

**POL 343: The American Presidency**  
**M/W 2:30-3:45 PM**  
**CSS #134**

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**Course Description**

This course weighs the logic and impact of constitutional design upon the office of the presidency, including sources of power and constraint. It traces the development of the presidency as an institution over time and examines the relationship between the president and the public, Congress, and the judiciary. The course then turns to an in-depth analysis of four recent presidencies in relation to key areas of executive authority and action. Throughout the semester relevant and illustrative examples will be drawn from the Trump presidency. *Prerequisite: POL 160.*

**Course Objectives**

- Students will become familiar with the historical development of the presidency in relation to its institutional design and the scope and exercise of presidential authority.
- Presentations and written assignments will hone students' public speaking skills while also developing their academic writing skills.
- Students will think critically about the role of the presidency in shaping American political life and reflect on how presidents impact the nation's civic and political culture.
- Engaged course discussion will provide students with an opportunity to practice engaging with complex political problems through civil discourse.

**Books and Readings**

- **Required Books are available for purchase in the campus bookstore and online.**
  - Ellis, Richard J. and Michael Nelson, Eds. *Debating the Presidency: Conflicting Perspectives on the American Executive*. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, an imprint of SAGE Publications, 2018). (Identified as DP on schedule.)
  - Pika, Joseph A., John Anthony Maltese and Andrew Rudalevige. *The Politics of the Presidency, Revised 9<sup>th</sup> Edition*. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, an imprint of SAGE Publications, 2018). (Identified as PP on course schedule.)
  - Skowronek, Stephen. *Presidential Leadership in Political Time: Reprise and Reappraisal, Second Ed, Revised and Expanded*. (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2008, 2011).
  - Presidential biography [TBD]
- **(PDF):** Stand-alone academic articles and book chapters that are designated PDF on the schedule will be available on Blackboard.

- **Online:** Sources that are readily accessible online have been hyper-linked in the schedule of readings. To access these readings, navigate to the syllabus posted on Blackboard and click on the hyper-linked reading.
- **Students are expected to subscribe to and read a newspaper of their choice**

### **Assignments/ Grading**

**All written assignments must be submitted electronically prior to the start of class and in hard-copy at the start of the class period. A late assignment will lose one full letter grade (10%) for each day (24-hour period) it is submitted after the due date. For example, a written assignment that is due at the start of class on Tuesday, January 29<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am. If you were to submit this assignment any time after 9:30am on the 29<sup>th</sup> but before 9:30am on the 30<sup>th</sup>, you would lose one letter grade.**

**Extra credit event:** Steven Levitsky, 2/7, 3pm in Bieberbach on the erosion of democracy. And/or 2/8 at 9:00-9:50 in Crummer 222 for discussion of *How Democracies Die* and to answer student questions. To receive extra credit, you must attend one of these two events and submit a 1 page reflection.

- DP Debate Class Discussion: 5 pts [*Schedule of presentations determined in class.*]
  - For their assigned reading, small student groups will lead the class discussion. Students are expected to prepare a short (5 minute) synopsis of the reading and pose discussion questions to the class.
- Book Review and Presidential Presentation: 15 pts
  - *At the start of the semester, students will be randomly assigned to a president whom they will study in detail. Early in the semester, students are expected to choose a book that focuses on this president (subject to professor approval) and to read it in addition to other assigned readings. In addition to being the basis for their book review, this book should also provide a starting point for the student's presidential presentation.*
  - Book Review: 10 pts [*Due 3/18*]
    - 3-4 page (double-spaced) book review on biographical book of your choice pertaining to your assigned president.
  - Presidential Presentation: 5 pts [*Schedule determined in class*]
    - 10 minute formal presentation on assigned president that addresses the book you chose and highlights one key area of presidential politics in relation to your president's administration
- Midterm: 30 pts [*Due 2/27*]
  - 3 essays in response to assigned questions
  - Essays should be polished and incorporate citations
  - Each essay should be 2 single-spaced pages
  - Essays that exceed the two-page limit will be marked down
- Final Presidential Paper: 40 pts
  - Presidential Paper Proposal, Annotated Bibliography, Outline: 3 @10% each
    - 1-2 page paper proposal [*Due 3/27*]

- Annotated bibliography with at least 5 scholarly (peer-reviewed) sources (not including assigned course readings) [Due 4/03]
- 3-4 page outline with citations to relevant texts [Due 4/17]
- Presidential Paper: 70% [Due 5/06 at 11 am]
  - 10-12 polished pages on approved topic
- Participation and Attendance: 10 pts

