A. Course Description

Credits: 4

Prerequisites: WRIT 131 Writing I or equivalent.

Lab Hours/ Weeks: Corequisites: None

Lecture Hours/ Week:

MnTC Goals: Goal LS - Upper Division Liberal Studies , Goal 05 - Hist/Soc/Behav Sci

The president of the United States is the most powerful political leader in the world. And yet Americans know astonishingly little about the person they elect to the highest office in the land, and even less about past presidents—who they were, what they did, how they helped shape the history of the United States and the world. At the same time, paradoxically, the genre of presidential biography is an extremely popular one with the reading public. This independent study is a critical and analytical exploration of the history of America’s past leaders. Periodically historians are surveyed to determine how they “rank” the American presidents. Among the issues considered are why presidents have been ranked as they have, and whether these rankings reflect reasonable judgments of their accomplishments in office. As students read about these men—for that is what they always have been—they should consider what constitutes political success, and why people remember some presidents as “great,” and others as failures. Also to be considered is the issue of “character.”

B. Course Effective Dates: 08/24/2002 - Present

C. Outline of Major Content Areas:

See Course Description for major content areas.

D. Learning Outcomes (General)

1. Grasps both the value and the limitations of biography as a means of understanding the past, consistent with the analytical and expressive complexity and sophistication that are distinctively characteristic of upper-division courses completed at a comprehensive university.

2. Understands the forces that shaped and constrained presidential actions in U.S. history, consistent with the analytical and expressive complexity and sophistication that are distinctively characteristic of upper-division courses completed at a comprehensive university.

3. Understands the historical relationship between elites and broad historical forces, consistent with the analytical and expressive complexity and sophistication that are distinctively characteristic of upper-division courses completed at a comprehensive university.

E. Learning Outcomes (MN Transfer Curriculum)

Goal LS - Upper Division Liberal Studies

None

Goal 05 - Hist/Soc/Behav Sci

1. Employ the methods and data that historians and social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition.

2. Develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues.

3. Examine social institutions and processes across a range of historical periods and cultures.

G. Special Information