

# U.S. Presidency and Executive Politics

POLI 259

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## Course Description

The U.S. President is a key figure on the world stage whose words, actions, and influence are of interest to foreign leaders, domestic politicians, journalists, scholars, and the American mass public. But how do presidents wield this power? How do they influence legislators, bureaucrats, their parties, and the public? And who do presidents represent?

In this course, graduate students will begin to answer these questions as they examine the role of the institutional presidency, with special attention paid to the separation of powers. We will explore presidential power; presidents' interactions with Congress and the bureaucracy; presidential leadership of public opinion; and presidential representation. Students will see where the field has been and gain an understanding of gaps in the current literature in an effort to develop their own projects.

## Assignments

### Participation, Short Reviews, Seminar Leadership (40%)

You should be an active and engaged participant in this class. This means attending class, doing the readings, and contributing actively. Now, yes, it's a lot of reading! For some advice on why there's so much reading, why you should actually do it, and how to be a more efficient academic reader, see my post: "[Don't Take Shortcuts When It Comes to Course Readings.](#)" Also see Nate Meyvis on "[Actually Reading the Book.](#)" I've also assigned a lot of books, the cost of which can add up. However, many of these titles can be downloaded as PDFs *for free* through the library website or can be found there in their physical form. If you cannot find a book I've assigned through the library, please talk to me. I probably have the book, and I'm happy to let you borrow it.

Each week, two students will lead class discussion. To prepare, each discussion leader should write a 3ish page (double spaced) memo analyzing the week's reading (each leader is responsible for all of the readings, do not split them). The memo should not summarize the readings. It should be a critical, analytical piece. Questions you might answer include: what do we learn from these readings? What do the authors agree or disagree about? Where are there gaps in the literature? What kind of data and methods are used, and why? How would someone interested in this topic build on what we've read? Please share your memo on Canvas by 12 noon on Thursday (giving everyone time to review the memo before class on Friday). *I will assign discussion leaders on the first day of class.*

More than one absence (barring anything major or serious—please talk to me) will adversely affect your final grade. If you will not be able to attend class, please send an email to me beforehand.

### **(For Students in Year 2+) Minimum Viable Paper (30%)**

Writing a good paper is hard. Writing an OK paper is also hard, but not as hard. So for our class, my encouragement is to write an OK paper, what I call the Minimum Viable Paper. In short, this paper should be approximately 7-10 pages and include (almost) all the major components of an academic paper: an introduction, theory, data, method, and results. Rather than write a conclusion, you'll write a few paragraphs about what you learned from this project and next steps (if any) or why you're not going to pursue the project further. If you don't find support for your hypothesis, that's perfectly fine. Just write up the paper as above with null results. Explain the findings and consider potential reasons why your hypothesis did not receive support.

My expectation is that this paper will be a professional product (e.g., full sentences, no typos, complete paragraphs, etc). It will still include the major components of a theory, such as a first go at appropriate literature citations and hypotheses. It will include a discussion of the data and results. I would encourage you to use easily accessible data (from the internet, from replication files, etc). But the paper does not have to be "done" in the sense that you would still need to develop each section further before submitting it for publication. In fact, if this project is successful, I would expect you will need to go collect new data and continue revising the paper.

For more on this specific assignment, see my post: [Write Your First Draft Faster by Writing the "Minimum Viable Paper"](#). For additional thoughts on writing intros in particular, see Andrew Little's post: [Three Templates for Introductions to Political Science Articles](#).

Checkpoints:

- Before class on week 4: A one-page memo describing the motivation, research question, and your strategy for collecting the data and completing the paper.

- Before class on week 8: A short (3-5 page) memo with a brief description of the research question, a description of your data, and a first cut of empirical results.
- On 12/15/2023: Paper due by 5pm.

### (For Students in Year 1) Research Design and Literature Review (30%)

First year students will write their own version of a minimum viable paper (see above) with special attention paid to the literature review and an ideal research design. First year students need not collect or analyze data or present findings. Instead, first year students should write an introduction, a longer literature review that analyzes the work related to their research question, and a research design. This should not be a summary of sources A, B, and C, but rather, a piece that puts the work into conversation and highlights current debates and areas ripe for further exploration. First year students should then write an ideal (but realistic) research design that can answer their question, noting the kind of data that would be helpful, how they might collect and analyze that data, and conclude with next steps (if any) or why you're not going to pursue the project further.

