

POLS 4610
U.S. Presidency
Spring 2025

Instructor

Dr. Michael S. Lynch
Office: Baldwin Hall 416
Email: mlynch@uga.edu
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30PM - 3PM and by appointment

Class Schedule

Tuesdays and Thursdays
11:10AM-12:25PM
Baldwin Hall 301

Course Description

This course is intended to provide students with an introduction to the American presidency. We will examine how the president is elected, how the president influences public opinion, how the president competes for power with Congress and the courts, and how the president influences public policy. Emphasis will be placed on the formal powers of the president and on how these powers are brought to bear on contemporary political issues..

Course Materials

The following book is recommended for the class. We will not follow the book closely, but will use it occasionally. Many students find it to be a helpful source of background material as well. I will be using the revised eighth edition. The ninth edition will work as well.

Pika, Joseph A. and John Anthony Maltese. *The Politics of the Presidency*.

In addition to the book, you should read the news on a daily basis. The [New York Times](#) and the [Wall Street Journal](#) are two excellent news sources. University of Georgia students have full digital access to both of these papers through the UGA Libraries (see this [website](#) for details).

Finally, we will also have readings that I will provide via eLC or will be available from the internet.

Course Grading

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

1. **Class attendance and participation** (10% 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. Any student that misses more than half of class meetings will receive an F for the semester.

2. **Written Assignments** (45% of final grade): Two written assignments will be due during the term. These assignments are designed to encourage students to engage with the course readings. Each of the two assignments is worth 22.5% of your grade.

- *Paper 1*: You will complete a 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. There is a 10-page maximum for this assignment.
- *Paper 2*: You will write a paper examining a campaign promise made by President Trump or Biden. 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. There is a 10-page maximum for this assignment.

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.

3. **Midterm Exam** (22.5% of final grade): Please take note of this date and mark it on your calendar now.

4. **Final Exam** (22.5% of final grade): Please take note of the date for the final exam and mark it on your calendar now.

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.

Other Issues (in no particular order)

1. **Disabilities**: Students with disabilities of any kind are strongly encouraged to tell me at the beginning of the semester, so appropriate accommodations can be made. If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting <http://drc.uga.edu>.
2. **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.
3. **Classroom Behavior**: Students should behave professionally throughout the course. Disruptive behavior in discussion sections will not be tolerated. Laptops and other

electronic may be used to take notes in class, but not in a way that is disruptive to other students.

UGA is committed to creating a dynamic, diverse, and welcoming learning environment for all students and has a [non-discrimination policy](#) that reflects this philosophy. Our class will respect all students regardless of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity or national origin, religion, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status.

4. **Cheating and Plagiarism:** All course work must meet the standards put forth in the University of Georgia's [Student Honor Code](#). See the [Academic Honesty Policy](#) for details on what is expected of you.
5. **FERPA Notice:** The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants students certain information privacy rights. See the registrar's explanation at <https://reg.uga.edu/general-information/ferpa/>.
6. **Well-being Resources:** UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community. Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit sco.uga.edu. Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the Embark@UGA program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.

UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.

- Well-being Resources: well-being.uga.edu
- Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu
- University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: caps.uga.edu or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273.
- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu
- Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: drc.uga.edu

Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting <https://well-being.uga.edu>.

7. **Artificial Intelligence-Based Software:** Students are allowed to use generative AI software for academic work, provided they document its use. This includes specifying the software used, the extent of its use, and how it contributed to the final product. AI-generated content must be cited appropriately, and students should include a brief reflection on how the AI tool helped them and what they learned from using it. The

work must remain original, with AI not replacing critical thinking or personal effort. Instructors will evaluate both the content and the documentation of AI use, considering proper documentation in grading. Failure to document AI use may result in penalties, including reduced grades or academic disciplinary actions. Cases of suspected misuse will be reviewed by the academic integrity committee. (This paragraph was generated with the assistance of Microsoft Copilot).

Tentative Schedule

Introduction

January 7 and 9

Intro and Course Overview

Klein, Ezra. 2014. [“The Green Lantern Theory of the Presidency, Explained.”](#)

[The Trump-o-meter](#). *Politifact*.

[Biden Promise Tracker](#). *Politifact*.

January 14 and 16

Origins and Expectations

[U.S. Constitution](#)

Federalist Papers [No. 69](#) and [No. 70](#)

Wehle, Kim. 2019. *How to Read the Constitution and Why*. Chapter 3.

