

GOVT 35: The Presidency

Instructor: Prof. Brendan Nyhan Classroom: Silsby 113
Office: 120 Silsby Schedule: MWF 2:10 PM–3:15 PM
Email: nyhan@dartmouth.edu x-period: Th. 1:20 PM–2:10 PM
Phone: 603/646-2894 Office hours: F 9:00–10:30 AM or by appt.

“I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me.”

–Abraham Lincoln

“The presidency has made every man who occupied it, no matter how small, bigger than he was; and no matter how big, not big enough for its demands.”

–Lyndon B. Johnson

“Someone said that being a president was a lot like running a cemetery: There are a lot of people under you, but nobody’s listening.”

–Bill Clinton

“Politicians have used you and stolen your votes. They have given you nothing. I will give you everything. I will give you what you’ve been looking for for 50 years. I’m the only one.”

–Donald Trump (May 2016)

“Mr. Trump’s difficult adjustment to the presidency, people close to him say, is rooted in an unrealistic expectation of its powers, which he had assumed to be more akin to the popular image of imperial command than the sloppy reality of having to coexist with two other branches of government.”

–*The New York Times* (December 2017)

Overview of the course

This course provides a modern political science perspective on the presidency, focusing particular attention on the “leadership dilemma”—the gap between the expectations that are placed on presidents and their limited institutional powers. Our goal is to understand the conditions under which presidents are more (or less) likely to achieve their objectives. As we’ll see, the answers are more complex than most people think.

The course begins with a whirlwind tour of the historical development of the institution of the presidency. After reviewing different scholarly approaches to understanding the presidency, we’ll consider the president’s relationship with

Congress, the courts, and the bureaucracy; his influence on foreign policy; his relationship with the press and the public; and presidential elections.

Throughout this process, we will be discussing the last two administrations and relating President Trump and Obama's experiences to ideas we have discussed in class.

Background knowledge

I assume students have a basic conceptual understanding of the American political system and its history (GOVT 3 or equivalent). Please contact me immediately with any questions about your preparation. For those who would like to strengthen their background knowledge, a recommended text on the history of the presidency is Sidney M. Milkis and Michael Nelson, *The American Presidency: Origins and Development* (various editions; please visit the library or contact me to borrow a copy).

Instructional approach

Each class period will begin with a brief lecture highlighting and expanding on key points from the readings and answering any questions about them. The remainder of the course period will consist of class discussion and active learning exercises in which we critically examine those ideas.

Learning objectives

I expect each student to come to class having completed all assigned readings and prepared to discuss them. However, we will aspire to not just learn the assigned material but to take it in new directions, applying theories to new contexts such as current events, drawing connections between the readings, and critiquing authors' assumptions, theories, and findings. The course is structured to help you learn to think analytically about the presidency in this way over the course of the quarter.

By the end of the course, you should specifically be able to do the following:

- Describe the development of the modern presidency and evaluate the causes and consequences of major changes in the institution over time;
- Explain the formal and informal mechanisms that the president can use to achieve his objectives when interacting with other branches of government, the bureaucracy, and the public;
- Identify the institutional and political constraints that limit the president's ability to achieve his objectives;
- Assess the president's influence on foreign policy;

- Analyze the major factors affecting the outcome of presidential primary and general election campaigns;
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to the study of these topics.

Assignments and grading

I will assess your success in achieving these objectives based on the components described below (but adjusted for the distribution of scores in the course — don't worry about raw scores!). In general, each student is expected to attend class on time with the readings completed and to contribute thoughtfully to class discussion when appropriate. Late work will be graded down 10% for each day it is submitted after a deadline.

Quizzes – 10%

During the quarter, a random number generator will be used at the start of each class starting in the second week to determine if we have a brief one-question quiz to measure whether students completed the readings (one point will be awarded simply for attending class; probability of quiz = 20%). Your lowest score during the quarter will be dropped. Absences will not be excused except for illness or required team travel for varsity athletes.