Check Points:

- Before class on week 4: A one-page memo describing the motivation, research question, and possible research design.
- Before class on week 8: A short (3-5 pages) memo with a brief description of the research question, an overview of the relevant literature, and a more developed research design.
- On 12/15/2023: Paper due by 5pm.

### Class Presentation (30%)

An important part of professionalizing yourself into the discipline is presenting your work. On the last meeting of class, you'll present a conference-style presentation of your work. That means, you should present a 12-15 minute talk with about 8-12 slides introducing your project in an attention-catching way, a brief description of the theory, a discussion of the data and results (or ideal research design for first-year students), and contributions and thoughts on future work. For further thoughts about preparing this presentation, see my post: [A Long Guide to Giving a Short Academic Talk](#).

I also expect those in attendance to ask questions after the presenter is finished and provide kind and thoughtful feedback on the work.

## Course Policies

### Academic Integrity

Students should uphold the [UCSD policy on academic integrity](#). Do not cheat, plagiarize or turn in someone else's work (including an AI's work) as your own. Students should do their own independent work, but should feel free to discuss their work with others or use generative AI as a tool—but not as a substitute for their own thinking, reading, or writing. If you're ever uncertain, ask me.

### Accommodations

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability should provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (<https://osd.ucsd.edu/>) and should speak with me at the beginning of the course.

## Course Schedule and Readings

All readings should be completed by class on the date listed.

Note:

\* Available online through Geisel Library.

† Available in physical form at Geisel Library.

### Week 1 (09/29/2023): Theoretical Orientation

- U.S. Constitution, Article II.
- Federalist Papers Nos. 68, 70, 72, 76
- Richard E. Neustadt. 1990 [1960]. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan*. Free Press. New York. Prefaces, Chapters 1, 2 (Pt I only), 3, 5.†
- Stephen Skowronek. 1997. *The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to Bill Clinton*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. Cambridge. Chapter 1-3.†
- Dearborn, John A. 2021. *Power Shifts: Congress and Presidential Representation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1, Intro Pt 1, 3, 6, Intro Pt 2, 7, 10-11.\*

No discussion leaders.

Further Reading:

- Cameron, Charles M. 2002. "Studying the Polarized Presidency." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 32(4): 647–63.
- Terry M. Moe and William G. Howell. 1999. "The Presidential Power of Unilateral Action." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 15(1):132–179.

## Week 2 (10/06/2023): Presidents and Parties (and War)

- Daniel J. Galvin. 2009. *Presidential Party Building: Dwight D. Eisenhower to George W. Bush*. Princeton University Press. Princeton, NJ Chapters 1, 2.\*
- Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves. 2015. *The Particularistic President: Executive Branch Politics and Political Inequality*. Cambridge University Press. New York. Chapters 1, 2, and 5.\*
- Jacobson, Gary C. 2019. *Presidents and Parties in the Public Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1-3 and 5.\*
- Canes-Wrone, Brandice, William G. Howell, and David E. Lewis. 2008. "Toward a Broader Understanding of Presidential Power: A Reevaluation of the Two Presidencies Thesis." *The Journal of Politics* 70(1): 1–16.
- Howell, William G., and Jon C. Rogowski. 2013. "War, the Presidency, and Legislative Voting Behavior." *American Journal of Political Science* 57(1): 150–66.

### Further Reading:

- Howell, William G., Saul P. Jackman, and Jon C. Rogowski. 2013. *The Wartime President: Executive Influence and the Nationalizing Politics of Threat*. University of Chicago Press.
- Levinson, Daryl J., and Richard H. Pildes. 2006. "Separation of Parties, Not Powers." *Harvard Law Review* 119(8): 2311–86.
- Nicholson, Stephen P. 2012. "Polarizing Cues." *American Journal of Political Science* 56(1): 52–66.
- Milkis, Sidney M. 1993. *The President and the Parties: The Transformation of the American Party System Since the New Deal*. Oxford University Press.
- Rogowski, Jon C. 2016. "Presidential Influence in an Era of Congressional Dominance." *American Political Science Review* 110(02): 325–41.
- Wildavsky, Aaron. 1969. "The Two Presidencies." *Trans-Action* 4: 230–43.
- Wood, B. Dan. 2009. *The Myth of Presidential Representation*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

