

POLI 3290-001: The American Presidency
Fall 2016 | MWF 1:00 PM - 1:50 PM | Haley 3166

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Overview, Objectives, and Outcomes

The single most powerful politician in the American political system is the President of the United States. This course is designed to develop an understanding of exactly why that is the case. First, we will examine the Constitutional basis for presidential power. This includes an understanding of the colonial experience (under a monarch) and the failed executive of the Articles of Confederation. Both led the Framers to organize the presidency as it appears in the Constitution.

Second, we will examine how the president interacts with each branch of government. Each relationship presents challenges and opportunities, and we will understand how the president uses (and is used in) these relationships to further his or her own policy goals.

Last, we will work to understand how the unique challenges and changes in government have allowed the president to become much more powerful in recent history. This growth in power is unprecedented, but we will understand it as a part of a larger political system.

Through each of broad questions, we will cover basic presidential facts: how presidents are elected and selected, styles of presidents, presidential campaigns, and other material. We will also pay close attention to the 2016 presidential election, illuminating concepts from class in the campaign season.

Student Learning Outcomes: by the end of the course, you should understand how and why presidents act the way they do, given the power and constraints of the office. You should be able to observe and understand all parts of a presidential election, and you should be able to thoughtfully consider the actions of the president. You should sufficiently understand the American presidency so that you feel qualified to participate in politics as an active and informed citizen. Through all, you should think critically and skeptically, as a scientist.

Official catalog description: The American Presidency. (3). LEC. 3. Examination of political styles and personalities of recent presidents and presidential decision-making.

Prerequisites

Any one of: POLI 1090, POLI 1093, POLI 1097, PHIL 1090, PHIL 1093, or PHIL 1097.

Expectations

College is an environment in which you learn how to manage your time and set your priorities. I do not take attendance. There is, however, a strong correlation between course attendance and performance (not to mention that a substantial portion of exam material is drawn from lectures). Part of your grade will also come exclusively from in-class quizzes. If you choose to come to class, you should do so responsibly. I fully expect that you will have done any assigned readings before coming to class. Class is much more interesting when you engage with both your instructor and the material. I also expect that you make a reasonable effort to maintain classroom decorum by refraining from reading newspapers, doing crossword puzzles, sleeping, texting, or playing on Facebook (or whatever social network/game/trend that I'm oblivious to). Please silence all cell phones. These ideas are formally outlined in the Auburn University Classroom Behavior policy: see tinyurl.com/au-st-pol for more details.

Text

There is only one required textbook for this class (referred to in this syllabus as “PMR”).

Pika, Joseph A., John Anthony Maltese, and Andrew Rudalevige. 2017. *The Politics of the Presidency [9th Edition]*. CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1-4833-7563-2.

The textbook is available at the Auburn University Bookstore, as well as the internet. There are older editions of this textbook. It is important to get the current edition. If you get an older edition, I can't promise that chapters and material will be identical. Roll the dice at your own discretion. *There will be additional readings posted to Canvas. These are not outlined in the syllabus, but they will be posted online and announced in class.* You are responsible for reading the assigned textbook reading and any other assigned reading by the *Monday* of that week of class. Any other supplementary readings will be accessible to all Auburn University students through the University Libraries.

Assignments

The course is divided into the following components:

In-class quizzes (two)	7.5% (each)
Midterm examination	30%
Final examination	30%
Annotated bibliography	25%
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 100%

In order, those components are ...

In-class quizzes: each week, you are assigned reading from PMR. Most weeks, this will be supplemented with academic (as in written by political scientists) articles on the nature of the presidency. You are expected to do these readings and to contribute to the class discussion around

them. As an extra incentive to do the readings, there will be unannounced quizzes at least three times through the semester. They will cover straightforward questions from the readings. *Only your two highest grades will count toward your final grade.*

Midterm examination: October 7 (Friday), during class. We will discuss the midterm exam in detail as the date approaches.