Short paper – 10%

Each student will be required to write a short paper of 1500–2000 words that makes a *specific argument* related to the presidency drawing on at least two of the assigned readings for a specific class session.¹ It is not necessary to summarize all of the readings or even aspects of the readings you draw on that are not relevant to your argument. Instead, you should present an argument that considers an application and/or implication of the theories and research findings you read for our understanding of the presidency. Please note that the argument you make should be about presidents in general, not just a specific one like Trump or Obama. Your paper should present an argument based in theory and the readings, consider how well it applies to one or more specific cases (e.g., an issue or controversy related to Trump or Obama), and then summarize the implications of that evidence for the argument in question. An example paper is provided on Canvas to give you a sense of how to approach the assignment. Please see me if you have questions!

You should also include three discussion questions based on the readings at the end of your paper that will be shared with the class. You will be randomly

¹You are not required to draw on every assigned reading (though you must use discuss more than one). Sometimes one or more readings are not directly relevant to the point you want to make. In that case, you may omit a discussion of it.

assigned to one of the class sessions after the first week of the course and will be expected to be a contributor to discussion during that session.

The short paper and discussion questions are due January 15 by 5 PM so that I can provide feedback on your writing as soon as possible. The rubric I will use to evaluate your papers is provided at the end of the syllabus; please consult it carefully!

Midterms – 50%

There will be two closed-book midterms (25% each) administered via blue books that will test your knowledge and understanding of the readings from that portion of the course. These may include multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer questions, and/or brief essays. An exam study guide with sample questions from a past version of the course is provided at the end of the syllabus. (Note: These will be curved! Don't panic about your raw score.)

Analytical paper – 30%

Each student will write an analytical paper of 3000—4000 words (excluding references) in which you apply one or more theories we've read to the Bush 43 or Obama presidency. You should identify a theoretically interesting argument that generates one or more predictions or expectations that you can evaluate using historical sources, journalistic accounts, or quantitative data. The theory or prediction can be yours or an author's, but ideally you will be adding new ideas or analysis beyond just testing a theory that we discuss in class. In general, you should be engaging with a larger scholarly literature outside of the assigned readings, which will help you go beyond the theories we've discussed and/or look at more detailed evidence. For instance, one author may state that $X \rightarrow Y$, but you might predict that X only affects Y under condition Z . Alternatively, you might test competing predictions — for example, author A argues that X increases Y and author B argues that X decreases Y . The citations in the works we read in class are excellent guides to the relevant literature as well as who is citing research of interest in Google Scholar (click on "Cited by ..."). Please contact James Adams, the Government Department librarian, at James.L.Adams@dartmouth.edu and/or consult with me if you need further assistance in conducting research for the paper.

In the course of making your argument, you should answer these questions:

1. What would the author's theory predict? Why?
2. Is what we observe consistent with their prediction(s)? Why or why not?
3. What implications does this evidence have for their theory (i.e., strengths and weaknesses)? How could it be improved?
4. What conclusions should we draw from your findings about the study of your topic more generally?

Other notes and suggestions:

- You don't need to do data collection as such, but you should think about how to reasonably evaluate a prediction or expectation. For instance, I wouldn't expect you to code all the legislation passed under Obama for importance, but you could identify some reasonable proxy of bill importance and evaluate a few key bills relative to the theory or prediction in question.
- Please make sure your theories are not about proper names. For example, you wouldn't want to study the effect of Sandy Hook on President Obama's approval rating. Instead, you would want to write a paper on applying theories of presidential approval to mass shootings or other tragedies more generally even though the evidence you will consider will be from Obama's time in office.
- Make sure to keep the scope of your paper manageable both substantively and theoretically (i.e., don't try to explain everything!). You should also try to minimize the space you devote to summaries of other people's work—the goal is to extend and critique the arguments of the authors you have read, not to recapitulate them.

We will talk throughout the term about how to do this type of writing. I have also posted excellent examples of analytical papers from past iterations of the course on Canvas for you to read and included the rubric I will use to evaluate your paper at the end of the syllabus. For further advice on writing analytical papers in political science, please see the assigned readings for the January 6 class, but the most important factor will be your willingness to commit to writing as an iterative process of drafting, feedback, review, and revision.

