

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY

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

James David Barber, *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House* (Prentice Hall, 1992; 4th ed.), 1-11

Dan McAdams, “The Mind of Donald Trump,” *The Atlantic* (June 2016)

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

Fred I. Greenstein, *The Presidential Difference: Leadership Style from FDR to Barack Obama* (Princeton, 2009), 1-25, 75-89 (LBJ), 91-109 (Nixon), 127-143 (Carter), 145-157 (Reagan), 173-188 (Clinton)

5.1 (Sept. 24) Trump's Place in Political Time

Stephen Skowronek, "Notes on the Presidency in the Political Order," *Studies in American Political Development* 1(1986), 286-302

Stephen Skowronek, "Is Transformational Leadership Still Possible? Barack Obama in Historical Perspective," in *Presidential Leadership in Political Time* (University Press of Kansas, 2011, rev. ed.), 167-194

Stephen Skowronek, "What's New in the Political Leadership of Donald Trump," lecture at LSE, May 2, 2019

5.2 (Sept. 26) The Power to Persuade

Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidency: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan* (Free Press, 1991), 3-49

Jonathan Bernstein, "The 1960 Book That Explains Why Trump is a Failure," *Bloomberg*, August 16, 2017

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

Jeffrey Tulis, "The Two Constitutional Presidencies," in Michael Nelson, *The Presidency and the Political System* (CQ Press, 2018; 11th edition), 2-34

Jeffrey Tulis, "Afterword" to the thirtieth anniversary edition of *The Rhetorical Presidency* (Princeton University Press, 2017), 205-237

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

Elvin Lim, "Institutionalizing the Anti-Intellectual Presidency," in *The Anti-Intellectual Presidency* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 77-99

8.1 (Oct. 15) The President and the White House Press Corps

Martha Joynt Kumar, "The White House Beat at the Century Mark," *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* (Summer 1997), 10-30

Martha Joynt Kumar, "The Press Secretary to the President" in *Managing the President's Message* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 178-221

Martha Joynt Kumar, "W.H. press conferences turn 100," *Politico*, March 28, 2013

Susan Milligan, "The President and the Press," *Columbia Journalism Review* (March/April 2015)

Emily Bell, "At White House Press Conferences, No Questions Allowed," *The Atlantic*, January 13, 2019

Karen Yourish and Jamine C. Lee, "The Demise of the White House Press Briefing Under Trump," *New York Times*, January 28, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/01/22/us/politics/white-house-press-briefing.html>

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

8.2 (Oct. 17) Trump's Twitter Presidency

Marjorie Randon Hershey, "The President and the Media: The Case of Donald Trump," in Michael Nelson, ed., *The Presidency and the Political System* (CQ Press, 2018; 11th edition), 259-282

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?

Nate Silver, "The Republican Party May Be Failing: What 'The Party Decides' could get wrong about Donald Trump and the GOP," *FiveThirtyEight*, January 25, 2016

Ezra Klein, "Donald Trump's Success Reveals a Frightening Weakness in American Democracy," *Vox*, Nov. 7, 2016, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2016/11/7/13532178/donald-trump-american-democracy-weakness>

John Sides, Michael Tesler, and Lynn Vavreck, "The 2016 Election: How Trump Lost and Won," *Journal of Democracy*, April 2017, 34-44

Brian Schaffner, Matthew McWilliams, and Tatishe Nteta, "Explaining White Polarization in the 2016 Vote for President: The Sobering Role of Racism and Sexism," Paper prepared for presentation at the Conference on The U.S. Elections of 2016: Domestic and International Aspects. January 8-9, 2017, IDC Herzliya Campus

IV. The Bad President Problem

9.2 (Oct. 24) The President as Norm Breaker

Brendan Nyhan, "Norms Matter," *Politico Magazine* (September/October 2017)

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

Robert Lieberman et al., "The Trump Presidency and American Democracy: A Historical and Comparative Analysis," *Perspectives in Politics* (June 2019), 470-479.

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

Pardons Granted by President Donald Trump, <https://www.justice.gov/pardon/pardons-granted-president-donald-trump>

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

Peter Kramer and Sally Satel, "Who Decides Whether Trump is Unfit to Govern," *New York Times*, August 29, 2017

Eric Posner, "Trump could be removed for political incompetence—using the 25th Amendment," *Washington Post*, September 12, 2017

Jonathan Turley, "How do you get rid of Trump? An election, not the 25th Amendment," *Washington Post*, October 19, 2017

<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

Jeffrey Engel, "The Constitution," in Engel, *Impeachment*, 3-45

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?

Jon Meachem, "Andrew Johnson," in Engel, *Impeachment*, 47-81

12.1 (Nov. 12) Should Clinton Have Been Impeached?

Peter Baker, "Bill Clinton," in Engel, *Impeachment*, 155-204

Karen Tumulty and Katie Mettler, "Abuse allegations have revived scrutiny of Bill Clinton," *Washington Post*, November 17, 2017

Caitlin Flanagan, "Bill Clinton: A Reckoning," *The Atlantic*, November 13, 2017

Jennifer Steinhauer, "Bill Clinton Should Have Resigned Over Lewinsky Affair," *New York Times*, November 16, 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_broadrick_s_rape_accusation_against_bill_clinton.html

12.2 (Nov. 14) (Why) Did the Impeachment Process Work with Nixon?

Timothy Naftali, "Richard Nixon," in Engel, *Impeachment*, 83-153

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?

Jeffrey Engel, "Conclusion," in Engel, *Impeachment*, 205-223

Summary of the Mueller Report, abridged and introduced by Thomas E. Patterson (2019)

13.2 (Nov. 21) Should Impeachment be "Normalized"

Laurence Tribe and Joshua Matz, "Impeachment Talk" in *To End a Presidency: The Power of Impeachment* (Basic Books, 2018), 151-195

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