Final examination: December 6 (Tuesday), 12:00 PM to 2:30 PM. We will discuss the final exam in detail as the date approaches.

Annotated bibliography: it is essential to learn how to synthesize and report data and findings. You are going to practice that skill in this class through an annotated bibliography. Broadly, this means finding the most relevant *political science* articles on a research question, summarizing the articles individually, and then *briefly* summarizing the findings *across* the articles.

Since our class concerns the presidency, so should your research question. Specifically, you are required to gather articles that answer *one* of the following questions:

1. What determines public approval of the president's job performance?
2. How has public approval of the presidency changed over time?
3. Who leads whom, the president or the media?
4. How does public approval of the president affect presidential success in Congress?
5. Do presidents successfully influence the legislative agenda?
6. To what extent does the president "control" the federal bureaucracy?
7. Do presidents successfully influence the behavior of courts?
8. What determines the propensity of presidents to act unilaterally, independent of Congress and the Courts?

Note that you are expected to review the most important literature in your selected area. You should be looking for work that is highly cited (use Google Scholar [scholar.google.com] to get citation counts on your articles). You are expected to have at least *fifteen* articles reviewed in your annotated bibliography. At a minimum, all references must be shown relevant to the research question, well described, and the entries should be formatted as below.

A bibliography is a list of sources and articles that are relevant to a question. An annotated bibliography expands on this by providing a short summary of each individual source. Specifically, I want your summary to include:

- A one sentence summary of the most important findings from the article,
- A brief statement of the research design,
- Any specific hypotheses from the article,

- The data used in the article, and
- A one sentence summary how these findings relate to your research question.

If it isn't obvious: you must read the article to be able to write the summary. I am aware that research articles usually begin with an abstract that summarizes the article. Note that I want a more in-depth summary of the article than the abstract provides. *If you plagiarize any portion of any abstract, you will receive a zero on the entire assignment.*

A rough draft of the annotated bibliography (that includes at least five sources) is due on October 28 (Friday). It is worth 5% of the 25% total. You will receive extensive revisions on this rough draft that should guide you towards the final product. The final assignment is due on November 28 (Monday).

You will receive a rubric that gives an example of an annotated bibliography entry, as well as recommendations for finding articles, within the first few weeks of class.

Makeups and Grades

Makeup assignments/examinations will only be offered to those with a University excused absence, which can be found at tinyurl.com/au-st-pol. It is your responsibility to ensure that your absence is covered by the University, and it is your responsibility to comply with all policies. These policies require that you notify me of your absence prior to the date of absence if such notification is feasible, but within one week from the missed class. Your makeup examination must be scheduled within two weeks of this notification (though I recommend much, much earlier). If I need additional information on your absence (doctor's notes, for instance), you must provide this additional documentation within one week of the last date of the absence. Note that this policy also allows for makeup examinations for reasons deemed appropriate by the instructor. If you do not have a University excused absence, and you are going to miss an examination, it is much easier for me to work with you if you notify me promptly, especially if you can provide some sort of documentation.

89.5-100:	A
79.5-89.49:	B
69.5-79.49:	C
59.5-69.49:	D
59.49↓:	F

I use the standard Auburn University grading scale. To maintain fairness, I do not change grades under any circumstances except when I make a mathematical error in computing your grade. There is a grade calculator at tinyurl.com/3290gradecalc. There is no extra credit. All grades will be posted to Canvas.

Contacting Me

I'm in Haley every day, but especially during my listed office hours. I check my email very, very regularly. If you want to get in touch with me through email, I ask that follow three guidelines

when attempting to contact me. First: include the course number and section number [3290-001] in the subject of your email. Your email will almost certainly get lost in the abyss if it missing this information. Second: wait at least 48 hours, not including weekends, to send a second email. I promise I will get to it, but it may not be immediate. Third: email me only from your Auburn University official email address. In the event that I need to contact you, it will almost certainly be at your @auburn.edu email address. You should check this email often!