Paper timeline

A draft one-page proposal/outline for your paper topic (including a preliminary set of outside references) is due before class on February 1. After getting feedback from your classmates, you should then submit a revised and expanded version of that proposal to me in the form of a detailed 2–3 page outline (including outside references that will be drawn on to support specific points) by 12 PM on February 10. I will either approve your proposal or ask you to submit a revised version by February 13. A complete draft of your paper including references is due February 20 (48 hours before class on February 22) for peer review. I recommend that you edit the paper at least once after receiving feedback from your colleague and then take the updated version to RWIT for feedback and further revision.² The final version of your paper is due by 8 PM on March 5. The rubric that I will use to evaluate your work is provided at the end of the syllabus. (Failure to meet *any* of these deadlines will result in a reduced grade on the final paper.)

²To consult an RWIT tutor, go to RWIT's [appointment scheduler](#) or stop by the Center in 183 Baker-Berry Library, Level One (next to the Reference area) during drop-in hours.

Ideas for sources

Possible academic sources:

- Google Scholar searches (regular or advanced search)
- Citations *in* a relevant article
- Citations *to* a relevant article (Google Scholar)
- *Annual Review of Politics* literature reviews

Historical, media, and polling data:

- [Roper Center for Public Opinion Research](#)
- [The Policy Agendas Project](#)
- [The American Presidency Project](#)
- [Lexis Nexis Academic](#)
 - Media coverage of the president/White House
 - Public Papers of the Presidents
 - PolitiFact compilations of presidential promises ([Obama](#), [Trump](#))
- [WhiteHouse.gov](#)
- [Huffington Post Pollster](#) and [PollingReport.com](#)
- [Morning Consult Intelligence](#)

Extra credit: Applications and case studies

Students may send me articles or clips that are particularly illustrative of or relevant to theoretical points from readings we have discussed. If I use what you send me in class, you will receive 0.5% extra credit toward your final grade (up to 1% per student).

Course requirements and expectations

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before each class and to contribute to class discussion. You are also expected to follow political news—we will often begin class by discussing how current events relate to class material. Finally, students must be respectful of others at all times, including during classroom discussion.

Communication

The class will be run through Canvas. I will use it to email announcements to you and provide access to assigned readings. Please submit your work to me through its assignments function rather than by email. However, if you have questions, feel free to come to my office hours or email me.

Studying

Many students do not study effectively. I highly recommend [Vox's guide](#) to improving how you prepare for exams. For more information, please contact the [Academic Skills Center](#).

Laptop/electronic device policy

Laptops, cell phones, and other electronic devices may not be used during class without the permission of the instructor. You should therefore make sure to print all readings before class. This policy is motivated by the growing body of research which finds that the use of laptops [hinders learning](#) not just for the people who use them but the students around them as well. Multitasking is unfortunately [distracting and cognitively taxing](#). In addition, research suggests that students take notes [more effectively](#) in longhand than when they write on laptops. (Exceptions will be made for students with disabilities who need to be able to use a laptop.)

Academic integrity

Students are responsible for understanding the [academic integrity rules](#) at Dartmouth, including [how to cite sources appropriately](#). Ignorance of the Academic Honor Principle or appropriate citation practices will not be considered an excuse if a violation occurs. Beyond any penalties imposed as a consequence of an Academic Honor Principle investigation, any student who is found to have cheated or plagiarized on any assignment will receive a failing grade in the class. Please see me immediately if you have any questions or concerns.

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities who may need disability-related academic adjustments and services for this course are encouraged to see me privately as early in the term as possible. Students requiring disability-related academic adjustments and services must consult the Student Accessibility Services office (205 Colis Student Center, 646-9900, Student.Accessibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu). Once SAS has authorized services, students must show the originally signed

SAS Services and Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to me. As a first step, if you have questions about whether you qualify to receive academic adjustments and services, you should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential. (Students with disabilities who require an exception to the laptop policy described above will be granted one; please let me know if we need to discuss this option.)

Religious observances

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Office hours

My office hours for this course are Friday from 9:00–10:30 AM. To ensure you have a time that works for you, please schedule a meeting with me using my ScheduleOnce page at <http://meetme.so/BrendanNyhan>. I will prioritize appointments over walk-ins though I am of course happy to meet with any student if time permits. (If you cannot make it to office hours, please email me to schedule an alternate meeting time.)

