

**POLS 4610**  
**The U.S. Presidency**  
**Fall 2018**

**Instructor**

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Office Hours: By appointment

**Course Schedule**

Tuesday & Thursday  
3:30 PM - 4:45 PM  
Baldwin Hall 311

**Course Description**

This seminar is intended as a broad survey of the literature on presidential and executive branch politics in order to provide students with an introduction to the American presidency. The central focus of the course will be on the U.S. Presidency, but much of what we discuss will have direct relevance for the study of executive politics more generally. As such, we will focus on the role of the president in the U.S. political system, presidential selection, executive politics, inter-branch relations, presidential power, and executive policymaking. Throughout the course, we will pay attention to current political and scholarly controversies in terms of identifying important research questions as well as examining and improving upon existing research designs. By the end of the course, you should have a better understanding of research on the presidency.

**Required Texts**

Cohen, Jeffrey E. 2010. *Going Local: Presidential Leadership in the Post-Broadcast Age*. New York: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 978-0521141437.

Howell, William G. 2013. *Thinking about the Presidency: The Primacy of Power*. Princeton University Press. ISBN: 978-0691155340.

**Course Materials**

The readings for the course will be drawn from the list of books above, in addition to scholarly articles each week. Required books are available for purchase from the usual sources or may be checked out from the library. Unless otherwise indicated, assigned articles can be downloaded from [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org) or from the UGA library. For each article assigned, students should be able to answer the following questions:

1. What is the main argument?
2. What evidence do the authors use to argue their case?
3. Is the argument supported by the evidence or not?
4. What conclusions do the authors draw?

In addition to the books and articles, you should read the news on a daily basis. The New York Times ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)) and the Washington Post ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)) are two excellent sources of news on politics and government.

**General Expectations**

I expect all students to behave professionally and respectfully in this class. You are expected to attend class regularly, to show up on time, and be prepared to participate in discussions. You are responsible for all material in the readings and lectures, even if you are unable to attend class. It is your responsibility to remain aware of specific deadlines or dates posted on the syllabus and to be sure that assignments are completed on time.

## Course Requirements and Grading

Your grade in this class will be assigned according to the following:

1. **Attendance & Participation** (15% of final grade): Students are expected to be familiar with assigned readings and should be prepared to intelligently discuss and debate issues from the readings during class. As such, class attendance and participation will be vital to your success in this class. To be awarded full participation points you must attend class, read any assigned materials, and actively engage the class in discussion.
2. **Written Assignment** (25% of final grade): A written assignment will be due during the term. This assignment is designed to encourage students to engage with the course readings. Please take note of the due date for the paper and mark it on your calendar now. Papers are expected to be 6-8 pages in length, double-spaced with 1-in margins. You should include a reference page with your paper, but this page will not count toward the page length requirement. *Your grade will be penalized if there are spelling or grammatical errors in the completed paper.* Choose one of the following topics on which to write your paper:
  - *Paper Option 1:* You will complete a 6-8 page paper analyzing a historical election. You will assess why the winning candidate won and why the losing candidate lost. You will consider both underlying public opinion and the campaigns of the candidates.
  - *Paper Option 2:* You will write a 6-8 page paper examining a campaign promise made by President Obama or President Trump. You will assess what attempts the president has made to implement this promise, what tools or formal powers he has used, what obstacles impeded his success, and how successful he has been in achieving his goal.

Assignments turned in late will be penalized one letter grade for each day they are late. After one week, late assignments will no longer be accepted. You must turn in a printed paper copy of your written assignment in order to be accepted. Electronic submissions will not be allowed.

3. **Midterm Exam** (30% of final grade): Please take note of this date and mark it on your calendar now. Exams are closed book and will include both short answer and essay questions. A blue book will be required for each exam.
4. **Final Exam** (30% of final grade): Please take note of this date and mark it on your calendar now. Exams are closed book and will include both short answer and essay questions. The final exam is cumulative and will include material covered in the class lectures and the assigned reading. A blue book will be required for each exam.

Missed exams will only be excused for a documented illness (documentation must be provided by a physician) or a death in the family. If you are excused from an exam, I reserve the right to alter the format and substance of the makeup exam (e.g. you may not get the same exam as everyone else).

Course grades will be assigned as follows: 93–100% = A, 90–93% = A-, 87–90% = B+, 83–87% = B, 80–83% = B-, 77–80% = C+, 73–77% = C, 70–73% = C-, 60–70% = D, 0–60% = F.

No “extra credit” will be assigned under any circumstances.

### **Instructor Availability**

I am available to meet with students by appointment if anyone cannot attend my posted office hours. Please email me to schedule a meeting.

