed without restricting usage or censoring contents of social media messages.</li> </ul>	10 pts
<b>Module 7 - Lesson Plan(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>7.1: Develop and Teach a Lesson</b> Develop and teach a lesson based on some aspect(s) of the American Presidency. Include lesson content and objectives, as well as standards relative to your teaching situation. Include a self-evaluation of your taught lesson, including any ideas for improving it. If you are unable to teach the lesson, complete two lesson plans (excluding a self-evaluation).</li> <li>• <b>7.2: Reflection and Evaluation</b> Submit a one-paragraph reflection and evaluation of how well the course met your expectations and what suggestions you might have for improving the course.</li> </ul>	50 pts  10 pts
<b>Course Wrap-up – Grading and Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Reflection Forum</li> <li>• Course Evaluation</li> <li>• Course Completion Checklist</li> <li>• Grade Request / Transcript Request</li> </ul>	
	<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>450 points</b>

## Grading Policies, Rubrics, and Requirements for Assignments

### Grading Policies

- Assignments will be graded per criteria presented in the course rubrics.
- A = 90-100% and B = 80-89%, (anything below 80% will not receive credit.)
- The discernment between an A or a B letter grade is at the discretion of the instructor based on the quality of work submitted (see course rubrics).
- Coursework falling below a B grade will be returned with further instructions.
- All assignments must be completed to receive a grade and are expected to reflect the quality that teacher-training institutions require of professional educators. If completed assignments do not meet this standard, students will be notified with further instructions from the instructor.

### Grading Rubrics

Grade	Percent	Description	Rubric
A	90-100%	Excellent	Meets all course / assignment requirements with significant evidence of subject mastery and demonstration of excellent graduate level professional development scholarship.

B	80-89%	Very Good	Adequately meets criteria for all course/assignment requirements - demonstrates subject competency with very good graduate level professional development scholarship.
NC	Below 80%	Unacceptable	Does not meet the minimum criteria for all course/assignment requirements and demonstrated little, if any, evidence of acceptable graduate level professional development scholarship.

### Writing Requirements

- **Superior:** Writing is clear, succinct, and reflects graduate level expectations. Clearly addresses all parts of the writing task. Maintains a consistent point of view and organizational structure. Includes relevant facts, details, and explanations.
- **Standard:** Writing is acceptable with very few mistakes in grammar and spelling. Addresses most parts of the writing task. Maintains a mostly consistent point of view and organizational structure. Includes mostly relevant facts, details, and explanations.
- **Sub-standard:** Writing contains noticeable mistakes in grammar and spelling. Does not address all parts of the writing task. Lacks a consistent point of view and organizational structure. May include marginally relevant facts, details, and explanations.

### Lesson Plan Requirements

- **Superior:** Instructional goals and objectives clearly stated. Instructional strategies appropriate for learning outcome(s). Method for assessing student learning and evaluating instruction is clearly delineated and authentic. All materials necessary for student and teacher to complete lesson clearly listed.
- **Standard:** Instructional goals and objectives are stated but are not easy to understand. Some instructional strategies are appropriate for learning outcome(s). Method for assessing student learning and evaluating instruction is present. Most materials necessary for student and teacher to complete lesson are listed.
- **Sub-standard:** Instructional goals and objectives are not stated. Learners cannot tell what is expected of them. Instructional strategies are missing or strategies used are inappropriate. Method for assessing student learning and evaluating instruction is missing. Materials necessary for student and teacher to complete lesson are missing.

### Instructor/Student Contact Information

Throughout the course participants will be communicating with the instructor and their classmates on a regular basis using asynchronous discussion forums. Students are provided with instructor contact information in the event they want to make email or phone contact. In addition, students are encouraged to email or phone the instructor at any time. Students will also receive feedback on the required assignments as they are submitted.

### Forums

Participation is an important expectation of this course and all online courses. Online discussions promote reflection and analysis while allowing students to appreciate and evaluate positions that others express. While students may not be engaging with the same students throughout this course, they will be expected to offer comments, questions, and replies to the discussion question whenever possible. The faculty role in the discussion forum is that of an observer and facilitator.

## Coursework Hours

Based on the Carnegie Unit standard, a unit of graduate credit measures academic credit based on the number of hours the student is engaged in learning. This includes all time spent on the course: reading the textbook, watching videos, listening to audio lessons, researching topics, writing papers, creating projects, developing lesson plans, posting to discussion boards, etc. Coursework offered for FPU Continuing Education graduate credit adheres to 45 hours per semester unit for the 900-level courses. Therefore, a student will spend approximately 135 hours on a typical 3-unit course.

