

# The American Presidency

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By appointment

## 1 Course Description

This course is dedicated to a systematic examination of the United States presidency. While the American Presidency is known as one of the most powerful offices in the world, scholars still struggle to understand the complexities of the office and the motives of those people who have held that office. This course introduces students to important and theoretical works in US presidency research. Doing so gives you a perspective of how scholars think about the executive branch, encouraging you to think critically and assess presidential administrations on your own.

The purpose of this class is to examine the presidency and its place in American politics, including its origin and development. Students should be able to assess the ways in which presidents make decisions and seek to shape foreign, economic, and domestic policy. The course is intended to address several questions about the presidency. These questions include but are not limited to: What is the relationship of the presidency with other governmental institutions? To what extent do presidents compromise with other elected officials? How often do presidents respond to public opinion? Which theories best explain how presidents make decisions? What constraints influence the president's ability to demonstrate leadership in the United States political system? One of the core tenets of this class is **leadership**. While the knowledge that we extract from academic work is important, the principles of leadership can be practically applied to your own lives and careers.

## 2 Course Objectives

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Recognize the structure, powers, and responsibilities of the executive branch.
2. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of presidents and their administrations.
3. Identify relevant and recent scholarship in presidential studies.
4. Evaluate presidential leadership on the basis of scholarship in presidential studies.
5. Identify the importance and weight of executive decision-making in democratic politics.

The American Presidency is one of the most dynamic institutions in American Government. These course objectives are met in the exploration of four units: presidential power, institutions, presidential decision-making, and the Office of the Presidency. Students demonstrate their learning of these objectives in a final course presentation in the last two weeks of the quarter.

### **3 Required Text**

In an effort to save you money, there are no textbooks or printed reader for this course. All required readings will be found online. Please visit the course website for frequent updates. If you have trouble with accessing course materials or prefer printed readings, please contact me to make alternate arrangements.

### **4 Course Requirements**

Your final grade is based on seven different components. These components are designed to give a fair and comprehensive assessment of your progress in this course.

Percentage	Assignment
5%	<i>Pre-Assessment:</i> In a one-to-two page paper, students will be asked to analyze the modern presidency. The pre-assessment is due the first week of class, on <b>Tuesday, April 3.</b>
15%	<i>Presidential Profile:</i> Students will be asked to profile a modern president. The profile is 7-8 pages in length and is due the sixth week of class, <b>Thursday, May 3</b>
15%	<i>Field Trip:</i> As a class, we will travel to the Richard Nixon Library and Museum during the fourth week of the quarter, <b>Saturday, April 21.</b>
10%	<i>Presentation:</i> Students will be required to complete a proposal to bring a presidential library on campus. These presentations are scheduled for the eighth, ninth, and tenth weeks of the quarter.
15%	<i>Participation:</i> This class requires students to participate in active discussion in class. The expectation is that students will participate at least once during every course meeting. For students who feel reluctant to speak up in class, I will extend class discussion to three social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Share course lessons on these platforms with BOTH hashtags <b>#learningthepresidency</b> and <b>#learnbydoing</b> . Students who successfully have a member of Congress like, retweet, or comment on their post (based on the course material) will unlock 1.5% extra credit for the course. Students who get blocked by Donald Trump on Twitter (for a nondefamatory post based on the course material) will unlock 5% extra credit for the course. Students are also expected to be present and on time. Each lecture counts as a point. You lose 1/2 point for tardiness. Absences and tardiness will not be excused under any circumstances.
15%	<i>Midterm Exam:</i> To be held on the fifth week of the quarter, <b>Thursday, April 26.</b>
25%	<i>Final Exam:</i> To be held on <b>Thursday, June 7.</b>

#### 4.1 Field Trip

A formal, required component of this course is a class field trip. We will be visiting The Richard Nixon Library and Museum (18001 Yorba Linda Boulevard, Yorba Linda, CA 92886; (714) 933-3383; nixonlibrary.gov; Approximately 18 miles from campus; Admission: \$10 with BroncoID) on **Saturday, April 21** at 10:00 AM. Please note that this is on a Saturday morning and will last into the early afternoon. There is also a wedding scheduled at the Library this day and we won't have access to the White House East Room. This visit is also scheduled in the fourth week of the quarter (shortly before midterm exams). Students are expected to arrange their own transportation and to pay for their own admission.