### **Special Needs and Academic Honesty**

Students with special needs that require accommodation should notify me and the Office for Disability Services as soon as possible so the appropriate arrangements can be made. All information as well as documentation is considered confidential. All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. See the Academic Honesty Policy for details on what is expected of you (<https://ovpi.uga.edu/sites/default/files/uga-academc-honesty-policy-may-07.pdf>).

### **Emergency Preparedness**

Emergencies during the course of the semester are rare, but it is important to be as prepared as possible should one occur. If the fire alarm sounds, we will exit the building and reassemble in front of Baldwin Hall to make sure everyone exited the building. If there is a tornado warning, we will move to the shelter location in the lowest level (basement) of Baldwin Hall and account for everyone. If you have concerns about other emergency scenarios or if you have special circumstances that I need to know about in case of an emergency, please speak to me after class.

### **Useful Websites:**

- Trump Presidential Actions: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/>
- The Obameter. *Politifact*.  
<http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/promises/obameter/>
- The Trump-O-Meter. *Politifact*.  
<http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/promises/trumpometer/>
- New York Times: [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)
- Washington Post: [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)

# Course Schedule

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

## Week of August 14

## Course Overview & History

- US Constitution
- *Federalist No. 69 & No. 70*

## Week of August 21

## Studying the Presidency

- Howell, *Thinking about the Presidency*.

## Week of August 28

## The Presidency as an Institution

- Walcott, Charles E., and Karen M. Hult. 2005. "White House Structure and Decision Making: Elaborating the Standard Model." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 35(2): 303-318.
- Klein, Ezra. 2014. "The Green Lantern Theory of the Presidency, Explained." *Vox*.

## Week of September 4

## Presidential Elections

- Collins, Keith and Gabriel J.X. Dance. 2018. "How Researchers Learned to Use Facebook 'Likes' to Sway Your Thinking." *New York Times*.
- Cohen, Marty, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2016. "Party Versus Faction in the Reformed Presidential Nominating System." *PS Political Science & Politics* 49(4): 701-708

## Week of September 11

## Presidential Approval

- Brace, Paul and Barbara Hinckley. 1991. "The Structure of Presidential Approval: Constraints Within and Across Presidencies." *Journal of Politics* 53(4): 993-1017.
- Gallup Presidential Job Approval Center

## Week of September 18

## Character and Performance

- Moe, Terry M, and William G. Howell. 1999. "Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*.

## Week of September 25

## Presidential Power and Leadership

- Cohen, *Going Local* (Selected chapters).

## October 4 (Thurs)

## Midterm Exam

**Week of October 9****The President and Congress**

- Canes-Wrone, Brandice and Scott de Marchi. 2002. "Presidential Approval and Legislative Success." *Journal of Politics* 64(2): 491-509.

**Week of October 16****Presidential Bargaining**

- Gilmour, John B. 2011. "Political Theater or Bargaining Failure: Why Presidents Veto." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41(3): 471-487.
- Phillips, Amber. 2018. "Why did Trump threaten to veto a spending bill hours before he signed it?" *The Washington Post*.

**Week of October 23****The Unilateral Presidency**

- Prokop, Andrew. 2014. "How Barack Obama is expanding presidential power – and what it means for the future." *Vox*.
- Bolton, Alexander and Sharece Thrower. 2016. "Legislative Capacity and Executive Unilateralism." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(3): 649-663.

**Week of October 30****The President and the Courts**

- Johnson, Timothy and Jason Roberts. 2004. "Presidential Capital and the Supreme Court Nomination Process." *Journal of Politics* 66(3): 663-683.
- Charlie Savage. 2017. "Trump is rapidly reshaping the judiciary – Here's how." *New York Times*.
- **Thursday, November 1: Written assignment DUE**

**Week of November 6****Presidents and the Media**

- Kernell, Samuel and Laurie L. Rice. 2011. "Cable and the Partisan Polarization of the President's Audience." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41(4): 693-711.
- Ember, Sydney. 2017. "Some See Media Bias. But 'the Enemy'? Not Quite." *The New York Times*.

**Week of November 13****Foreign Policy**

- Allen, Danielle. 2018. "Trump's Foreign Policy is Perfectly Coherent." *The Washington Post*.
- Ignatius, David. 2018. "Trump Can't Win at Foreign Policy the Way He Wins at Golf." *The Washington Post*.

**November 19 - 23****Thanksgiving Break****Week of November 27****Presidential Appointments & Review**

- Hollibaugh, Gary E., Gabriel Horton, and David E. Lewis. 2014. "Presidents and Patronage." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(4): 1024-1042.

- Rein, Lisa and Andrew Ba Tran. 2017. "How the Trump era is changing the federal bureaucracy." *The Washington Post*.

**December 6**

**Final Exam**

- 3:30 PM - 6:30 PM, Baldwin 311