

## COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

**Academic School/Department:** Social Sciences and Humanities

**Programme:** American Studies  
Political Science  
International Relations

**FHEQ Level:** 6

**Course Title:** The American Presidency

**Course Code:** AMS 6101

**Student Engagement Hours:** 160  
Lectures: 22.5  
Seminar / Tutorials: 22.5  
Supervision: 15  
Independent / Guided Learning: 100

**Credits:** 16 UK CATS credits  
8 ECTS credits  
4 US credits

### **Course Description:**

This course studies the American presidency in a deliberately multi-disciplinary fashion, taking into account the history of the office, its place within the American system of government as well as its cultural and international impact. The course considers the origins, history and evolution of the presidency; addresses the powers and limitations of the office; examines the individuals who have sought and held the title and explore the continuing cultural impact of the American Presidency.

### **Pre-requisites:**

*One of the Following:*

AMS 5100 Politics and Elections in the USA

SCL 5200 Social Research

HST 5210 Of Myths and Monsters - A History of History

PLT 5201 Research Methods and Practices: Social Sciences

**Aims and Objectives:**

- To examine the historical development of the American Presidency and its cultural and international impact
- To build an understanding of the evolving nature of the American Presidency in the context of the Constitution and changing American political and legal systems
- To provide a background for eventual careers in fields which require articulate, clear thinking individuals with a grasp of American Studies
- To foster the acquisition, development and consolidation of a variety of inter-disciplinary and transferable skills through the study of particular themes in American Studies
- To promote critical engagement with a wide range of primary and secondary historical sources, and the development of both a succinct writing style and the ability to present complex arguments orally

**Programme Outcomes:**

American Studies: 6A(ii); 6A(iii); 6B(i); 6B(ii); 6C(i); 6C(iii); 6C(iv); 6D(ii); 6D(iv)

Political Science: A(iii), A(iv), B(I), B(ii), C(I), C(ii), C(iii), D(ii), D(iv)

International Relations: A(iii), A(iv), B(I), B(ii), C(I), C(ii), C(iii), D(ii), D(iv)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification.

This is maintained by Registry and located at <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

**Learning Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following learning outcomes.

- Demonstrates a systematic understanding of how cultural, political and historical processes can be conceptualised at the global level, and the relevance of these to understanding contemporary social, cultural and political debates in USA and the Americas.
- Demonstrates a systematic understanding of the role of the USA and of US politics and culture in dynamics of contemporary globalisation.
- Demonstrates the ability to gather, organise and deploy complex and abstract ideas and information in order to formulate arguments cogently, and express them effectively in written, oral or other forms
- Demonstrates the ability to act with minimal direction or supervision, to engage in self- reflection, use feedback to analyse own capabilities, appraise alternatives, and plan and implement actions

**Indicative Content:**

- USA Constitution, Founding Principles and Debates
- USA political institutions
- The History of the Presidency
- The Presidency on the national and international stage
- The Powers and limitations of the Presidency
- The reciprocal relationship between the Presidency and culture

**Assessment:**

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies>

**Teaching Methodology:**

The course will be taught through a combination of lectures and seminar classes. Lectures are primarily designed to give an overview of the issues and problems on a particular topic, and thereby provide guidance for seminar discussion. Seminars will be used for debates and group/sub-group discussion and are intended to provide an interactive and participatory learning environment. Students are expected to do the set readings for each week, and to be prepared to contribute to class discussion and discussion sub-groups. The general approach to classes is informal, and discussion is viewed as an essential part of learning.

**Indicative Texts:**

Pika, J. & Maltese, J (2013). *The Politics of the Presidency*: Sage  
 Nelson, M. (2009). *The Presidency and the Political System*, Sage  
 Rollins, P. (2005). *Hollywood's White House*, University of Kentucky  
 Genovese, Michael A., *The Power of the American Presidency 1789-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).  
 Roper, J. (2000). *The American Presidents: Heroic Leadership*, Edinburgh

*Please Note: The core and the reference texts will be reviewed at the time of designing the semester syllabus*

See syllabus for complete reading list.

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Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or LTPC)	Change Actioned by Academic Registry
Various updates as part of the UG programme review	AB Jan 2022	
Revision – annual update	May 2023	