Course materials

No books are required for this course—all readings are available on Canvas unless otherwise noted.

Course schedule

The tentative schedule for the course is presented below. Please note that certain classes have been replaced with x-periods due to holidays and/or schedule conflicts. This course outline is subject to change; please consult the current version of the syllabus on Canvas for the most up-to-date information.

Introduction

The presidency at a crossroads (1/3)

- Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt (2016), “Is Donald Trump a Threat to Democracy?,” *The New York Times*, December 16, 2016
- Peter Baker (2017), “For Trump, A Year of Reinventing the Presidency,” *The New York Times*, December 31, 2017

- Matt Grossman and David A. Hopkins (2017), “Trump isn’t changing the Republican Party. The Republican Party is changing Trump,” *Washington Post*, August 2, 2017
- Matt Glassman (2017), “Donald Trump is a dangerously weak president,” Vox, December 27, 2017
- Julia Azari (2017), “Trump Is A 19th-Century President Facing 21st-Century Problems,” FiveThirtyEight, August 28, 2017
- Syllabus review
- Assignment: Take class survey (http://tuck.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1KZ2XIR9hBZndC5)

The development and study of the presidency / skill-building

Analytical writing (1/4–x-period)

- Erin Ackerman (2015), “‘Analyze This:’ Writing in the Social Sciences,” in Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein (eds.), *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, 3rd ed.
- John Gerring, “[General Advice on Social Science Writing](#)”
- Tim Büthe, “[Planning and Writing an Analytical Empirical Paper in Political Science](#)”
- Assignment: Bring one-page excerpts of two previous analytical writing assignments with you to class (any subject is fine but social science is preferred)
 - One that you are proud of
 - One that you could improve on

Reading quantitative social science (1/5)

- William D. Berry and Mitchell S. Sanders (2000), *Understanding Multivariate Research*, 1–39, 45–49
- Abby Long (2015), “[10 Things to Know About Reading a Regression Table](#)”
- Hints on how to read and interpret regression tables (handout on Canvas)

The Constitution and the pre-modern presidency (1/8)

- Sidney M. Milkis and Michael Nelson (2012), *The American Presidency: Origins and Development 1776-2011*, 6th edition, Ch. 2
- U.S. Constitution (1789)
- Gene Healy (2009), *The Cult of the Presidency*, 32–46

The modern presidency (1/10)

- Jeffrey K. Tulis (2010), “The Two Constitutional Presidencies,” in Michael Nelson (ed.), *The Presidency and the Political System*, 9th edition
- Healy (2009), Chs. 2–3
- Optional background reading: Milkis and Nelson (2012), 218–264, 288–350

The contemporary presidency (1/12)

- Healy (2009), Ch. 4, 145–149
- Richard M. Skinner (2008), “George W. Bush and the partisan presidency,” *Political Science Quarterly*
- Context: Ross Douthat (2014), “The Making of an Imperial President,” *The New York Times*, November 22, 2014
- Optional background reading: Milkis and Nelson (2012), 351–485

Presidential power, rules, and norms (1/17)

- Woodrow Wilson (1908), *Constitutional Government in the United States*, Ch. 3
- Julia R. Azari and Jennifer K. Smith (2012), “Unwritten Rules: Informal Institutions in Established Democracies,” *Perspectives on Politics*
- Context: Emily Bazelon (2017), “How Do We Contend With Trump’s Defiance of ‘Norms’?,” *The New York Times Magazine*, July 11, 2017

Analytical paper session I (1/18–x-period)

- Before class: Submit brief description of at least three possible topics of interest
- Discussion of assignment
- Pairs: Paraphrase of assignment; plans for improvement from short paper; brainstorming on topics
- Special guest: Dan Benjamin (former White House foreign policy speechwriter and principal advisor to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on counterterrorism; now directs the Dickey Center)

Different approaches to the study of the presidency (1/19)