Participation Rubric

<p><b>10 pts</b> Stellar attendance and <i>daily</i> participation that reflected engagement with assigned readings and course topics.  (0-1 absences)</p>	<p><b>8 pts</b> Strong attendance and consistent participation in course discussions that reflected engagement with assigned readings and course topics.  (0-2 absences)</p>	<p><b>7 pts</b> Strong attendance and some participation; OR average attendance and very strong participation in course discussions that reflected engagement with assigned readings and course topics  (0-2 absences)</p>	<p><b>5 pts</b> Strong attendance and little participation; OR average attendance and strong participation in course discussions that reflected engagement with assigned readings and course topics.  (0-3 absences)</p>	<p><b>4-0 pts</b> Average attendance with no participation; OR poor attendance with some participation; OR participation in course discussions does NOT reflect engagement with assigned readings and course topics.  (2-4 absences)</p>
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**Note on classroom decorum**

This course asks students to engage with many of the most polarizing questions in American politics. A plurality of views are presented in our course readings and will be discussed in class. Students are encouraged to critically engage with the readings in order to formulate and express their own perspectives on these issues. The classroom should be a place where we debate political ideas and policies freely; for everyone to feel empowered to speak, students must be committed to civil and respectful dialogue. Students are expected to refrain from ad hominem attacks and to ground their positions in relation to established political theories and empirical evidence.

**Schedule\***

**Note: Students are expected to remain up to date on the news as it pertains to the presidency and American politics more broadly. There is an expectation that students will read at least one newspaper daily.**

\*Course readings and schedule subject to change at professor’s discretion.

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
1/16		Introduction: Constitution and Oath of Office	
1/21		NO CLASS: MLK Jr. Day	
1/23	Studying the Presidency	Lyn Ragsdale, “Studying the Presidency: Why Presidents Need Political Scientists”; Nigel Bowles, “Studying the Presidency.”	

1/28	Understanding the Presidency in terms of American Political Development	Skowronek, Ch. 1; <a href="#">John Dickerson, "The Hardest Job in the World," <i>The Atlantic</i></a>	
1/30	The Changing Presidency	PP, I.1	<b>Submit President Book for Approval</b>
2/04	Constitutional traditionalism	Milkis and Landy, "The Presidency in History," pp. 93-126; DP, Ch. 1	Group A <sub>1</sub> : Pro Discussion Questions Group B <sub>1</sub> : Con Discussion Questions *Levitsky event on 2/7
2/06	Election Politics:	PP, I.2	
2/11	Presidential Elections: Who chooses?	DP, Ch. 3 DP Ch. 4  <a href="#">Ron Elving, "How does the Electoral College work, and is it fair?" NPR</a>	Group A <sub>2</sub> : Pro Discussion Questions Group B <sub>2</sub> : Con Discussion Questions
2/13	Public Politics	PP, I.3 <i>Recommended: Doherty, "The Implications of the Permanent Campaign," <i>The Rise of the President's Permanent Campaign</i></i>	
2/18	Presidential Time and Presidential Power	Skowronek, Ch. 2 DP, Ch. 8 <i>Recommended, DP, Ch. 7</i>	
2/20	Congressional vs. Presidential Power	DP, Ch. 9 DP, Ch. 10	Group A <sub>3</sub> : Pro Discussion Questions Group B <sub>3</sub> : Con Discussion Questions <b>Midterm Questions Distributed</b>
2/25	No Class: CNPS Conference	Independent midterm writing day	
2/27	Legislative Politics	PP, II.5	<b>Midterm Due</b>