The field trip is worth 10% of your final course grade. The field trip will also include

various assignments and tasks to maximize your experience at the library. The intention of the field trip is to give context and background to your profiles, proposals, and presentations. For an overview of the CSU's regulations on course field trips, please refer to CSU Executive Order 1062.

## 4.2 Extra Credit

Students also have the ability to earn up to two percent of course credit in one of two ways. First, students can visit the other Presidential Library in Southern California. The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library (40 Presidential Drive, Simi Valley, CA 93065; (805) 522-2977; reaganfoundation.org, Approximately 70 miles from campus; Admission: \$25.00). The library is open seven days a week, 10am-5pm.

Second, students can attend an event at Citrus College scheduled for Wednesday, April 3 at 10:00am. The event, "A Presidential Progress Report: Grading the Trump Administration," will bring together faculty members from local area universities (including myself) to speak about this most recent presidential administration. Approximately 10 miles from campus, no price for admission. The event will be held in the Center for Innovation, Room 159.

These are both optional opportunities. You can only claim credit for one opportunity. If you do choose to complete this credit, you must be responsible for arranging your own transportation. To receive credit, students are required to submit a 2-3 page, double-spaced paper. For the Reagan visit, students must summarize which critical aspects and events of the Reagan administration are missing from the museum exhibits. This task requires students to do some independent research. In addition, students must turn in a ticket stub or receipt from the museum. For the Citrus event, students must summarize the major points discussed during the panel and assess how the most recent President Barack Obama might be graded under the criteria discussed in the panel. This task also requires students to do some independent research.

## 5 Communication

Office hours are great for getting detailed answers and clarification. Furthermore, you are welcome to visit office hours if you are in search of academic advising. I encourage **everyone** to come to office hours at some point in the quarter. It will help me to get to know you better and it will help you do well in this class. Office hours have been statistically proven to help your grade.

Whenever I am in my office (94-316), I am happy to meet with you. I am guaranteed to be in my office during dedicated office hours, but you can also schedule an appointment so we can meet when it is convenient for you. I do not make formal appointments during drop-in hours. Feel free to contact me online via Facebook chat (marioguerrero). I am frequently online and will be happy to answer your questions whenever I can.

## 6 Academic Honesty

Cal Poly Pomona takes academic honesty very seriously. Cheating is not tolerated and students will be held accountable for cheating on an assignment or an exam. Violators will receive an F in the course and then be referred to the Dean of Students and Judicial Affairs for further disciplinary action that may result in suspension. There should be no reason for you to feel compelled to cheat in this class. If you feel overwhelmed with the course, please do not hesitate to contact me for help.

## 7 Special Assistance

A wide range of services is available to support students in their efforts to meet the course requirements. Cal Poly Pomona offers counseling for personal and academic concerns at the Counseling and Psychological Services at no additional charge to students (Building 66-110, 909-869-3220). Additionally, Student Health Mental Services (Building 46, 909-869-3070) provides a range of services to help students identify and overcome obstacles stemming from financial, emotional, social, or family situations. The Disability Resource Center (Building 9-103, 909-869-3333) also provides academic support services to eligible students with temporary and permanent disabilities. You must register with DRC prior to receiving these accommodations.

Separately from these services, the University Writing Center (Library 2921) provides assistance to students writing papers. The Writing Center offers students 30-minute one-on-one appointments. Writing Center tutors specialize in reading for content, but will also read papers for grammar and style. Please utilize this resource if you know you need help with your writing.

## 8 Course Schedule

Please note that the following schedule is subject to change throughout the quarter. Students are expected to complete the reading before each individual class meeting.

### UNIT 1 PRESIDENTIAL POWER

**Tuesday, March 27, 2018** Course Introduction. What "makes" a president?

*Readings* NO READING

**Thursday, March 29, 2018** No Class. Western Political Science Association Conference.

*Readings* Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Rating the Presidents: From Washington to Clinton. *Political Science Quarterly* 112(2): 179-190.

**Tuesday, April 3, 2018** Evaluating the Presidency. How do we evaluate the president in the past, present, and future?

*Readings* James Fallows. 2012. "Obama, Explained." *The Atlantic*. 6 February.  
Brandon Rottinghaus and Justin Vaughn. 2018. "Official results of the 2018 presidents & executive politics presidential greatness survey." Web.

PRE-ASSESSMENT DUE: TUESDAY, APRIL 3

GRADING THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3 Citrus College, Building: CI 159, 10:00am

**Thursday, April 5, 2018** The Framers' Intent. How does the concept of "energy" translate into current presidential administrations?

