This is a course about an institution (the American presidency) that has been in existence for 230 years and an individual (Donald Trump) who has occupied that institution for only about two-and-a-half years. Among the questions we will explore in this class are: How different is Trump from the presidents who came before him? How well can theories of political science, specifically scholarship on the presidency, help us to understand Trump? What lasting impact is Trump likely to have on the institution of the presidency and what impact has the institution had (or will it have) on Trump’s political behavior? How much should we focus on Trump’s character or personality or should we instead think about Trump in much the same way we think about any president who is a rational political actor? How, if at all, does Trump change the way we should think about the presidency that was created by the framers of the Constitution and about the benefits or dangers of presidential power?

Participation in class discussion is a vital component of this class and will be worth 40% of your grade. Active participation entails doing all the reading (be forewarned, there will be a lot of reading), coming to class fully prepared to discuss the reading, and contributing constructively to class discussions. If you don’t want or have time to read a lot, then this is probably not the class for you. The midterm (due October 3 at 4pm) is worth 25% of your grade and the final (due December 14 at 2pm) is worth 35% of your grade.

If you miss a class, whether excused or unexcused, you must write a 600-word paper analyzing the reading that was assigned for the day you miss. Your participation grade in the course will be lowered by half a letter grade for every make-up paper you do not turn in within a week of your return to class. The makeup paper must be turned in to me in class and submitted electronically via email, saved as a Word document.

More than one unexcused absence will result in a full letter grade deduction from your final course grade; more than two unexcused absences will result in two full letter grade deductions from your final grade; more than three unexcused absences will result in failing the class. Persistent lateness for class can also result in deductions from the final grade.

Required texts are available for purchase at the Willamette Bookstore. The other readings indicated in the syllabus are available on the class WISE page, except for a couple readings that have URLs. Since a significant part of the course focuses on Donald Trump, you should expect that new readings will be added (and in some cases perhaps subtracted) to keep up with events, particularly in the 2nd half of the course. The texts to be purchased are: William Howell, Thinking about the Presidency: The Primacy of Power (Princeton University Press, 2013); Jeffrey A. Engel, et al., eds, Impeachment: An American History (Modern Library, 2018); and Summary of the Mueller Report, for those too busy to read it all, abridged and introduced by Thomas E. Patterson (Independently Published, 2019). Readings available on WISE must be printed out and brought to class. In class you should always have the reading for that day on the desk in front of you. Sorry, but no laptops are to be used during class.

Please tell me about any disabilities that will affect your participation in this course and any accommodations authorized by the Office of Disabilities Services. I expect you to be familiar with Willamette’s Plagiarism and Cheating Policy.

My office is Smullin 324. Office hours are T 10:30-11:30 and TH 10:30-12:30, and by appointment (my email is rellis@willamette.edu).
Schedule of Class Topics and Readings

1.1 (Aug 27) Introduction: On Being Presidential

I. Thinking about the Presidency

1.2 (Aug 29) The Pursuit of Power
Howell, *Thinking about the Presidency*, 1-54 (chaps. 1-2)

2.1. (Sept 3) Constitutional Foundations
Howell, *Thinking about the Presidency*, 55-72, 82-91 (chaps. 3-4)
Ray Raphael, *Mr. President: How and Why the Founders Created a Chief Executive* (New York: Knopf, 2012), 47-125 (Part II: Conjuring the Office)

2.2 (Sept 5) What would the Framers think of the Modern Presidency?
David Nichols and Terri Bimes, “Resolved, the framers of the Constitution would approve of the modern presidency,” in Richard J. Ellis and Michael Nelson, eds., *Debating the Presidency* (CQ Press, 2018; 4th ed), 1-14

3.1 (Sept 10) Is the Presidency too Strong or too Weak?
Howell, *Thinking about the Presidency*, 92-143 (chaps. 5-7)
“Resolved, Congress should be required to vote up or down on legislation proposed by the president,” in Richard J. Ellis and Michael Nelson, eds., *Debating the Presidency* (CQ Press, 2018; 4th ed), 163-180.

3.2 (Sept 12) The Presidential Spectacle
Bruce Miroff, *Presidents on Political Ground: Leaders in Action and What They Face* (University Press of Kansas, 2016), 1-44 (intro, chap. 1)

II. Thinking about the President

4.1 (Sept 17) Trump’s Character
Jeannie Suk Gersen, Will Trump be the Death of the Goldwater Rule,” *New Yorker*, August 23, 2017
Craig Malkin, “Pathological Narcissism and Politics,” in Bandy X. Lee, ed., *The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump: 25 Psychiatrists and Mental Health Experts Assess a President* (St. Martin’s, 2017), 51-68

4.2 (Sept. 19) Trump’s Leadership Style in Historical Perspective
5.1 (Sept. 24) Trump’s Place in Political Time

5.2 (Sept. 26) The Power to Persuade
Matt Dickinson and George Edwards debate, “Resolved, Presidential Power is (still) the power to persuade,” *Debating the Presidency* (CQ Press 2018, 4th ed), 137-162

6.1 (Oct. 1) Work on Midterm Essay

6.2 (Oct. 3) Midterm Essay Due

III. The Presidency and the Public
7.1 (Oct. 8) The Rhetorical Presidency
Mary Stuckey, “‘The Joshua Generation’: Rethinking the Rhetorical Presidency and Presidential Rhetoric,” ScholarWorks@Georgia State University (published in *Review of Communication* [2010]).