## Services for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are eligible for reasonable accommodations in their academic work in all classes. In order to receive assistance, the student with a disability must provide the Academic Support Center with documentation, which describes the specific disability. The documentation must be from a qualified professional in the area of the disability (i.e. psychologist, physician or educational diagnostician). Once documentation is on file, arrangements for reasonable accommodations can be made. For more information and for downloadable forms, please go to <https://www.fresno.edu/departments/disability-access-education>.

## Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

All people participating in the educational process at Fresno Pacific University are expected to pursue honesty and integrity in all aspects of their academic work. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be handled per the procedures set forth in the Fresno Pacific University Catalogue and Handbook - <https://handbook.fresno.edu/graduate/academic-policies>

## Technology Requirements

To successfully complete the course requirements, course participants will need Internet access, can send and receive email, know how to manage simple files in a word processing program, and have a basic understanding of the Internet. Please remember that the instructor is not able to offer technical support. If you need technical support, please contact your Internet Service Provider.

**Getting Help with Canvas:** If you need help with Canvas, please contact the FPU Help Desk by phone: (559) 453-3410 or email: [helpdesk@fresno.edu](mailto:helpdesk@fresno.edu). Help is available Mon-Fri 8:00 am to 7:00 pm.

## Final Course Grade and Transcripts

When all work for the course has been completed, students will need to logon to the Continuing Education website (<https://ce.fresno.edu/my-account>) and "Request Final Grade". Once the instructor receives the requests and submits the grade online, students may log back in to view their Final Grade Report or order transcripts online. Please allow at least two weeks for the final grade to be posted. For more information, see the Continuing Education Policies and Procedures at <https://ce.fresno.edu/ce-policies-and-procedures>.



## University Policies and Procedures

Students are responsible for becoming familiar with the information presented in the Academic Catalog and for knowing and observing all policies and procedures related to their participation in the university community. A summary of university policies may be found on the university website at <https://www.fresno.edu/departments/registrars-office/academic-catalogs>.

## Fresno Pacific University Student Learning Outcomes (FPU-SLO)

FPU-SLO 1	<b>Oral Communication:</b> Students will <i>exhibit</i> clear, engaging, and confident oral communication – in both individual and group settings – and will critically <i>evaluate</i> content and delivery components.
FPU-SLO 2	<b>Written Communication:</b> Students will <i>demonstrate</i> proficient written communication by <i>articulating</i> a clear focus, <i>synthesizing</i> arguments, and utilizing standard formats in order to <i>inform</i> and <i>persuade</i> others.
FPU-SLO 3	<b>Content Knowledge:</b> Students will <i>demonstrate</i> comprehension of content-specific knowledge and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts.
FPU-SLO 4	<b>Reflection:</b> Students will <i>reflect</i> on their personal and professional growth and <i>provide evidence</i> of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and vocational improvement.
FPU-SLO 5	<b>Critical Thinking:</b> Students will <i>apply</i> critical thinking competencies by <i>generating</i> probing questions, <i>recognizing</i> underlying assumptions, <i>interpreting</i> and <i>evaluating</i> relevant information, and <i>applying</i> their understandings to new situations.
FPU-SLO 6	<b>Moral Reasoning:</b> Students will <i>identify</i> and <i>apply</i> moral reasoning and ethical decision-making skills, and <i>articulate</i> the norms and principles underlying a Christian worldview.
FPU-SLO 7	<b>Service:</b> Students will <i>demonstrate</i> service and reconciliation as a way of leadership.
FPU-SLO 8	<b>Cultural and Global Perspective:</b> Students will <i>identify</i> personal, cultural, and global perspectives and will employ these perspectives to <i>evaluate</i> complex systems.
FPU-SLO 9	<b>Quantitative Reasoning:</b> Students will accurately <i>compute</i> calculations and symbolic operations and <i>explain</i> their use in a field of study.
FPU-SLO 10	<b>Information Literacy:</b> Students will <i>identify</i> information needed in order to fully understand a topic or task, <i>explain</i> how that information is organized, <i>identify</i> the best sources of information for a given enquiry, <i>locate</i> and critically <i>evaluate</i> sources, and accurately and effectively <i>share</i> that information.