### Week 3 (10/13/2023): Unilateral Power

- Howell, William G. 2003. *Power without Persuasion: The Politics of Direct Presidential Action*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. Chapters 2 and 6.\*
- Rudalevige, Andrew. 2021. *By Executive Order: Bureaucratic Management and the Limits of Presidential Power*. Princeton University Press. Chapters 1, 2, and 5.\*
- McClain, Meredith. "Presidential Policymaking in the Face of Congressional Sanctioning." [\[link\]](#)
- Reeves, Andrew, and Jon C. Rogowski. 2018. "The Public Cost of Unilateral Action." *American Journal of Political Science* 62(2): 424–40.
- 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): 769–85.

#### Further Reading:

- Reeves, Andrew, and Jon C. Rogowski. 2022. *No Blank Check: The Origins and Consequences of Public Antipathy towards Presidential Power*. Cambridge University Press.
- Christenson, Dino P., and Douglas L. Kriner. 2020. *The Myth of the Imperial Presidency: How Public Opinion Checks the Unilateral Executive*. University of Chicago Press.
- Martin, Lisa L. 2005. "The President and International Commitments: Treaties as Signaling Devices." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 35(3): 440–65.
- Rogowski, Jon C. 2023. "Public Opinion and Presidents' Unilateral Policy Agendas." *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Thrower, Sharece. 2017. "To Revoke or Not Revoke? The Political Determinants of Executive Order Longevity." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(3): 642–56.

### Week 4 (10/20/2023): Special Interests, Social Movements, and Elections

Checkpoint 1 for course projects due before class.

David Miller (Assistant Professor at UC Riverside) will join us for this session to discuss his paper.

- Miller, David Ryan. 2023. "The President Will See Whom Now? Presidential Engagement with Organized Interests." *American Political Science Review* 117(3): 1019–35.

- Hackenburg, Kobi, William J Brady, and Manos Tsakiris. 2023. "Mapping Moral Language on US Presidential Primary Campaigns Reveals Rhetorical Networks of Political Division and Unity." *PNAS Nexus* 2(6): pgad189.
- Ghitza, Yair, Andrew Gelman, and Jonathan Auerbach. 2023. "The Great Society, Reagan's Revolution, and Generations of Presidential Voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 67(3): 520–37.
- Milkis, Sidney M., and Daniel J. Tichenor. 2018. *Rivalry and Reform: Presidents, Social Movements, and the Transformation of American Politics*. University of Chicago Press. *Individual chapters to be assigned in class.*<sup>†</sup>

#### Further Reading

- Baccini, Leonardo, and Stephen Weymouth. 2021. "Gone For Good: Deindustrialization, White Voter Backlash, and US Presidential Voting." *American Political Science Review* 115(2): 550–67.
- Erikson, Robert S. 2016. "Congressional Elections in Presidential Years: Presidential Coattails and Strategic Voting." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 41(3): 551–74.
- Petrocik, John R. 1996. "Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study." *American Journal of Political Science* 40(3): 825–50.
- Popkin, Samuel L. 1991. *The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wattenberg, Martin P. 2016. "The Declining Relevance of Candidate Personal Attributes in Presidential Elections." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 46(1): 125–39.

#### Week 5 (10/27/2023): No Class, UCR PIPE Conference

- UC Riverside is hosting this year's Political Institutions and Political Economy conference. This conference will be a great opportunity to meet other scholars in the region and see some of the latest political institutions work. Breakfast and lunch will be served at the conference, and Shaun Bowler will host a post-conference reception at his house following the conference. Attendance is not required, but strongly encouraged if you do not have another conflict. You can [RSVP here by 10/13](#).

