



### The American Presidency

Political Science 220

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Jill Dunlap, PhD

Office Hours: W, 6:00 – 7:00 PM

Phone: (913) 481-8892

Online

E-mail: jdunlap6@depaul.edu

#### Course Description

*“America isn’t Congress. America isn’t Washington. America is the striving immigrant who starts a business, or the mom who works two low-wage jobs to give her kid a better life. America is the union leader and the CEO who put aside their differences to make the economy stronger.”*

– Barack Obama

This course is designed as an examination of the structure of the presidency, its relationship to other political and social institutions, and the way in which that office is shaped by individual presidents.

#### Course Learning Outcomes:

This course will introduce you to the study of the United States presidency. The course will focus on the balance of power between the Presidency and the other branches of government and the dynamic nature of the relationship among all of the branches, as well as the ways that power has shifted from one branch to others throughout history. We will utilize some of the basic tools political scientists use to understand presidential behavior, but with the added perspective of the ways that this particular office impacts a range of policies, from domestic policy to economic policy to national security policy. By the end of the term, students will have developed a basic understanding of the functions of the executive branch, and how those functions impact other political functions such as judicial appointments, conducting foreign policy, and other federal elections. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Understand both the unique, and overlapping, powers and functions of the President with other branches of government.
2. Articulate the impact of the Presidency on domestic policy, foreign policy and judicial appointments.
3. Situate current Congressional-Presidential dynamics using a historical lens to assess these relationships.
4. Understand the fluctuating nature of presidential power and what contributes to its ebb and flow.
5. Articulate the way that the President impacts political parties during elections and beyond.

#### Political Science Program Learning outcomes:

- Define and discuss core concepts within the field of political science, including but not limited to: power, democracy, representation, authoritarianism, freedom and equality.

- Describe the key features of the American political system.
- Compare American institutions to other forms of government found in different countries and regions of the world.
- Analyze a given political issue from a multiplicity of perspectives.
  - Identify, analyze, evaluate, and draw upon a variety of theoretical perspectives to explain particular political phenomenon.
  - Collect, organize, and apply various forms of information to assess statements or hypotheses about political questions.
- Compose clear and well-organized explanations of political phenomenon and support these explanations with evidence.
- Explain and evaluate a sophisticated conception of justice.
  - Identify and describe situations in which justice concerns arise, and take an informed position about the meaning or demands of justice.
- Recognize and describe the importance of values to political attitudes and behavior, and be able to identify and explain their own values.
  - Articulate one's own normative assumptions about politics, society, and other peoples.
- Identify and explain:
  - The key elements of the inter-state system.
  - The nature of globalization.
  - The dynamics of a particular country or region of the world.

### **DePaul University College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Mission Statement:**

As a university, DePaul pursues the preservation, enrichment, and transmission of knowledge and culture across a broad scope of academic disciplines. It treasures its deep roots in the wisdom nourished in Catholic universities from medieval times. The principal distinguishing marks of the university are its Catholic, Vincentian, and urban character.

#### **Required Texts:**

- Nelson, M. (Ed.). (2018). *The presidency and the political system*. CQ Press.
- Pika, J. A., Maltese, J. A., & Rudalevige, A. (2017). *The politics of the presidency*. CQ Press.

#### **Recommended Texts:**

- Ellis, R. J., & Nelson, M. (Eds.). (2017). *Debating the presidency: conflicting perspectives on the American executive*. CQ Press.

#### **Teaching/Learning Methods:**

The majority of the class will be discussion based, in addition to some writing and a group project. You cannot be an active participant in class discussions without having read the material. You must be prepared to be an active participant in our discussions so that we may all come to further our knowledge of the American presidency. You need to read the material assigned for each class before coming to class so that you are sufficiently prepared to discuss the material. Additionally, since much of what we discuss will involve current events, you should be paying attention to the news. If you find news sources of interest to you that we have not discussed in class (podcasts, blogs, video series, TV shows, etc.), please send them to me and we can post them on D2L for everyone to access.

We will do some writing as part of the class assignments. There will be one paper (4-5 pages) for this class. Class discussions and the paper are the two ways we actively engage with the material we study, and thus are the two major ways we learn. It is important that you understand the material and are able to communicate that understanding. Writing is an important part of the learning process, as well as a skill vital to your future activity both in and out of school. We will spend some time class discussing scholarly sources and expectations for the writing assignment.

There will also be one midterm exam and one final examination. They will consist of multiple choice and essay questions. The purpose of the exams is to assess how well you are learning the material, and to challenge you to

synthesize ideas and discriminate among them in a sophisticated manner. They are also designed to make sure you are keeping up with the reading.

## **University and Class Policies**

### *Attendance*

Attendance at all class meetings is mandatory. Absences will only be excused for health conditions (a doctors' note is required) and required university activities. These must be approved in advance by the instructor. You will be permitted 2 unexcused absences during the semester. The third absence, and all subsequent absences will result in 5% reduction in your final grade for each instance.

### *Cell Phones, Pagers, and other Electronic Media*

Anything that will disturb you or your classmates while we are in session should be turned off. If your cell phone goes off once, you will get a dirty look. If it goes off twice, you will be asked to leave. If you are using your cell phone during class for any reason, you will be asked to leave and not return.