- Michael Nelson (2010), “The Psychological Presidency,” in Nelson (ed.), *The Presidency and the Political System*, 9th edition
- Stephen Skowronek (2005), “Presidential Leadership in Political Time,” in Nelson (ed.), *The Presidency and the Political System*, 9th edition
- Gary King (1993), “The Methodology of Presidential Research,” in Edwards, Kessel, and Rockman (eds.), *Researching the Presidency*
- Context: Stephen Skowronek (2017), “Is Donald Trump the Great Disrupter? Probably not.” *Washington Post*, April 24, 2017
- Context: Benedict Carey (2016), “The Psychiatric Question: Is It Fair to Analyze Donald Trump From Afar?” *The New York Times*, August 15, 2016

Interbranch relations: Congress and the courts

Congressional constraints on legislation (1/22)

- David W. Brady and Craig Volden (2005), *Revolving Gridlock: Politics And Policy From Jimmy Carter to George W. Bush*, 2nd edition, Chs. 1–2 and 80–90
- Frances E. Lee (2008), “Dividers, Not Uniters: Presidential Leadership and Senate Partisanship, 1981-2004,” *Journal of Politics*
- Context: Ryan Lizza (2012), “The Obama Memos,” *The New Yorker*, January 30, 2012
- Context: Frances Wilkinson (2017), “Trump’s Hyper-Partisan 2017” *Bloomberg View*, December 20, 2017

Enacting a legislative agenda (1/24)

- George C. Edwards III (2009), *The Strategic President: Persuasion and Opportunity in Presidential Leadership*, Ch. 4
- Matthew N. Beckmann (2010), *Pushing the Agenda: Presidential Leadership in US Lawmaking, 1953–2004*, Ch. 3
- Context: George C. Edwards III (2017), “No Deal: Donald Trump’s Leadership of Congress,” *The Forum*

Interactions with the courts (1/26)

- Lee Epstein and Jeffrey A. Segal (2005), *Advice and Consent: The Politics of Judicial Appointments*, Ch. 3
- Richard J. Anderson, David Cottrell, and Charles R. Shipan (2017), “The Power to Appoint: Presidential Nominations and Change on the Supreme Court”
- Context: Charlie Savage (2017), “Trump Is Rapidly Reshaping the Judiciary. Here’s How,” *The New York Times*, November 11, 2017

Midterm 1 (1/29)

- Midterm course survey (http://tuck.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dg67doCM3uS8yNv) must be submitted to take exam

The executive branch

Unilateral actions (1/31)

- Hans H.G. Hassell and Samuel Kernell (2015), “Veto Rhetoric and Legislative Riders,” *American Journal of Political Science*
- Alexander Bolton and Sharece Thrower (2015), “Legislative Capacity and Executive Unilateralism,” *American Journal of Political Science*
- Context: Andrew Prokop (2014), “How Barack Obama is expanding presidential power and what it means for the future,” *Vox*, September 14, 2014
- Context: Glenn Greenwald (2016), “Trump will have vast powers. He can thank Democrats for them.” *Washington Post*, November 11, 2016
- Context: Andrew Rudalevige (2017), “Candidate Trump attacked Obama’s executive orders. President Trump loves executive orders,” *Washington Post*, October 17, 2017

Analytical paper session II (2/1–x-period)

- Due before class: One-page summary proposal (including references)
- Discussion of proposals
- Pairs: Peer review

Governing the executive branch (2/5)

- B. Dan Wood and Richard W. Waterman (1991), “The Dynamics of Political Control of the Bureaucracy,” *American Political Science Review*
- Joshua B. Kennedy (2015), “‘Do This! Do That! and Nothing Will Happen:’ Executive Orders and Bureaucratic Responsiveness,” *American Politics Research*
- Sidney M. Milkis and Nicholas Jacobs (2017), “ ‘I Alone Can Fix It’: Donald Trump, the Administrative Presidency, and Hazards of Executive-Centered Partisanship,” *The Forum*

Foreign policy

Foreign policy and presidential power (2/12)

- William G. Howell and Jon C. Rogowski (2013), “War, the Presidency, and Legislative Voting Behavior,” *American Journal of Political Science*
- Brandice Canes-Wrone, William G. Howell, and David E. Lewis (2008), “Toward a Broader Understanding of Presidential Power: A Reevaluation of the Two Presidencies Thesis,” *Journal of Politics*
- Context: Jeremy Herb (2017), “Could Congress stop Trump from bombing North Korea?,” CNN, August 10, 2017

