

**Political Science 4610**  
**THE U.S. PRESIDENCY**  
Spring 2020 (52593)  
Baldwin 102  
MWF 2:30 - 3:20 p.m.

Dr. Jamie L. Carson  
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## **Course Overview**

This course is intended as a broad survey of the literature on presidential and executive branch politics. 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 how the executive branch operates.

## **Required Texts**

- Edwards, George C. III. 2019. *Why the Electoral College is Bad for America*, 3rd edition. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Howell, William G. 2013. *Thinking About the Presidency: The Primacy of Power*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kriner, Douglas L. and Andrew Reeves. 2015. *The Particularistic President: Executive Branch Politics and Political Inequality*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sides, John, Michael Tesler, and Lynn Vavreck. 2018. *Identity Crisis: The 2016 Presidential Campaign and the Battle for the Meaning of America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

## **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 (<http://www.libs.uga.edu/ejournals/>). Please keep in mind that assigned readings or the course schedule may be altered at the discretion of the instructor.

## **General Expectations**

I expect all students to behave professionally 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 course will be based on the following components:

1. Attendance/Participation (15%)
2. Exam One (20%)
3. Exam Two (20%)
4. Final Paper (20%)
5. Final Exam (25%)

In terms of final grades in light of the +/- grading system, an A will be given to anyone receiving 94 or more points, an A- to those receiving 90-93 points, a B+ to those receiving 87-89 points, a B to those receiving 83-86 points, a B- to those receiving 80-82 points, a C+ to those receiving 77-79 points, a C to those receiving 73-76 points, a C- to those receiving 70-72 points, a D to those receiving 60 to 69 points, and an F to anyone receiving fewer than 60 points in the course.

### ***Class Attendance/Participation***

Your grade will be based on class attendance and the quality of your participation in class (see rubric for participation grades below). You are allowed one unexcused absence without penalty. Students are expected to participate through asking questions and answering inquiries raised in class. Keep in mind that it is difficult to participate without being physically present. To adequately prepare for class, all assigned readings should be completed by the dates indicated on the course schedule. Not all assigned readings may be discussed in class; nonetheless you are responsible for familiarizing yourself with them.

### ***Participation Rubric***

A – Student attends almost every class while consistently demonstrating that he or she has completed and understands the assigned readings by participating in class discussion meaningfully.

B – Student only attends most class meetings while completing all readings and actively participating in a meaningful way.

C – Student has perfect attendance but regularly fails to demonstrate completion of readings or participate in any meaningful way.

D – Student only attends most class meetings and regularly fails to demonstrate completion of readings or participate in any meaningful way.

F – Student regularly arrives late or misses class entirely, does not complete assigned readings, does not engage in class discussion meaningfully, or is disruptive or disrespectful.

### ***Writing Assignment***

Everyone will be required to complete a short writing assignment. This assignment will take the form of a “reaction paper” to a scholarly text on the presidency, where you will be asked to respond to several questions. Your completed paper should be approximately 4-5 pages in length in a typed, double-spaced format with one-inch margins. *Keep in mind that your grade on the paper will be penalized if there are grammatical or spelling errors in the completed paper.* Writing assignments turned in after the due date will lose one full letter grade for each day they are late.

### ***Exams***

There will be three exams in this course, including a final exam given during the scheduled examination period at the end of the semester. Exams are closed book and may include a mixture of identification, short answer, and/or essay questions. The final exam is cumulative and will include material covered in the class lectures and the assigned readings since the first day of class.

### **Miscellaneous**

No “extra credit” will be assigned in this course under any circumstances. Keep in mind that final grades may only be changed in the event of a clerical error (e.g., points summed incorrectly). Also, for privacy reasons, information pertaining to course grades cannot be discussed over the telephone or via email. A final grade of “Incomplete” will only be given in this course under extraordinary circumstances and is solely at the discretion of the instructor. The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

### **Instructor Availability**

If you would like to speak with me outside of class, feel free to stop by my office during scheduled office hours. Occasionally I have meetings during the day and may be unavailable. To ensure that I am in my office on a given day, email me ahead of time to set up a specific time to meet.