7.2 (Oct. 10) The Separation of Word and Deed
Kathleen Hall Jamieson, “The Divorce Between Speech and Thought,” in *Eloquence in an Electronic Age* (Oxford University Press, 1988), 201-237

8.1 (Oct. 15) The President and the White House Press Corps
Martha Joynt Kumar, “The Press Secretary to the President” in *Managing the President’s Message* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 178-221
Emily Bell, “At White House Press Conferences, No Questions Allowed,” *The Atlantic*, January 13, 2019


Peter Nicholas, “There is No White House Press Secretary,” *The Atlantic*, June 14, 2019

8.2 (Oct. 17) Trump’s Twitter Presidency


Alexandra Samuel, “How Trump’s Twitter presidency hijacked hopes for e-democracy,” daily.jstor.org, January 24, 2017

Grace Olmstead, “Trump’s Twitter Presidency is the One We All Deserve,” *The Federalist*, June 6, 2017

9.1 (Oct. 22) Why did Trump Get Elected, and What Does It Mean?


**IV. The Bad President Problem**

9.2 (Oct. 24) The President as Norm Breaker


E.J. Dionne, Norman Ornstein, and Thomas Mann, *One Nation After Trump* (St. Martin’s Press, 2017), 65-118 (chaps. 3-4)


10.1 (Oct. 29) The Use and Abuse of Pardons

Richard J. Ellis, ed., *Founding the American Presidency* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 222-227

Quinta Jurecic, “Donald Trump’s Pardon Power and the State of Exception,” *Lawfare*, June 11, 2018

Mark Greenberg and Harry Litman, “Trump’s Corrupt Use of the Pardon Power,” *Lawfare*, June 19, 2018

Sam Morison, “Setting the Record Straight: The Pardon Power is Part of the Rule of Law,” *Just Security*, July 20, 2018
Sharece Thrower and Jeffrey Crouch, “Resolved, Congress should have the power to override a presidential pardon by a two-thirds majority vote of both houses,” in Richard J. Ellis and Michael Nelson, eds., *Debating the Presidency* (CQ Press, forthcoming; 5th ed)

10.2 (Oct 31) Is the 25th Amendment a Solution?
Brian Kalt, “Removing a ‘Disabled’ President,” in *Constitutional Cliffhangers* (Yale University Press, 2012), 61-82
https://lawandcrime.com/opinion/the-full-list-of-evidence-that-could-be-used-to-remove-trump-under-25th-amendment/

11.1 (Nov.5) The Founders’ Solution: Impeachment
Richard J. Ellis, ed., *Founding the American Presidency* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 241-251
(skip Luther Martin on 248-249)
Hamilton, Federalist 65

11.2 (Nov. 7) Should Johnson have been Impeached?

12.1 (Nov. 12) Should Clinton Have Been Impeached?
Karen Tumulty and Katie Mettler, “Abuse allegations have revived scrutiny of Bill Clinton,” *Washington Post*, November 17, 2017
Ross Douthat, “What if Ken Starr was Right?” *New York Times*, November 18, 2017
Jonathan Chait, “I Opposed Bill Clinton’s Impeachment and I Don’t Regret It,” *New York Magazine*, November 17, 2017
Leon Neyfakh, “Move On,” episode 8 of season 2 of *Slow Burn*, October 17, 2018,
http://www.slate.com/articles/podcasts/slow_burn/2018/10/juanita_broaddrick_s_rape_accusation_against_bill_clinton.html

12.2 (Nov. 14) (Why) Did the Impeachment Process Work with Nixon?
Leon Neyfakh, “Going South: How it all ended,” episode 8 of season 1 of *Slow Burn*,
http://www.slate.com/articles/podcasts/slow_burn/2018/01/the_final_episode_of_slate_s_watergate_podcast.html
13.1 (Nov. 19) Should Trump Be Impeached?
*Summary of the Mueller Report*, abridged and introduced by Thomas E. Patterson (2019)

13.2 (Nov. 21) Should Impeachment be “Normalized”
Gene Healy (Pro) and Keith Whittington (Con) debate “Impeachment should be normalized,” from Richard J. Ellis and Michael Nelson *Debating Reform* (CQ Press, 4th ed. forthcoming)

No class Nov. 26 and 28 (Thanksgiving Break)

14. 1 (Dec. 2) Imagining the Presidency after Trump

14.2 (Dec. 4) Conclusions

Final Paper Due: Saturday, December 14, 2pm