3/04	Executive Politics	PP, II.6	
3/06	No Class: Spring Break	Finish reading presidential biography; Work on book review	
3/11 and 3/13	Unilateral Directives	DP, Ch. 11 DP, Ch. 12 Dwight D. Eisenhower's Little Rock Executive Order (PDF) <i>Recommended:</i> Kenneth R. Mayer, "Executive Orders," in <i>The Constitutional Presidency</i>	Group A4: Pro Discussion Questions Group B4: Con Discussion Questions
3/18	Judicial Politics	PP, II.7, pgs. 341-362 DP, Ch. 13 Listen: Amicus Podcast	<b>Book Review Due</b>
3/20	Fox Day Wiggle Room	NA	NA
3/25	Reagan Presentations	David Farber, "Reagan," in <i>The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism</i> (PDF)	
3/27	Reagan and Economic Policy	PP, pgs. 422-437, 469-475; Michael Harrington, "The Prospects for Reaganomics," <i>Party Coalitions in the 1980s</i> (PDF) Jonathan Fuerbringer, <a href="#">Reagonomics: The Report Card for 1981, and the Prospects, New York Times</a>	<b>Paper Proposals Due</b>
4/01	Clinton Presentations	Stanley A. Renshon, "A Preliminary Assessment of the Clinton Presidency: Character, Leadership and Performance," and "After the Fall: The Clinton Presidency in Psychological Perspective" (PDFs)	
4/03	Clinton and Domestic Policy	PP, III.8, pgs. 381-399, 407-416. <a href="#">Russell L. Riley, "Bill Clinton: Domestic Affairs," Miller Center</a> James Petras and Steve Vieux, "From Little Rock to Wall Street: Clinton's Journey Beyond Reaganism" (PDF)  <i>Recommended:</i> Mark Byrnes, "The President and Domestic Policy" (PDF) <a href="#">Yann R. Newkirk, II, "The Real Lessons from Bill Clinton's Welfare Reform," The Atlantic</a>	<b>Annotated Bibliographies Due</b>
4/08	George W. Bush Presentations	PP III.10	
4/10	George W. Bush and Foreign Policy	The Bush Doctrine (PDF) <a href="#">Chronology: The Evolution of the Bush Doctrine</a> Robert Jervis, "Understanding the Bush Doctrine" (PDF) <a href="#">Watch: The War Behind Closed Doors, Frontline</a>	

4/15	Obama Presentations	<a href="#">William A. Galston, "Resident Barack Obama's First Two Years: Policy Accomplishments, Political Difficulties," <i>Brookings</i></a> Martell Teasley and David Ikard, "Barack Obama and the Politics of Race: The Myth of Posttracism in America" (PDF) Clarence E. Walker, "We're Losing Our Country: Barack Obama, Race, and the Tea Party"	
4/17	Obama and Divided Government	<a href="#">John Sides, "Divided Government is Bad for Obama," <i>The Hill</i></a> Edward G. Carmines and Matthew Fowler, "The Temptation of Executive Authority: How Increased Polarization and the Decline in Legislative Capacity Have Contributed to the Expansion of Presidential Power" (PDF)  Recommended: Jeffrey A. Fine and Adam L. Weber, "Circumventing Adversity: Executive Orders and Divided Government" (PDF)	<b>Paper Outline Due</b>
4/22	Trump Presentations	Pika, et al., <i>Understanding a New Presidency in the Age of Trump</i> (PDF)	
4/24	Trump and the Politics of Presidential Masculinity	Jackson Katz, <i>Man Enough? Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, and the Politics of Presidential Masculinity</i> , pgs. 233-273 (PDF)	
4/29	Topic TBD	Students' Choice/ Presentation Catch Up	
5/06	Final Papers Due at 11am		

### **Syllabi Statements**

#### **Accessibility Services**

Rollins College is committed to equal access and inclusion for all students, faculty and staff. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 create a foundation of legal obligations to provide an accessible educational environment that does not discriminate against persons with disabilities. It is the spirit of these laws that guides the college toward expanding access in all courses and programs, utilizing innovative instructional design, and identifying and removing barriers whenever possible.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of academic accommodations in order to fully participate in your classes, please contact the Office of Accessibility Services, located on the first floor of the Olin Library, as soon as possible. You are encouraged to schedule a Welcome Meeting by filling out the "First Time Users" form on the website: <http://www.rollins.edu/access> and/or reach out by phone or email: 407-975-6463 or [Access@Rollins.edu](mailto:Access@Rollins.edu).

All test-taking accommodations requested for this course must first be approved through the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) and scheduled online through *Accommodate* **at least 72 hours before the**

**exam.** Official accommodation letters must be received by and discussed with the faculty in advance. There will be no exceptions given unless previously approved by the OAS with documentation of the emergency situation. We highly recommend making all testing accommodations at the beginning of the semester. OAS staff are available to assist with this process.

### **Academic Honor Code Reaffirmation (updated 7/18/18)**

<http://www.rollins.edu/honor-code/documents/academic-honor-code-rollins-college.pdf>

Membership in the student body of Rollins College carries with it an obligation, and requires a commitment, to act with honor in all things. The student commitment to uphold the values of honor - honesty, trust, respect, fairness, and responsibility - particularly manifests itself in two public aspects of student life. First, as part of the admission process to the College, students agree to commit themselves to the Honor Code. Then, as part of the matriculation process during Orientation, students sign a more detailed pledge to uphold the Honor Code and to conduct themselves honorably in all their activities, both academic and social, as a Rollins student. A student signature on the following pledge is a binding commitment by the student that lasts for his or her entire tenure at Rollins College.