### **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. The link to more detailed information about academic honesty can be found at: [http://www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/culture\\_honesty.htm](http://www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/culture_honesty.htm).

### **Religious Holidays**

Students who are absent from academic or social activities because of religious observances will not be penalized. If you desire to be excused from class to observe a religious holiday, plan on notifying me in advance. You are still responsible for any material covered during the excused absence, but will be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up any work missed. If an examination is administered during the class at which you are excused for a religious observance, you should make arrangements with me as soon as you can to be examined at an alternate time or be given a comparable assignment.

### **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.

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### **Course Schedule** (Assigned readings are to be completed by the dates listed below.)

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| 1/8  | <b>Introduction</b>  |
| 1/10 | <i>The West Wing</i> – Season 1: “Pilot”   |
| 1/13 | <b>Studying the Presidency</b><br>Howell, <i>Thinking About the Presidency</i> (pgs. 1-70) |
| 1/15 | Howell, <i>Thinking About the Presidency</i> (pgs. 71-143)                                 |
| 1/17 | <i>The West Wing</i> – Season 1: “Let Bartlet Be Bartlet”                                  |

- 1/20 *No Class, MLK Day*
- 1/22 **Presidential Primaries**  
Aldrich, John. 2009. "The Invisible Primary and Its Effects on Democratic Choice." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42(1): 33-38.
- 1/24 *The West Wing* – Season 2: "In the Shadow of Two Gunmen: Part I"
- 1/27 Norrander, Barbara. 2006. "The Attrition Game: Initial Resources, Initial Contests, and the Exit of Candidates During the U.S. Presidential Primary Season." *British Journal of Political Science* 36: 487-507.
- 1/29 Sides, John, Chris Tausanovitch, Lynn Vavreck, and Christopher Warshaw. 2018. "On the Representativeness of Primary Electorates." *British Journal of Political Science*
- 1/31 *The West Wing* – Season 2: "In the Shadow of Two Gunmen: Part II"
- 2/3 **Presidential Elections**  
Sides, Tesler and Vavreck, *Identity Crisis* (pgs. 1-68)
- 2/5 Sides, Tesler and Vavreck, *Identity Crisis* (pgs. 69-153)
- 2/7 *The West Wing* – Season 2: "The Midterms"
- 2/10 Sides, Tesler and Vavreck, *Identity Crisis* (pgs. 154-220)
- 2/12 **Exam One**
- 2/14 *The West Wing* – Season 4: "20 Hours in America"
- 2/17 **The Electoral College**  
Edwards, *Why The Electoral College is Bad for America*, pgs. 1-100
- 2/19 Edwards, *Why The Electoral College is Bad for America*, pgs. 101-219
- 2/21 *The West Wing* – Season 4: "Game On"
- The Presidency as an Institution**
- 2/24 Ragsdale, Lyn and John Theis. 1997. "The Institutionalization of the American Presidency, 1924-92." *American Journal of Political Science* 41(4): 1280-1318.
- 2/26 Dickinson, Matthew and Kathryn Dunn Tenpas. 2002. "Explaining Increasing Turnover Rates Among Presidential Advisors, 1929-1997." *Journal of Politics* 64(2): 434-448.
- 2/28 *The West Wing* – Season 3: "Documentary Special"
- 3/2 **Presidential Approval**  
Kriner, Douglas L. and Eric Schickler. 2014. "Investigating the President: Committee Probes and Presidential Approval, 1953-2006." *Journal of Politics* 76(2): 521-534.

