

Draft Syllabus

A final version of the syllabus will be available on the first day of class

The American Presidency and Executive Power Wednesdays 10am-1pm, UC Washington Center

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Office hours: Monday/Wednesday 5-6pm (or by
appointment), Room 330

Course Instructor

I am a Ph.D. of American government and politics with specializations in the American presidency, public policy, parties, and polarization. My research focuses on presidential governance via the executive order and how political factors influence the ability of presidents to issue their most significant orders. At the University of Maryland, I taught classes about public policy and Congress to students who had internships related to those fields. By day, I'm a Campaigns & Elections Specialist at the National Education Association, where I do data work and help write strategic electoral plans for states with high priority elections.

Course Description

This course will put the current presidency in historical and theoretical context, drawing on a variety of readings and approaches. At its core, this class is about the problem of executive power in democratic government. We will study and reflect not only on the details of what the presidency is in theory and practice, we will also consider how it (and other parts of the system) might be changed to overcome the problems of governance that have plagued the U.S. The goal is to understand the work of the presidency and some of the different perspectives by which we might analyze presidents and their administrations.

Disclaimer: We may deal with real world issues of today. Our discussions will reflect these parameters and engage in some controversial "hot topics." This is an important part of our course, and you should be prepared to understand the politics of the situation separated from your own views.

Learning Objectives

The UCDC program emphasizes experiential learning and critical thinking and writing, which will be reflected in the work of this seminar.

- Goal #1: Students will complete assigned readings and participate in discussions about readings and world events each week in class.
- Goal #2: Students will write weekly reading reaction papers about the readings to pose questions about the material, including disagreements between authors, questions raised by authors, whether or not arguments are still valid years after they were made, etc.
- Goal #3: Students will write a research paper rooted in presidential literature (including but going beyond class readings) to pose and answer a question about the American presidency and presidential power.
- Goal #4: Students will successfully complete an internship in the Washington, DC, area and attend at least one congressional hearing or briefing, a think tank seminar or lecture, or NGO/advocacy/nonprofit event. They will write a learning report based on this event to discuss the content, something they learned, and how the event/content relate to the student's respective internship.

Course Materials and Accessibility

We will work primarily from the following textbooks (of which you should buy whatever cheap edition is available). UCDC will also have two copies available on reserve at the 4th Floor desk.

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Morris, Irwin L. 2010. *The American Presidency: An Analytical Approach*. Cambridge University Press.

Neustadt, Richard E. 1990. *Presidential Power and the Modern President*. Free Press.

In addition, you will be responsible for locating and reading academic journal articles and selected news stories listed for each class prior to class. I will make these readings available via e-mail and/or Dropbox whenever possible. You should also read major daily news sources (*New York Times*, *Washington Post*, CNN, Politico, etc.) to stay connected with current events and topics within the government and American politics.

I reserve the right to make changes to the course materials as the term progresses. This includes, but is not limited to, adding and subtracting articles and other readings.

Course Responsibilities and Assignments

Grades in the course derive from the following components. Any late work will be penalized with a lower grade at the rate of one letter grade per (calendar) day.

- **Class participation (15%):** You are responsible for completing all of the reading assignments listed on the schedule below for each week of class. Grades here are based on the quality of your discussion and questions, evidence of informed/insightful contributions, connections of academic material with the real world, and meaningful interactions with your peers. As a seminar, your participation is crucial to the flow of class. As the instructor, I will clarify concepts and try to highlight key ideas via questions, but the course will not simply be a three hour lecture where I provide all of the material each week.
- **Weekly reading responses (15%):** You will write a weekly reading response (typed and printed) for each class beginning on October 3. Each week's response should be two-thirds to a full double-spaced page and use at least one of the readings for that week as a way of discussing concepts, contrasting arguments, etc. The topic is your choice as long as it makes a serious effort to engage the readings. Completing these assignments should help you prepare for discussions in class: look for disagreements between authors, questions the readings raise, problems or gaps you find in the readings, whether or not the arguments still hold, etc. You should use parenthetical citations (author and page number) for quotations and construct your response with complete sentences and paragraphs.
- **Experiential learning report (10%):** You will attend (in person) at least one congressional or other government hearing or briefing, a think tank seminar or lecture, or NGO/advocacy/nonprofit event. At any point in the quarter before November 21, you will submit a brief report (minimum of one and a half double-spaced pages) about the event, its content, something you learned, and how it relates to your internship. If there are any connections to our course and its topics, you should include those observations as well.
 - Grades will be based on clearly communicating about the event, what you learned from it, and your observations.
 - The top of the report (before you start your narrative) should include pertinent details about the event: who held the event, where it happened, when it happened, the type of event (hearing, briefing, lecture, guest speaker, etc.), and an approximate count of the audience size.

