

The American Presidency and Executive Power

UCDC Fall 2019 Quarter

Tuesdays 3:00-6:00pm, UC Washington Center

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Office hours: Tuesdays 6:00-8:00pm

Course Instructor

I am a Ph.D. of American government and politics with specializations in the American presidency, public policy, polarization, and parties. 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. I have taught UCDC's presidency seminar since the Fall 2017 quarter. At the University of Maryland, I taught classes about public policy and Congress to students who had internships related to those fields. Outside of the classroom, I'm the Electoral Data Manager at Community Change & Community Change Action, non-profit organizations focused on building a movement led by everyday people to create change in their communities and across the country. In that work, I work with many different teams and partner organizations to help institute sound data practices for doing the best work possible in communities affected by injustice.

Course Description

Most Americans can name several presidents and even have opinions on "good" versus "bad" presidents. But how do we evaluate and measure what presidents do and our expectations for their leadership? This course will put the modern presidency in historical and theoretical context, drawing on a variety of readings and approaches over time to determine which framework best explains presidential (in)action. At its core, this class is about the question of executive power in democratic government. In addition to studying and reflecting on the theme of presidential power in theory and practice, we will also consider the limits to this power and how presidents achieve their goals. Ultimately, we aim to understand the work of the presidency and some of the different perspectives by which we might analyze or assess presidents and their administrations.

Disclaimer: We will 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 and gain professional experience and familiarity with Washington, DC, in the process.

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.

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.
(Any edition of the Neustadt book is acceptable.)

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 American politics and the presidency.

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. All assignments, especially the final research paper, should be drafted/stored in such a way that they are automatically saved and accessible to you from anywhere (like Google docs). Issues that arise from papers being deleted without saving or travel that impedes the ability to (re)submit an assignment on time do not constitute special circumstances, and those assignments will be penalized as detailed below. For all e-mailed assignments, especially the final paper, you should look for a confirmation e-mail affirming that the file is received and accessible/readable.

- **Class participation (25%):** 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, both within a given class and over the course of the quarter. 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 1. Each week's response should be two-thirds to a full single-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 (not just summarize) 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.
- **Data analysis paper (10%):** You will write a 3 double-spaced page paper on data analysis we perform as a class. The paper will focus on presidential evaluations with everyone

contributing to a survey that will be distributed and completed by as many people as possible. We will take some time to do statistical testing and data analysis as a class. You will then write a short paper discussing findings that you found interesting (something that appears to have statistical significance whether expected or not, something that we might expect to have statistical significance but does not, or something that has a coefficient sign opposite of what you might expect). These papers will allow you to step into the role of presidential scholar and get your hands on some data for guided data analysis.

- Grades will be based on writing, focus, clarity of purpose, presentation of a response to prompt. A rubric will be provided.
 - These are short pieces of formal writing. Citations and a bibliography are appropriate.
 - You should assume a relatively educated audience that is interested in the topic but uninformed about the particular question presented.
 - We will build the survey together as a class on October 8. You should bring 2-3 questions that you think should be asked to class that week.
 - The paper is due Friday, November 15, by 11:59pm by e-mail.
- **Research paper (50%):** You will write a 15¹ double-spaced page research paper based on some topic of interest to you related to presidential power. These thoughtful research papers should be rooted in our study of the presidency and explore a question you have formulated about this topic broadly considered. 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 writing, 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.
 - All pieces of your paper that you submit before the final submission should include your name and research question.
 - The paper is due Friday, December 6, by 6:00 pm by e-mail and hard copy.
 - Please note that I must have an accessible, readable copy of the paper by December 10 at the very latest (with penalties applied). Failure to get me a copy of the paper by then will constitute a failure in the class.

Grading Standards and Measurements

Throughout the course, I will provide comments and suggestions whenever possible on 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 the graded assignment is returned and must file your request within seven days of the assignment's 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.

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.

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.

99 – 100 A+	87 – 89 B+	77 – 79 C+	67 – 69 D+	
94 – 98 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 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. Please arrive on time for class and plan to stay for the entirety of the class. If you must miss class due for medical reasons or emergency, please make every effort to communicate those absences before the class. Failing to report an absence constitutes an unexcused absence that will lower your final course grade. **Regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused, you are still responsible for the material covered and assignments due that day.** 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 1 so we can plan accordingly. If your internship site has a special event that you would like to attend during regularly scheduled class time, you should discuss it with me before the day of the event. 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 are still responsible for the material covered and assignments due that day. Additionally, you will need to write a 1-2 page description of what the event was, your role at the event, and what you learned while there. Failure to submit such a report will make the absence unexcused.

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 and discussions. If computers become a disruption or distraction, I will ask that they be removed from the classroom space. Please arrive on time

(at 6:30 pm) 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

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.

1. September 24 Introduction & Creating the Presidency
 Morris 1-3

2. October 1 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.

Due Friday, October 4, by 11:59 pm via e-mail: Research question (single question)

3. October 8 From Elections to Elected
 Pfiffner, James. 2011. "[Organizing the Obama White House.](#)" In *Obama in Office: The First Two Years*, ed. Thurber. Paradigm Publishers.
 Pfiffner, James. 2017. "[Why John Kelly can't tame the White House chaos.](#)" *Washington Post*. 18 August 2017.
 Anonymous. 2018. "I Am Part of the Resistance Inside the Trump Administration." *New York Times*. Online. 5 September 2018.
 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.

Due Tuesday, October 8, in class: Survey questions (2-3) for approval survey

4. October 15 Power and Persuasion
 Morris 4 (88-107)
 Neustadt 1-5

Due Friday, October 18, by 11:59 pm via e-mail: Topic statement

5. October 22 Presidents and Congress
 Morris 6
 Slattery, Elizabeth, and Andrew Kloster. 2014. "[An Executive Unbound: The Obama Administration's Unilateral Actions.](#)" *Heritage Foundation*. 12 February 2014.

Due Friday, October 25, by 11:59 pm via e-mail: Working bibliography

6. October 29 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.

Due Friday, November 1, by 11:59 pm via e-mail: Research tweets and hashtags

7. November 5 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. Chapter 3.
 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 Friday, November 8, by 11:59 pm via e-mail: Draft introduction and outline

8. November 12 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.

Due Friday, November 15, by 11:59 pm via e-mail: Data analysis paper

9. November 19 Presidents and the Courts
Morris 7
- November 26 No class – work on research papers
10. December 3 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 Friday, December 6, by 6:00 pm via e-mail and hard copy: Final paper