- 3/4 Christenson, Dino P. and Douglas L. Kriner. 2017. "Mobilizing the Public Against the President: Congress and the Political Costs of Unilateral Action." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(4): 769-785.
- 3/6 *The West Wing* – Season 2: "Lies, Damn Lies, and Statistics"
- 3/9 *No Class, Spring Break*
- 3/11 *No Class, Spring Break*
- 3/13 *No Class, Spring Break*
- 3/16 **The President and Congress**  
Canes-Wrone, Brandice and Scott de Marchi. 2002. "Presidential Approval and Legislative Success." *Journal of Politics* 64(2): 491-509.
- 3/18 Rogowski, Jon C. 2016. "Presidential Influence in an Era of Congressional Dominance." *American Political Science Review* 110(2): 325-341.
- 3/20 *The West Wing* – Season 2: "The Stackhouse Filibuster"
- 3/23 Hassell, Hans J. G. and Samuel Kernell. 2016. "Veto Rhetoric and Legislative Riders." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(4): 845-859.
- 3/25 **Exam Two**
- 3/27 *The West Wing* – Season 3: "On the Day Before"
- 3/30 **Unilateral Presidential Power**  
Ostrander, Ian and Joel Sievert. 2013. "What's So Sinister about Presidential Signing Statements?" *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 43(1): 58-80.
- 4/1 Thrower, Sharece. 2017. "To Revoke or Not Revoke? The Political Determinants of Executive Order Longevity." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(3): 642-656.
- 4/3 *The West Wing* – Season 5: "Shutdown"
- 4/6 **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.
- 4/8 Bailey, Michael, Brian Kamoie, and Forrest Maltzman. 2005. "Signals From the Tenth Justice: The Political Role of the Solicitor General in Supreme Court Decision Making." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(1): 72-85.
- 4/10 *The West Wing* – Season 5: "The Supremes"
- 4/13 **Presidential Power and Leadership**  
Gronke, Paul, Jeffrey Koch, and J. Matthew Wilson. 2003. "Follow the Leader? Presidential Approval, Presidential Support, and Representatives' Electoral Fortunes." *Journal of Politics* 65(3): 785-808

- 4/15 *No Class, Midwest Political Science Association Meeting (Chicago, IL)*
- 4/17 *No Class, Midwest Political Science Association Meeting (Chicago, IL)*
- 4/20 **Executive Branch Politics**  
Kriner and Reeves, *The Particularistic President*, pgs. 1-81
- 4/22 Kriner and Reeves, *The Particularistic President*, pgs. 82-184
- 4/24 *The West Wing* – Season 2: “Bartlett’s Third State of the Union”
- 4/27 **Presidents and the Media**  
Baum, Matthew A. and Samuel Kernell. 1999. “Has Cable Ended the Golden Age of Presidential Television?” *American Political Science Review* 93(1): 99-114.  
**\*Final Papers Due**
- 4/29 *No Class, Reading Day*
- 5/6 **Final Examination**, 3:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Here are the currently scheduled primary and caucus dates for the 2020 election:

### **February**

**February 3:** Iowa caucuses

**February 11:** New Hampshire primary

**February 22:** Nevada Democratic caucuses

**February 29:** South Carolina Democratic primary

### **March**

**Super Tuesday (March 3):** Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont and Virginia primaries

**March 7:** Louisiana primary

**March 8:** Maine Democratic caucuses and Puerto Rico Republican primary

**March 10:** Hawaii Republican caucuses, North Dakota Democratic "firehouse caucus," Idaho, Michigan, Mississippi, and Missouri primaries

**March 17:** Arizona, Florida, Illinois, and Ohio primaries

**March 24:** Georgia Democratic primary

### **April**

**April 4:** Alaska, Hawaii and Wyoming Democratic caucuses

**April 7:** Wisconsin primary

**April 28:** Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island primaries

### **May**

**May 5:** Indiana primary

**May 12:** Nebraska Republican primary and West Virginia primary

**May 19:** Kentucky and Oregon primaries

### **June**

**June 2:** Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico and South Dakota primaries

**June 7:** Puerto Rico Democratic primary

**June 16:** Washington, D.C., Democratic primary