The role of domestic politics in foreign policy (2/14)

- William G. Howell and Jon C. Pevehouse (2005), “Presidents, Congress, and the Use of Force,” *International Organization*
- Matthew A. Baum and Tim Groeling (2010), “Reality Asserts Itself: Public Opinion on Iraq and the Elasticity of Reality,” *International Organization*
- Context: Dan Balz and Emily Guskin (2017), “Trump foreign policy pronouncements split the Republican Party,” *Washington Post*, October 1, 2017

Invited speaker (2/15–x-period)

- Special guest: Lisa Monaco (Assistant Attorney General for National Security under Obama and former chief of staff to Robert Mueller at the FBI)

Accountability: The public, the press, and scandal

Understanding presidential approval (2/16)

- James A. Stimson (2015), *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics*, 2nd ed., Ch. 5
- Robert S. Erikson, Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson (2002), *The Macro Polity*, Ch. 2
- Context: Gary C. Jacobson (2017), “Donald Trump, the Public, and Congress: The First 7 Months,” *The Forum*
- Context: [Gallup Presidential Job Approval Center](#) (online, not on Canvas; make sure to use the comparison tool and to look at subgroup approval measures such as own/opposing party)

Are presidents responsive to public opinion? (2/19)

- Robert S. Erikson, Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson (2002), *The Macro Polity*, Ch. 8
- Brandice Canes-Wrone and James P. Kelly (2013), “The Obama Presidency, Public Position-Taking, and Mass Opinion,” *Polity*
- Context: Fred Hiatt (2014), “Obama needs to lead, not follow polls,” *Washington Post*, April 20, 2014

Going public—how does the president do it? Does it work? (2/21)

- Samuel Kernell (2006), *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership* (4th edition), Ch. 5
- Garry Young (2005), “Presidential Rhetoric, the Public Agenda, and the End of Presidential Television’s ‘Golden Age,’ ” *Journal of Politics*
- Annie Franco, Justin Grimmer, and Chloe Lim (2017), “The Limited Effect of Public Appeals”
- Context: Brian Resnick (2017), “Trump is a real-world political science experiment,” *Vox*, October 11, 2017

Analytical paper session III (2/22–x-period)

- Due 48 hours before class: Paper draft
- Due before class: One-page peer review (pairs)
 1. Using cut and paste (only!), provide answers to the questions for assignment

2. Using the rubric criteria, identify at least two specific aspects of the paper that are especially strong and two that could be improved
 3. With the rubric criteria in mind, write at least three specific and constructive questions for the author that could help them think about how best to revise the paper
- Class discussion of paper progress
 - Review and discussion of peer review responses

The president and the press (2/23)

- Samuel Kernell (2006), *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership* (4th edition), Ch. 4
- Steven E. Clayman, Marc N. Elliott, John Heritage, and Megan K. Beckett (2010), “A Watershed in White House Journalism: Explaining the Post-1968 Rise of Aggressive Presidential News,” *Political Communication*
- Context: Jack Shafer (2017), “Who’s Winning Trump’s War With the Press? Assessing Year One,” *Politico*, December 27, 2017

Presidential scandal (2/26)

- Brendan Nyhan (2015), “Scandal Potential: How political context and news congestion affect the president’s vulnerability to media scandal,” *British Journal of Political Science*
- Robert Entman (2012), *Scandal and Silence: Media Responses to Presidential Misconduct*, Ch. 2
- Context: Carlos Lozada (2017), “The presidency survived the Watergate, Iran-contra and Clinton scandals. Trump will exact a higher toll,” *Washington Post*, December 21, 2017

Presidential elections

The primaries (2/28)

- Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller (2008), *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*, 187–234 and 288–303
- Context: Andrew Prokop (2015), “**Political scientists think ‘the party’ will stop Trump. They shouldn’t be so sure,**” Vox, September 23, 2015
- Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller (2016), “Party Versus Faction in the Reformed Presidential Nominating System,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*

The general election (3/2)

- James A. Stimson (2015), *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics*, 2nd ed., Ch. 4
- Alan Abramowitz (2016), “Will Time for Change Mean Time for Trump?,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*
- Lynn Vavreck (2017), “The Ways That the 2016 Election Was Perfectly Normal,” *The New York Times*, May 1, 2017
- John Sides (2017), “Race, Religion, and Immigration in 2016,” Democracy Fund Voter Study Group

Analytical paper working session (3/5)

- Finish your papers! I will be in the classroom and available for consultation if you would like to work there or ask questions (optional).