The development of the virtues of Honor and Integrity are integral to a Rollins College education and to membership in the Rollins College community. Therefore, I, a student of Rollins College, pledge to show my commitment to these virtues by abstaining from any lying, cheating, or plagiarism in my academic endeavors and by behaving responsibly, respectfully and honorably in my social life and in my relationships with others. This pledge is reinforced every time a student submits work for academic credit as his/her own. Students shall add to the paper, quiz, test, lab report, etc., the handwritten signed statement:

***"On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any unauthorized assistance on this work."***

Material submitted electronically should contain the pledge; submission implies signing the pledge.

### **Citation Expectations**

As per the Academic Honor Code, plagiarism is defined as "Offering the words, facts, or ideas of another person as your own in any academic exercise." In order to avoid plagiarism, all students are expected to use proper citation norms. **This includes citing all works you have consulted in your bibliography and providing citations in the body of your written work for all material that is quoted, paraphrased, or summarized. For our course, all assignments will use Chicago Manual of Style citations.**

### **Attendance**

***Students may have one absence without any grade reduction and two absences without significant penalty. Three absences will result in a significant reduction of the student's grade. (For guidelines, see participation rubric.) Five or more absences may automatically result in a failing grade.***

### **Absences – religious holidays and/or campus business**

The professor will accommodate a reasonable number of excused absences for religious holidays and official off-campus college business such as academic conference presentations and athletic competitions.

However, per the College's policy on excused absences ([http://www.rollins.edu/catalogue/academic\\_regulations.html#class-attendance](http://www.rollins.edu/catalogue/academic_regulations.html#class-attendance)), students must discuss with the professor the dates of the anticipated absences no later than the last day of the drop period. Students must present to their professor written evidence of the anticipated absences and discuss with him/her how and when make-up work should be completed prior to missing the class. Students should not expect to receive allowance for excused absences if they do not meet with the professor beforehand and clarify the dates as necessary. Absences will be addressed by the faculty member in accordance with his/her attendance policy. The professor retains the right to determine what would be considered to be a reasonable number of absences (excused or otherwise) for the course. A student will not fail a course because the number of religious observances and/or college business absences exceed the number of absences allowed, except if excessive absences make it impossible to fulfill the expectations of the course. The student's class participation grade in the course, though, may still be affected.

### **Credit Hour Statement for Rollins Courses**

This course is a four-credit-hour course that meets three hours per week. The value of four credit hours results, in part, from work expected of enrolled students both inside and outside the classroom. Rollins faculty require that students average at least 2 ½ hours of outside work for every hour of scheduled class time. In this course, the additional outside-of-class expectations are that students dedicate sufficient time to carefully read all assigned texts, complete assigned homework, including but not limited to a writing a book review, preparation for in-class presentations, and the production of a multi-stage final paper.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Student grade reports are based on the following definitions.

- Grade 'A' is reserved for work that is exceptional in quality and shows keen insight, understanding, and initiative.
- Grade 'B' is given for work that is consistently superior and shows interest, effort, or originality.
- Grade 'C' is a respectable grade. It reflects consistent daily preparation and satisfactory completion of all work required.
- Grade 'D-' is the lowest passing grade. It is below the average necessary to meet graduation requirements and ordinarily is not accepted for transfer by other institutions.
- Grade 'F' is failing.

### **Recording Device Use**

In order to protect the integrity of the classroom experience, the use of recording devices is limited to either the expressed permission of the faculty member or with proper documentation from the Office of Accessibility Services. Information about accommodations through Accessibility Services can be found at <http://www.rollins.edu/accessibility-services/>. Recording without the proper authorization is considered a violation of the Rollins Code of Community Standards.

### **Title IX Statement (updated 7/18/18)**

Rollins College is committed to making its campus a safe place for students. If you tell any of your faculty about sexual misconduct involving members of the campus community, your professors are required to report this information to the Title IX Coordinator. Your faculty member can help connect you with the Title IX Coordinator, ([TitleIX@rollins.edu](mailto:TitleIX@rollins.edu) or 407.691.1773). You will be provided with information,



resources and support. If you would prefer to speak to someone on campus confidentially, please call the Wellness Center at 407.628.6340. They are not required to report any information you share with the Title IX Coordinator.

Misconduct under Title IX includes gender-based discrimination and harassment, sexual harassment, sexual violence including fondling and assault, sexual coercion/force, sexual-based communication, sexual exploitation, interpersonal violence including dating and domestic violence, stalking, complicity and retaliation. Everyone is protected under the following protected statuses: sex (including pregnancy), gender, gender identity (including transgender status), gender expression, and sexual orientation. For information, visit [Rollins.edu/titleix](http://Rollins.edu/titleix).