

The Presidency

PS140B Summer 2024

Monday/Wednesday 10:45-12:50 Online

Instructor: Sean Ewing

Email: sewing1@ucla.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 2-4pm or by appointment (Zoom link on Bruin Learn)

Course Overview

This course provides a modern and historical political science perspective on the presidency and its role in American democracy. One of our goals in this class is to understand both the formal and informal powers of the presidency and discuss how that power has evolved over time. The president's relationship to the public, congress, the courts, and political parties will also be a focus of this course as we seek to uncover what kinds of checks exist on presidents and how robust those checks are. We will also discuss presidential activities such as speechmaking, leadership, and campaigning to determine how those institutions shape a presidency. We will be giving particular attention to the "leadership dilemma"—the gap between the expectations that are placed on presidents and their limited institutional powers. Although this class is about the office of the presidency and not presidents themselves, we will be applying the concepts we learn about to both early and modern presidents and the decisions they faced while in office.

Grade Breakdown

Reading Memos: 20%

Papers: 50%

Final Exam: 30%

Reading Memos:

Before each class, students are expected to write a 1-2 page reaction memo to the assigned readings.. This assignment should briefly summarize the readings, analyze the content, and propose at least two critical questions. These summaries should cover all assigned readings for the day.

Papers:

Papers will be assigned in weeks 2, 3, and 4, and will be due two weeks after they are assigned (weeks 4, 5, and 6, respectively). Students are required to complete and submit two papers, so each student can opt out of one of the paper assignments. Papers are expected to be 4-6 pages in length and in APA format. More details will be given when the assignments are released to the class.

Final Exam:

The final exam for this class will be a series of short answer questions that will be given during normal class time during our last class (Wednesday, September 11th). The exam is open note and open book, so you may refer to your class notes and all course materials while completing the exam. ChatGPT, paper writing/tutoring services, or other forms of unauthorized aid are not permitted and will be considered a serious violation of academic integrity. Students are welcome to prepare for the exam in groups, but assisting each other during the exam is not permitted.

Grading

All assignments are due the day listed on this syllabus. Late work will be deducted by a letter grade. If you have an exceptional situation that you believe qualifies you for an extension, please email me *prior* to the due date.

Virtual Policies

This class will be conducted through zoom in real time. I will not be recording class sessions, and this class is not set up to be taken asynchronously. I will not be assigning a grade for attendance, but students are expected to attend every class. If you are unable to make it to a class, please let me know ASAP so we can brainstorm ways for you to catch up on the content you missed. Missing more than two classes may result in a grade penalty.

Communication/Office Hours

The best way to reach me is via email. I check my email fairly regularly, but please allow me 24 hours to respond to emails. If I do not respond within 24 hours, feel free to email me again!

My office hours and location are listed above. If those times do not work for you, please email me and we can schedule an alternate time to meet.

Academic Integrity

It should go without saying that all assignments and exams are expected to be completed at the highest standards of academic integrity. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are taken very seriously and will not be tolerated. This includes the use of ChatGBT or other Artificial Intelligence tools- while there may be appropriate ways to use these tools in an academic setting, taking phrases or sentences directly from AI is considered plagiarism and will be treated as such.

For more information, see the UCLA Student Code of Conduct at <https://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/studentconductcode>

Course Schedule

TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
8/5 Introduction and Historical Evolution	- Articles I and II of the U.S. Constitution: https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/ - Alexander Hamilton. <i>Federalist 69, 70, and 74</i> - Tulis, Jeffery K.: "The Two Constitutional Presidencies," Nelson's <i>The Presidency and the Political System</i>, Chapter 1.	None
8/7 Executive Power and the Unitary Executive	- Crouch, Jeffery, Mark Rozell, and Mitchel Sollenberger. 2017. <i>The Law: The Unitary Executive Theory and President Donald J. Trump. Presidential Studies Quarterly</i> 47: 561-573. - Rozell, Mark and Mitchel Sollenberger. 2013 "The Unitary Executive Theory and the Bush Legacy," Kelley and Shield's <i>Taking the Measure: The Presidency of George W. Bush</i>, Chapter 4	Reading Memo #1 Due
8/12 Presidential Power and Prerogative Power	Neustadt, Richard E. 1990. <i>Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan</i>. Macmillan Publishing Company: New York. Chapters 1-5.	Reading Memo #2 Due
8/14 The President and Congress	- Dickinson, Matthew J.: "The President and Congress," Nelson's <i>The Presidency and the Political System</i>, Chapter 15. - Lee, Frances E. 2008. "Dividers, Not Unifiers: Presidential Leadership and Senate Partisanship, 1981-2004." <i>Journal of Politics</i>.	Reading Memo #3 Due Paper #1 Assigned

	Bolton, Alexander and Sharece Thrower 2016. "Legislative Capacity and Executive Unilateralism." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>.	
8/19 Political Parties and Presidential Nominations	Cohen, Marty, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2008. <i>The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations before and after Reform</i>. University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1-2 and 7.	Reading Memo #4 Due
8/21 Presidential Campaigns	Vavreck, Lynn. 2009. <i>The Message Matters: The Economy and Presidential Campaigns</i>. Princeton University Press. Chapters 1-5.	Reading Memo #5 Due Paper #2 Assigned
8/26 Presidential Elections	Sides, John, Chris Tausanovitch, and Lynn Vavreck. 2022. <i>The Bitter End: The 2020 Presidential Campaign and the Challenge to American Democracy</i>. Princeton University Press. Chapters 1, 7-9.	Reading Memo #6 Due
8/28 Presidential Speechmaking and Public Leadership	George C. Edwards III. 2003. <i>On Deaf Ears: The Limits of the Bully Pulpit</i>. Yale University Press. Parts 1 and 3. Parts 2 and 4 are optional.	Reading Memo #7 Due Paper #3 Assigned Paper #1 Due
9/2 NO CLASS	NO CLASS	N/A
9/4 The President, the Courts, and Impeachment NO LIVE CLASS	<i>U.S. v. Nixon</i> - Richard J. Anderson, David Cottrell, and Charles R. Shipan 2019. "The Power to Appoint: Presidential Nominations and Change on the Supreme Court." <i>Journal of Politics</i>. - Watch Lecture Video	Reading Memo #8 Due Paper #2 Due
9/9 War Powers	Louis Fisher. 2013. <i>Presidential War Power</i>. University Press of Kansas. Chapters 1-2, 6, 9-11.	Reading Memo #9 Due
9/11		Study for Final Exam

Final Exam, Democracy, and Takeaways	Graham, Matthew H. and Milan W. Svolik 2020. “Democracy in America? Partisanship, Polarization, and the Robustness of Support for Democracy in the United States.” <i>American Political Science Review</i>.	Paper #3 Due
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Resources

If you have concerns about or difficulty with academic writing, you can visit the undergraduate writing center. More information is available at <http://wp.ucla.edu/index.php/home>

For general academic concerns, you can contact the academic counseling office for help at <http://www.ugeducation.ucla.edu/more.htm>

If you want to speak to a therapist or psychological counselor you can contact CAPS at <http://www.counseling.ucla.edu>