*Readings* Jeffrey K. Tulis. 2003. "The Two Constitutional Presidencies." *The Presidency and the Political System*. Washington DC: CQ Press.

**Tuesday, April 10, 2018** The Imperial Presidency. What is the imperial presidency?

*Readings* Richard Neustadt. 1990. "Leader or Clerk?" *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidencies: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan*. New York: The Free Press.  
Richard Neustadt. 1990. The Power to Persuade. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidencies: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan*. New York: The Free Press.

**Thursday, April 12, 2018** The Presidency and Legislative Power. In the never-ending struggle between Congress and the presidency, which branch is better suited for leadership?

*Readings* Matt Bai. 2009. "Taking the Hill." *New York Times*, 2 June.  
Carl Hulse, Jeremy W. Peters, and Michael D. Shear. 2014. "Obama is Seen as Frustrating His Own Party." *New York Times*, 18 August.

## UNIT 2 INSTITUTIONS

**Tuesday, April 17, 2018** The Presidency and Executive Power. As the leader of the executive branch, does the president have control over the bureaucracy?

*Readings* Terry M. Moe. 2003. "The Presidency and the Bureaucracy: The Presidential Advantage." *The Presidency and the Political System*. Washington DC: CQ Press.  
Julie H. Davis. 2014. "Behind Closed Doors, Obama Crafts Executive Actions." *New York Times*, 18 August.

**Thursday, April 19, 2018** The Presidency and Rhetorical Power. How has the president's use of rhetoric changed over time?

*Readings* Samuel Kernell. 1997. The Growth of Going Public. *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*. Washington DC: CQ Press.

FIELD TRIP TO NIXON LIBRARY: SATURDAY, APRIL 21, 2018

**Tuesday, April 24, 2018** The Presidency and Judicial Power. What developments in the modern presidency has influenced the president's relationship with the judiciary?

*Readings* David A. Yalof. 2003. The Presidency and the Judiciary. *The Presidency and the Political System*. Washington DC: CQ Press.

MIDTERM EXAM: THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2018

### UNIT 3 PRESIDENTIAL DECISION-MAKING

**Tuesday, May 1, 2018** Presidential Decision-Making. How do individual president's display different decisionmaking skills?

*Readings* Richard E. Neustadt. 1990. Men in Office. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidencies: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan* New York: The Free Press.

Roger B. Porter. 1982. Organizing the White House for Presidential Decision Making. *Presidential Decision Making*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Thursday, May 3, 2018** The President and Foreign Policy. In examining decision-making, what factors seem to influence foreign policy decisions?

*Readings* James P. Pfiffner. 2011. Decision Making in the Obama White House. *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41(2): 244-262.

PRESIDENTIAL PROFILE DUE: THURSDAY, MAY 3

**Tuesday, May 8, 2018** The President and Domestic Policy. What constraints do presidents face in the domestic arena that are not present in foreign policy?

*Readings* Stuart Eizenstat. 1992. "Economists and White House Decisions." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 6(3): 65-71.

### UNIT 4 THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

**Thursday, May 10, 2018** The Executive Office of the President and the Evolving Role of the Vice-President. Has the Executive Office, including the Vice-President's office,

evolved beyond the scope of its original power?

- Readings* John P. Burke. 2003. "The Institutional Presidency." *Three Presidency and the Political System*. Washington DC: CQ Press.
- Silverstein, Gordon. 2009. Bush, Cheney, and the Separation of Powers: A Lasting Legal Legacy? *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 39(4): 878-895.
- Traub, James. 2009. After Cheney. *New York Times*, 24 November.

**Tuesday, May 15, 2018** The Evolving Role of the First Lady and Women Executives. Is the United States ready for a woman president?

- Readings* Heldman, Caroline. 2007. Cultural Barriers to a Female President in the United States. *Rethinking Madam President*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

### UNIT 5 LEARN BY DOING: RANKING THE PRESIDENTS

**Thursday, May 17, 2018** Presentations I

- Readings* No Readings

**Tuesday, May 22, 2018** Presentations II

- Readings* No Readings

**Thursday, May 24, 2018** Presentations III

- Readings* No Readings

**Tuesday, May 29, 2018** Presentations IV

- Readings* No Readings

**Thursday, May 31, 2018** Course Conclusion

- Readings* NO READINGS

FINAL EXAM: THURSDAY, JUNE 7, 11:30AM - 1:30PM