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- **Research paper (60%):** You will write a 15-20¹ double-spaced page research paper based on some topic of interest to you related to the course syllabus. These thoughtful research papers should be rooted in the academic literature of the presidency and explore a question you have formulated about this literature. You will work with me to develop and define your research question over the course of class with pieces of the final paper due throughout the quarter.
 - Grades will be based on presentation, focus, clarity of purpose, presentation of an answer to your developed question, use of relevant literature, and clear preview of the paper. A rubric will be provided.
 - This is a formal research paper. Citations and a bibliography are required.
 - You should assume a relatively educated audience that is interested in the topic but uninformed about the particular question presented.
 - The paper is due Thursday, December 6, by 11:59pm by e-mail.

Grading Standards and Measurements

Throughout the course, I will provide comments and suggestions whenever possible on how to better prepare for classes and assignments. You have the ability to discuss grades and raise your concerns about all assignments. If you want to register a grade dispute, you must wait at least 24 hours from the time graded assignments are returned and must file your request within seven days of assignment return. **Requests for grade reevaluation on particular assignments that are submitted outside of this time or not in writing will not be considered.** Such requests should be typed and include clear reasoning regarding grounds for reevaluation. Upon review, grades may be lowered, raised, or stay the same.

The class will use the following scale of grades to percentages as shown below. I will only consider letters of recommendation for students who earn an A or higher in the course.

98 – 100 A+	87 – 89 B+	77 – 79 C+	67 – 69 D+	
94 – 97 A	83 – 86 B	73 – 76 C	63 – 66 D	<60 F
90 – 93 A-	80 – 82 B-	70 – 72 C-	60 – 62 D-	

Course Communication

The most direct way of getting in touch with me is e-mail. In most cases, I will respond to student e-mails within 24 hours of receipt, though turnaround time may be longer on breaks and weekends. You are also encouraged to schedule meetings with me to talk about specific issues with the class or other topics.

Attendance

It is crucial that you attend every class because a seminar requires the participation of its members. It is assumed that you have worked out your internship schedule so as to not conflict with this course. Each unexcused absence will lower your final course grade by one step (A- to B+, B+ to B, etc.). Please arrive on time for class and plan to stay for the entirety of the class. If you must leave early on a particular day for any reason, please notify me before class starts that you will be doing so. Absences for religious holidays and observances will be accommodated. If you are affected by such an observance, please contact me in writing by October 3 so we can plan accordingly. If your internship site has an event that you would like to attend during regularly scheduled class time, you should discuss it with me before the day of the event.

¹ Several campuses require 20 page research papers for major or other course credit. Students should check with their campus advisors before turning in a final paper that is less than 20 pages in length.

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Once per quarter, you may miss one class for such a reason, though you will not be able to make up the in-class work and will still be responsible for the material covered that day.

Weather Emergencies

In the event of a weather emergency, UCDC follows the federal government's decisions about delayed starts and closures.

Academic Misconduct

UCDC has a zero-tolerance policy for cheating, plagiarism, and any other form of dishonesty. Students should refer to their home campus Student Code of Conduct for the regulations that apply to them. The burden is on each student to know what behaviors constitute cheating and plagiarism. Ignorance of these behaviors is not an adequate defense.

Classroom Conduct

The following operating norms of interaction are necessary for a successful course. You must abide by these expectations:

- The value and quality of people in the class is never in question.
- The value and quality of work and ideas in the class is always in question.
- Being present to participate is both a physical and mental state. Phones should be away and computers only used for notes. If computers become a disruption or distraction, I will ask that they be removed from the classroom space. Please arrive on time and plan to stay the full time. Please keep eating to a minimum with noise-free foods.

Statement on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

The University of California is committed to creating and maintaining a community where all individuals who participate in University programs and activities can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. Every member of the community should be aware that the University prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence, and that such behavior violates both law and University policy. The University will respond promptly and effectively to reports of sexual harassment and sexual violence, and will take appropriate action to prevent, to correct, and when necessary, to discipline behavior that violates this policy on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence.

Students who wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct should contact UCDC's Counseling Services at UCDCCounseling@gmail.com. To report sexual misconduct to ask questions about UCDC policies and procedures regarding sexual misconduct, please contact the UCDC Title IX administrator, Josh Brimmeier (202-974-6214 or josh.brimmeier@ucdc.edu). Because the University of California is legally obligated to investigate reports of sexual misconduct, the confidentiality of reported misconduct cannot be guaranteed. You can click here for the [full UC policy](#).