Student Academic Honesty

Auburn University is a institution committed to integrity and honor. It is your job as a University citizen to uphold those values. I will not tolerate any cheating or plagiarism, broadly defined as using unauthorized aids during examinations or attempting to represent someone else's work as your own. You are not as sly as you think you are. With hundreds of heads facing forward, it is extremely easy to tell who is working alone and who is not. Be aware that academic dishonesty can lead directly to failing the course and being referred to the Academic Honesty Committee. Penalties include expulsion from Auburn, as per Chapter 1202 of Title XII. For additional information visit tinyurl.com/au-st-pol.

Emergency Contingency

If normal class is disrupted due to illness, emergency, or crisis situation, the syllabus and other course plans and assignments may be modified to allow completion of the course. If this occurs, an addendum to your syllabus and/or course assignments will replace the original materials.

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please electronically submit your approved accommodations through AU Access and make an individual appointment with the me during the first week of classes (or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately). If you have not established accommodations through the Office of Accessibility, but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Office of Accessibility, 1228 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT).

Any requests or arrangements made with the instructor in person must be followed up with an official email request for documentation. If you believe you may need an accommodation, it is your responsibility to secure it before the first exam.

Copyrighted Materials

The lectures, presentations (including slides), readings, and exams for this course are copyrighted, so you do not have the right to copy and distribute them. This includes recording class lectures.

Course Outline

PART I: The President (as a person) in the Office

Week 1 (August 17 - 19): Overview and Introduction

<http://tinyurl.com/6-reas-4-prez>

Week 2 (August 22 - 26): Constitutional Design and Framers' Minds

The Constitution. <http://constitutionus.com/>

Week 3 (August 29 - September 2): Presidential Characters and Personalities

PMR, Chapters 1 and 3.

Other reading to be assigned.

Week 4 (September 5 - 9): Presidential Elections

PMR, Chapter 2.

Other reading to be assigned.

September 5 (Monday): Labor Day (no class).

September 6 (Tuesday): 15th Class Day (last day to drop with no grade assignment).

Week 5 (September 12 - 16): White House Structure and Decisionmaking

Other reading to be assigned.

Week 6 (September 19 - 23): Policy

PMR, Chapters 8-10.

Other reading to be assigned.

Week 7 (September 26 - 30): Policy

PMR, Chapter 8-10 (again).

Other reading to be assigned.

September 26 (Monday): First presidential debate.

September 28 (Wednesday): Mid-semester grades posted.

Week 8 (October 3 - 7): Is Power Changing?

Other reading to be assigned.

October 4 (Tuesday): Vice-presidential debate.

October 7 (Friday): Midterm Exam.

PART II: The President in Government

Week 9 (October 10 - 14): The President and Public Opinion

PMR, Chapter 3.

Other reading to be assigned.

October 9 (Sunday): Second presidential debate.

October 12 (Wednesday): 41st Class Day (deadline to request moving final exam).

October 14 (Friday): Fall break (no class).

Week 10 (October 17 - 21): The President and Congress

PMR, Chapter 5.

Other reading to be assigned.

October 19 (Wednesday): Third presidential debate.

Week 11 (October 24 - 28): The President and the Courts

PMR, Chapter 7.

Other reading to be assigned.

October 28 (Friday): Annotated bibliography draft due.

Week 12 (October 31 - November 4): The President and the Bureaucracy

PMR, Chapter 6.

Other reading to be assigned.

November 4 (Friday): Last day to withdraw with no grade penalty (W).

Week 13 (November 7 - 11): The President and the Media

Other reading to be assigned.

November 8 (Tuesday): Presidential election day!

Week 14 (November 14 - 18): The President, Parties, Money, and Interest Groups

Other reading to be assigned.

Week 15 (November 21 - 25): No Class (Thanksgiving Break)Week 16 (November 28 - December 2): Concluding Thoughts

Other reading to be assigned.

November 28 (Monday): Annotated bibliography due.

December 6 (Tuesday): Final exam.