Wrapping up

The presidency reconsidered (3/7)

- Juan Linz (1990), “The Perils of Presidentialism,” *Journal of Democracy*
- Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt (2018), *How Democracies Die*, Chs. 1 and 4
- Context: Brian Beutler (2016), “Trump the Disrupter,” *The New Republic*, March 29, 2016
- Context: Bright Line Watch January 2017 survey results (TBD)
- Assignment: Review your previous midterm

Midterm 2 (3/10 11:30 AM, room TBD)

Presidency midterm study guide

Syllabus description

There will be two closed-book midterms (25% each) covering half of the course. These exams will test your knowledge and understanding of the readings from that portion of the course. These may include multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer questions, and/or brief essays. (Note: These will be curved! Don't panic about your raw score.)

Exam details

- Each covers approximately half the class
- Closed-book; first held during class, second during final exam period
- Test *conceptual* knowledge and understanding of readings and lectures, not tiny details of individual articles or examples

Questions to consider for readings

- What is the authors' *main hypothesis*?
- What is the *theoretical mechanism* that they believe would generate such an outcome?
- What is their *general approach to testing* their theory?
- What are their *key results*?
- How do their theories/results *relate to those of other authors* we read?

Sample questions from previous exams

1. (1 point) Compared to an agency created by Congress, which of these would Howell and Lewis expect for an agency created through executive action? (select all that apply)

- (A) A greater likelihood of reporting to the president
- (B) More stringent limits on personnel selection and replacement
- (C) A shorter life span
- (D) Larger budget

2. (2 points) Why do Black and Owens question the use of success rates to measure the influence of the Solicitor General on Supreme Court decisions? What implications does this argument have for the legislative success data cited by Edwards?

Short paper rubric

Criteria	A	B	C/D/F
Understanding	Demonstrates deep understanding of readings and relationships among them	Demonstrates acceptable understanding of readings, but some limits or errors	Demonstrates limited or no understanding of readings and relationships among them
Application	Applies several key concepts from readings to current events or historical cases	Successfully applies at least one concept from readings to current events or history	Implies one or more key concepts, but link to readings is missing or flawed
Discussion/critique	Significant insight and creative discussion	Interesting, engaged discussion and critique	Shallow, flawed, or incorrect
Quality of expression	Excellent grammar, vocabulary, and word choice	Some errors, imprecision, or room for improvement in writing	Awkward, imprecise, sloppy, or error-filled writing

Analytical paper rubric

Criteria	A	B	C/D/F
Thesis/argument	Clear, strong arguments that go beyond description, address important objections	Discernible arguments but not strong/clear enough or too much description	Unclear or weak arguments; mainly description or assertion; incomplete
Originality	Especially creative new arguments, juxtaposing previously unrelated theories, or relating of facts to theories in new ways	Demonstrates some analytical originality in arguments, themes, and evidence covered; opportunities for greater creativity	Demonstrates little analytical originality, relies mainly on arguments and evidence covered in class or suggested by sources
Evidence	Numerous, varied, and relevant details and facts provided in support of arguments	Details and facts support arguments, but more needed or some lacking relevance	Some details and facts to support arguments, but not enough and/or lack relevancy
Use of course concepts	Excellent understanding of course concepts and insightful application to research topic	Conveys familiarity with course concepts; applies concepts to topic appropriately	Basic course concepts not applied appropriately; incorrect or incomplete
Organization	Clear, logical organization that develops argument appropriately; does not stray off topic	Organization not totally clear; some digressions or lack of needed structure	Organization is unclear and/or paper strays substantially from agreed-upon topic
Quality of expression	Excellent grammar, vocabulary, and word choice	Some errors, imprecision, or room for improvement in writing	Awkward, imprecise, sloppy, or error-filled writing