Statement on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

In compliance with the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Public Law 93- 112) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336), University of California policy prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of disability in its programs, services, and activities. If you have an accommodation, please let me know at our first meeting (if not earlier) so the necessary arrangements can be made. Any student requiring an accommodation for a disability should contact me regarding your needs as soon as possible.

Schedule

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Our class will follow the below schedule. This plan is subject to change at my discretion with due notice given to the students with regard to readings and order of topics. In general, each class period will be designed to allow for some lecture, discussions of readings, and drawing connections between the academic and real world observations.

- Session 1 Introduction & Creating the Presidency
Morris 1-3
King, Gary. 1993. "The Methodology of Presidential Research." In *Researching the Presidency: Vital Questions, New Approaches*, ed. Edwards, Rockman, Kessel. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Session 2 Presidential Elections
Morris 5
PS symposia articles
Stevenson, Peter W. 2016. "[Trump is headed for a win, says professor who has predicted 30 years of presidential outcomes correctly.](#)" *Washington Post*. 23 September 2016.
Edwards, George C., III. 2016. "[Two of the most prominent arguments for the electoral college are completely wrong.](#)" *Washington Post*. 18 November 2016.
- Session 3 From Elections to Elected
Pffifner, James. 2011. "[Organizing the Obama White House.](#)" In *Obama in Office: The First Two Years*, ed. Thurber. Paradigm Publishers.
Sheth, Sonam, and Skye Gould. 2017. "[Who's Running the Government?](#)" *Business Insider*. 22 April 2017.
Pffifner, James. 2017. "[Why John Kelly can't tame the White House chaos.](#)" *Washington Post*. 18 August 2017.
- Due via e-mail: Topic statement and initial sources (1 page)
- Session 4 Power and Persuasion
Morris 4 (88-107)
Neustadt
- Session 5 Presidents and Congress (held with Congress seminar)
Morris 6
James, Scott C. 2005. "[The Evolution of the Presidency: Between the Promise and the Fear.](#)" In *The Executive Branch*, ed. Aberbach and Peterson. Oxford University Press.
Surowiecki, James. 2016. "[The Perils of Executive Action.](#)" *The New Yorker*. 8 August 2016.
Slattery, Elizabeth, and Andrew Kloster. 2014. "[An Executive Unbound: The Obama Administration's Unilateral Actions.](#)" *Heritage Foundation*. 12 February 2014.
Hawley, Erin. 2016. "[Obama's Curtain Call: A Look Back on a Legacy of Executive Overreach.](#)" *The Hill*. 24 December 2016.

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Due via e-mail: Literature review & bibliography

- Session 6
- Presidents and Unilateralism
- Howell, William G. 2005. "Introduction: Unilateral Powers: A Brief Overview." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 35(3): 417-439.
- Mayer, Kenneth R. 1999. "[Executive Orders and Presidential Power.](#)" *Journal of Politics* 61(2): 445-466.
- Mayer, Kenneth R., and Kevin Price. 2002. "Unilateral Presidential Powers: Significant Executive Orders, 1949-99." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 32(2): 367-386.
- Lowande, Kenneth S. 2014. "[After the Orders: Presidential Memoranda & Unilateral Action.](#)" *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 44(4): 724-741.

- Session 7
- Power and Time
- Morris 4 (107-132)
- Skowronek, Stephen. 1997. *The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to Bill Clinton*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Kreitner, Richard. 2016. "[What Time Is It? Here's What the 2016 Election Tells Us About Obama, Trump, and What Comes Next.](#)" *The Nation*. 22 November 2016.

Due via e-mail: Draft introduction and outline

- Session 8
- Presidents and Policy Leadership
- Morris 9-10
- Wildavsky, Aaron. 1966. "The Two Presidencies." *Trans-Action* 4(2).
- Canes-Wrone, Brandice, William G. Howell, David E. Lewis. 2008. "[Toward a Broader Understanding of Presidential Power: A Reevaluation of the Two Presidencies Thesis.](#)" *Journal of Politics* 70(1): 1-16.

- Session 9
- Presidents and the Courts
- Morris 7
- Krebhiel, Keith. 2007. "Supreme Court Appointments as a Move-the-Median Game." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(2): 231-240.
- Krutz, Glen S., Richard Fleisher, Jon R. Bond. 1998. "From Abe Fortas to Zoe Baird: Why Some Presidential Nominations Fail in the Senate." *American Political Science Review* 92(4): 871-881.

- Session 10
- Leadership and Evaluations
- Morris 11
- Greenstein, Fred I. 2006. "[Presidential Difference in the Early Republic: The Highly Disparate Leadership Styles of Washington, Adams, and Jefferson.](#)" *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36(3): 373-390.

Due via e-mail: Final paper