

Political Science 3260 – Cal Poly Pomona
Fall 2019
American Presidency

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Office Hours: M 8:30-9:30am, 11:00am-12:00pm Tu 1:00-3:00pm, W 10:00am-12:00pm, Th 1:00-3:00pm, by appointment

Office Location: Building 94, Room 303

Classroom: Building 5, Room 138

Class Time: TuTh 10:00 – 11:15am

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 executive 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.

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 relevant scholarship.
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.

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.

Course Requirements

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

%	Assignment	Description
5%	Pre-Assessment	In a one-to-two page paper, students will be asked to collect their thoughts about presidential success. The pre-assessment is due the first week of class on Tuesday, August 27, 2019 (Week 1).
10%	Presidential Profile	Students will be asked to profile a modern president. The profile is 7-8 pages in length and is due on Thursday, October 24, 2019 (Week 9).
10%	Field Trip	As a class, we will travel to the Richard Nixon Library and Museum on Saturday, October 12, 2019 (Week 7). If you cannot arrange to make it on this trip, you should drop the course. More information about the field trip can be found on the next page.

%	Assignment	Description
10%	Presentation	Students will be required to complete a proposal to build an annex for a presidential library on the Cal Poly Pomona campus. These presentations are scheduled in the last weeks of the semester. Presentations are scheduled to begin on Tuesday, November 26, 2019 (Week 14).
10%	Participation	This class requires students to participate in active discussion in class. The expectation is that students will participate at least once each week. For students who feel reluctant to speak up in class, I will extend class discussion to three social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Make sure to tag your posts with the hashtag #pls326. Students are also expected to be present and on time. Each lecture counts for a point. You lose ½ point for tardiness. Absences and tardiness will not be excused under any circumstances.
30%	Midterm Exams	There will be two midterm exams in the semester. One held on Tuesday, September 17 (Week 4), and the other held on Tuesday, November 19 (Week 13). Each is worth 15% of your final grade and the second will not be cumulative.
25%	Final Exam	To be held on Tuesday, December 10, 9:00-10:50am in 5-138. The final will be cumulative.

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: \$15 with BroncoID) on **Saturday, October 12**. As this is on a Saturday, make sure to make appropriate arrangements on time. Students are expected to arrange their own transportation and 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 and presentations. For an overview of the CSU's regulations on course field trips, please refer to CSU Executive Order 1062.

Extra Credit

Students also have the ability to earn up to four percent of course credit by attending 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.

If you do choose to complete this credit, you are responsible for arranging your own transportation. To receive credit, students are required to submit a 2-3 page, double-spaced paper explaining which 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 receipt from the purchase of admission.

Communication

Office hours are great for getting detailed answers and clarification. I encourage everyone to come to office hours at some point during the semester. It will help me to get to know you better and it will help you do well in this class. Academic studies have proven that office hours statistically improve a student's grade.

Whenever I am in my office (94-303), I am happy to meet with you. I am guaranteed to be in my office during dedicated hours, but you are also able to schedule an appointment to meet when it is convenient for you. Feel free to contact me on Facebook messenger, I am frequently online and will be happy to answer your questions whenever I can.

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 exam. Violators will receive a 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.

Special Assistance

A wide range of services is available to support students in their efforts to keep up with coursework. The following services are open to all students, use them when necessary:

- **Counseling and Psychological Services** (Building 66, Room 110; 909-869-3220; <https://www.cpp.edu/~healthcounseling/counseling/>): At no additional cost to students, Counseling and Psychological Services provides counseling for both personal and academic concerns.

- **Student Health & Wellness Services** (Building 46; 909-869-3070; <https://www.cpp.edu/~healthcounseling/>): This office provides a range of services to help students identify and overcome obstacles stemming from financial, emotional, social, or family situations.
- **Disability Resource Center** (Building 9, Room 103; 909-869-3333; <https://www.cpp.edu/~drc/>): This office provides academic support services to eligible students with temporary and permanent disabilities. You must register with the DRC prior to receiving these accommodations.
- **Learning Resource Center** (Library 2919; 909-869-3502; <https://www.cpp.edu/~lrc/>): This office promotes student success through tutoring, workshops, test preparation, and study skills development. They also house the University Writing Center (Library 2921), which provides assistance to students writing papers. The Writing Center offers students 30-minute, one-on-one appointments. Please utilize this resource if you need help with writing.

Course Schedule

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

I. Presidential Power

Thursday, August 22, 2019. Course Introduction. What “makes” a president?

Readings: No reading

Tuesday, August 27, 2019 and Thursday, August 29, 2019. Evaluating the Presidency. How do we evaluate the presidency in the past, present, and future?

Readings Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Rating the Presidents: From Washington to Clinton. *Political Science Quarterly* 112(2): 179-190.
James Fallows. 2012. “Obama Explained.” *The Atlantic*. 6 February.
Brandon Rottinghaus and Justin Vaughn. 2018. “Official results of the 2018 presidents and executive politics presidential greatness survey.” Web.

Assignments Pre-Assessment due on Tuesday, August 27

Tuesday, September 3, 2019 and Thursday, September 5, 2019. 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, September 10, 2019 and Thursday, September 12, 2019. 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.

II. Institutions

Tuesday, September 17, 2019. Midterm I

Readings No Readings

Thursday, September 19, 2019 and Tuesday, September 24, 2019. 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.

Thursday, September 26, 2019 and Tuesday, October 1, 2019. 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, October 3, 2019 and Tuesday, October 8, 2019. 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.

Thursday, October 10, 2019. The Presidency and Judicial Power. What developments in the modern presidency have 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.

Field Trip to Nixon Library. **Saturday, October 12, 2019**

III. Presidential Decision-Making

Tuesday, October 15, 2019 and Thursday, October 17, 2019. 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.

Tuesday, October 22, 2019 and Thursday, October 24, 2019. 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.

Assignments Presidential Profile Due, Thursday, October 24, 2019

Tuesday, October 29, 2019 and Thursday, October 31, 2019. 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.

IV. The Office of the President of the United States

Tuesday, November 5, 2019 and Thursday, November 7, 2019. 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 as well?

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

James Traub. 2009. "After Cheney." *New York Times*, 24 November.

Tuesday, November 12, 2019 and Thursday, November 14, 2019. The Evolving Role of the First Lady and Women Executives. When will the United States elect a woman president?

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

Tuesday, November 19, 2019. Midterm II

Readings No Readings

V. Learn by Doing: Ranking the Presidents

Tuesday, November 26, 2019. Presentations I.

Readings No readings

Thursday, November 28, 2019. Thanksgiving Holiday. No Class.

Readings No readings

Tuesday, December 3, 2019. Presentations II.

Readings No readings

Thursday, December 5, 2019. The Evolution of the American Presidency. How has the structure, strength, and evolution of the executive affected individual presidential administrations? How much power does the person behind the office have to transform American government?

Readings No readings

Final Exam. **Tuesday, December 10, 2019, 9:00-10:50am, 5-138.**