Pika and Maltese. Chapter 1. (recommended)

January 21 and 23

Elections Intro

Abramowitz, Alan. [“Forecasting the 2008 Presidential Election with the Time-for-Change Model.”](#) and [“Will Time for Change Mean Time for Trump.”](#)

[538’s 2020 Election Forecasts](#)

Pika and Maltese. Chapter 2. (recommended)

January 28 and 30

Elections – Primaries

Fabrizio, Lee & Associates. 2020. [Post Election Exit Poll Analysis 10 Key Target States](#).

[The Green Papers](#)

Jason S. Byers and Jamie L. Carson. 2017. [“What’s Rules Got to Do with It? Parties, Reform, and Selection in the Presidential Nomination Process.”](#) (recommended)

February 4 and 6

Elections – Campaign Strategies and Effects

[“The pandemic is forcing Democrats to ask: How important is door-knocking, anyway?”](#)
Vox

Huber, Gregory A., and Kevin Arceneaux. 2007. [“Identifying the Persuasive Effects of Presidential Advertising.”](#) *American Journal of Political Science*

[The Living Room Candidate.](#) *Museum of the Moving Image.*

[“How Researchers Learned to Use Facebook ‘Likes’ to Sway Your Thinking.”](#) 2018. *New York Times.*

February 11 and 13

Presidential Approval

Druckman, James N. and Justin W. Holmes. 2004. [“Does Presidential Rhetoric Matter? Priming and Presidential Approval.”](#) *Presidential Studies Quarterly.*

[Gallup Presidential Job Approval Center](#)

Pika and Maltese. Chapter 3. (recommended)

February 18 and 20

Character and Performance

[Presidential Podcast.](#) *Washington Post*

Pika and Maltese. Chapter 4. (recommended)

February 25

Presidential Power

Moe, Terry M, and William G. Howell. 1999. [“Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory.”](#) *Presidential Studies Quarterly.*

Pika and Maltese. Chapter 5. (recommended)

February 27

Midterm

March 4 and 6

No Class – Spring Break

March 11 and 13

Presidential Power Cont.

[Biden Presidential Actions.](#)

Black et al. 2011. [“Assessing Congressional Responses To Growing Presidential Powers: The Case of Recess Appointments.”](#) *Presidential Studies Quarterly.*

[National Labor Relations Board v. Noel Canning](#)

Assignment #1 Due March 13.

March 18 and 20

Presidential Policymaking

[Regulatory Rollbacks Have Changed the Nature of Presidential Power.](#) 2020. *Regulatory Review*

Coleman, Sarah. R. 2018. "A Promise Unfulfilled, An Imperfect Legacy: Obama and Immigration Policy." In *The Presidency of Barack Obama: A First Historical Assessment*.

Prokop, Andrew. 2014. "How Barack Obama is expanding presidential power – and what it means for the future." *Vox*.

[West Virginia v. EPA](#)

[Presidential Actions](#). Whitehouse.gov.

March 25 and 27

Presidential War Powers

Fisher and Adler. 1998. "War Powers Resolution: Time to Say Goodbye."

[US Forces Abroad](#).

[War Powers Resolution Reporting Project](#).

[Cheney's Law](#)

Pika and Maltese. Chapter 10. (recommended)

April 1 and 3

Congress and the President

Reconciliation Bill Article TBA.

Ryan, Josh. 2020. "Congress and the Executive in the Age of Trump." In *New Directions in Congressional Politics*.

Pika and Maltese. Chapter 8. (recommended)

April 8 and 10

Executive Branch Politics

Weingast, Barry R. 2005. "Caught in the Middle: The President, Congress and the Political Bureaucratic System." In *Institutions of American Democracy: The Executive Branch*.

Lewis, Michael. 2018 *The Fifth Risk*. Selected Chapters.

Pika and Maltese. Chapter 6. (recommended)

April 15 and 17

The President and the Courts

Binder, Sarah and Forrest Maltzman. 2016. "Is Advice and Consent Broken?" In *Congress Reconsidered*.

Boyd et al. 2016. "Nuclear Fallout: Investigating the Effects of Senate Procedural Reform on Judicial Nominations." *The Forum*. 13: 623-642.

Moraski, Byron J., and Charles R. Shipan. 1999. "The Politics of Supreme Court Nominations: A Theory of Institutional Constraints and Choices." *American Journal of Political Science*. 43: 1069-95.

Pika and Maltese. Chapter 7. (recommended) Assignment #2 Due April 17.

April 22 and 24 **Assessing Presidential Success and Final Exam Review**

[The Trump Presidency Is History. They're Writing the First Draft.](#) *New York Times*.

[A Partisan Chasm in Views of Trump's Legacy](#) *Pew Research*.

May 1 (12:00PM to 3:00PM)

Final Exam