#### Week 6 (11/03/2023): Going Public

- Ragsdale, Lyn. 1984. "The Politics of Presidential Speechmaking, 1949-1980." *American Political Science Review* 78(4): 971–84.
- Kernell, Samuel H. 1997. *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership*. Washington, D.C: CQ Press. Chapters 1 and 2.<sup>†</sup>

- Edwards, George C. III. 2003. *On Deaf Ears: The Limits of the Bully Pulpit*. New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale University Press. Chapters 1, 2, 10.\*
- Canes-Wrone, Brandice. 2006. *Who Leads Whom?: Presidents, Policy, and the Public*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1-3. Skip "Extensions" and "Examples" sections of Chapter 2. †
- Russell, Annelise, and Rebecca Eissler. 2022. "Conditional Presidential Priorities: Audience-Driven Agenda Setting." *American Politics Research* 50(4): 545–49.

Further Reading:

- Cohen, Jeffrey E. 2009. *Going Local: Presidential Leadership in the Post-Broadcast Age*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Cavari, Amnon. 2017. *The Party Politics of Presidential Rhetoric*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Druckman, James N., and Lawrence R. Jacobs. 2015. *Who Governs?: Presidents, Public Opinion, and Manipulation*. University of Chicago Press.
- Rottinghaus, Brandon. 2010. *The Provisional Pulpit: Modern Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion*. Texas A&M University Press.

Week 7 (11/10/2023): No class, Veterans Day.

## Week 8 (11/17/2023): Presidents and Congress

Checkpoint 2 for course projects due before class.

- Lebo, Matthew J., and Andrew J. O'Geen. 2011. "The President's Role in the Partisan Congressional Arena." *The Journal of Politics* 73(3): 718–34.
- Lee, Frances E. 2008. "Dividers, Not Uniters: Presidential Leadership and Senate Partisanship, 1981-2004." *The Journal of Politics* 70(4): 914–28.
- Noble, Benjamin S. 2023. "Presidential Cues and the Nationalization of Congressional Rhetoric." *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Kriner, Douglas L., and Eric Schickler. 2014. "Investigating the President: Committee Probes and Presidential Approval, 1953–2006." *The Journal of Politics* 76(2): 521–34.
- Bolton, Alexander, and Sharece Thrower. 2021. *Checks in the Balance: Legislative Capacity and the Dynamics of Executive Power*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1, 2, 5 and 6.\*

Further Reading:



- Groseclose, Tim, and Nolan McCarty. 2001. "The Politics of Blame: Bargaining before an Audience." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(1): 100–119.
- Rogowski, Jon C. 2016. "Presidential Influence in an Era of Congressional Dominance." *American Political Science Review* 110(02): 325–41.
- Beckmann, Matthew N. 2010. *Pushing the Agenda: Presidential Leadership in US Lawmaking, 1953–2004*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bond, Jon R., and Richard Fleisher. 1990. *The President in the Legislative Arena*. University of Chicago Press.
- Kriner, Douglas L., and Eric Schickler. 2016. *Investigating the President: Congressional Checks on Presidential Power*. Princeton University Press.

Week 9 (11/24/2023): No class, Thanksgiving.

### Week 10 (12/01/2023): Bureaucracy and Politicization

- Potter, Rachel Augustine. "Privatizing Personnel: Bureaucratic Outsourcing & the Administrative Presidency." [\[link\]](#)
- Chiou, Fang-Yi, and Jonathan Klingler. 2023. "Rule Significance and Interbranch Competition in Rulemaking Processes." *American Political Science Review*: 1–16.
- Ban, Pamela, Ju Yeon Park, and Hye Young You. 2023. "How Are Politicians Informed? Witnesses and Information Provision in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 117(1): 122–39.
- Kinane, Christina M. 2021. "Control without Confirmation: The Politics of Vacancies in Presidential Appointments." *American Political Science Review*: 1–16.
- Napolio, Nicholas G. Forthcoming. "Implementing Presidential Particularism: Bureaucracy and the Distribution of Federal Grants." *Political Science Research and Methods*.

Further Reading:

- Bellodi, Luca. 2022. "A Dynamic Measure of Bureaucratic Reputation: New Data for New Theory." *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Potter, Rachel Augustine. 2019. *Bending the Rules: Procedural Politicking in the Bureaucracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- David E. Lewis. 2008. *The Politics of Presidential Appointments: Political Control and Bureaucratic Performance*. Princeton University Press. Princeton, NJ.

## Week 11 (12/08/2023): Class Presentations

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### Acknowledgements

I thank Jonthan Klingler, Andrew Reeves, Patrick Rickert, and Sharece Thrower for their inspiration.