## **Instructional Uses of Technology**

The content, delivery and assessment of this course is augmented by the use of the following academic technologies:

- Tools/Applications Used to Aid in the Delivery of Instructional Content
- Power Point
- Desire 2 Learn (or other Grading Software)
- Desire 2 Learn Tools (e.g. Assignment submissions)
- Use of Originality Software (e.g. Turn It In)

## **Grade Calculation**

Grades are computed on the following percentage scale:

90-100	=	A	(360-400 points)
80-89.9	=	B	(320-359 points)
70-79.9	=	C	(280-319 points)
60-69.9	=	D	(240-279 points)
0-59.9	=	F	(under 240 points)

All written assignments are graded based on content, organization, grammar, style, and presentation. All written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the designated date.

## **Evaluation Methods:**

The weight for these various assignments is as follows:

1 midterm exam	@	50 pts each	=	50
1 short paper	@	50 pts each	=	100
Participation x 10 weeks	@	10 pts	=	100
Group Project: Debate	@	100 pts	=	100
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>@</u>	<u>50 pts</u>	<u>=</u>	<u>50</u>
Total				400

### Group Project: Debate

In week 1, I will assign you to groups for this project. The reason I do this is so that you meet new people in class, and no one winds up without a group. The debate presentations, which will be due on the dates designated in the syllabus, will be 10 minutes in length. Each debate will incorporate the following: selection of a topic from the assigned list; a thorough understanding of both sides of the debate; at least five reasons that the topic is supported by evidence from the textbooks we are reading for class. Each presentation will involve at least one citation from each of the major textbooks in the course, and at least one mainstream media source related to the debate topic you select. Each debate presentation will provide groups with an opportunity to answer the question “so what” – why do we care about what we read and how does it apply to the real world of presidential and Congressional politics? Why is this content topical and timely to our understanding of politics today? \*\*PLEASE note that exam questions may come from these presentations – so paying close attention to these presentations is important as an observer.\*\*

#### Participation:

Each day during class, there will be ample opportunity for you to participate in the discussion. To demonstrate that you have read (and even thought about!) the material prior to coming to class, each student will receive 10 participation points per class. At the beginning of each class period, each student will be given two full minutes to discuss what they found interesting from the reading assigned for that day. I like to hear your thoughts about the reading – even the critical perspectives – and we all learn from one another when everyone is engaged. These points should be easy to achieve if you read and come to class and participate each day. Note – you will not be able to make up these points, so attendance is required in order to accumulate these.

#### Paper

You will be assigned one small paper – approximately five to six pages. The paper will involve a discussion of a current piece of legislation that has been introduced into either house of Congress. The paper will be framed by our discussions and understanding of institutionalism and our interpretation of unitary executive theory that has driven recent presidencies. We will discuss the details of the paper in class and a formal prompt will be uploaded to Canvas, which will include the length, citation expectations, deadline to submit the paper, and opportunities for you to have a draft reviewed by me prior to submitting a final paper. The paper will need to have at least one citation from two of the assigned textbooks, at least one mainstream media source, and at least one scholarly citation to support the argument made in your paper. We will spend time discussing what a scholarly resource is and where to find them, so please don't be intimidated by that.

#### In-Class Assignments

These will be assignments done in groups or individually in class. The dates will not be announced, and missing class means you will also miss the points for that day's assignment.

#### **Late Policy:**

Late papers will be penalized one letter grade per day late; a paper is late 15 minutes after the start of class.

#### **Readings and Assignments (by week):**

Week 1	Topic	Required Reading
04.01.20	Course Introductions and introduction to course D2L site	Read the syllabus. Seriously.
	Presidential Competence, Character, and Performance	Chapter 5 (pp. 131-165) <i>The Presidency and the Political System</i> (Nelson)
		Chapter 4 (pp. 177-251)

*The Politics of the Presidency (Pika et al.)*

<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Required Reading</b>
04.08.20	The President and Domestic Policy	Chapter 8 (pp. 449-492) <i>The Politics of the Presidency (Pika et al.)</i>
		Chapter 18 (pp. 497-523) <i>The Presidency and the Political System (Nelson)</i>
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Required Reading</b>
04.15.20	The President and Political Parties	Chapter 12 (pp.309-352) <i>The Presidency and the Political System (Nelson)</i>
		Chapter 2 (pp. 44-96) <i>The Politics of the Presidency (Pika et al.)</i>
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Required Reading</b>
04.22.20	The Presidency and Congress	Chapter 5 (pp. 216-264) <i>The Politics of the Presidency (Pika et al.)</i>
		Chapter 15 (pp. 406-446) <i>The Presidency and the Political System (Nelson)</i>
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Required Reading</b>
04.29.20	The President and Economic Policy	Chapter 9 (pp. 493-552) <i>The Politics of the Presidency (Pika et al.)</i>
<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>		
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Required Reading</b>
05.06.20	The President and Judicial Politics	Chapter 16 (pp. 447-469) <i>The Presidency and the Political System (Nelson)</i>
		Chapter 7 (pp. 401-448) <i>The Politics of the Presidency (Pika et al.)</i>
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Required Reading</b>
05.13.20	Presidential Power	Chapter 17 (pp. 470-496) <i>The Presidency and the Political System (Nelson)</i>
		Chapter 6 (pp. 323-400) <i>The Politics of the Presidency (Pika et al.)</i>
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Required Reading</b>
05.20.20	<b>PAPER DUE</b>	<b><i>No readings assigned.</i></b>
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Required Reading</b>
05.27.20	The President and Interest Groups	Chapter 11 (pp. 277-308) <i>The Presidency and the Political System (Nelson)</i>
<b>DEBATE PRESENTATIONS DUE</b>		
		<b><i>Debating the Presidency</i></b>

Week 10	Topic	Required Reading
06.03.20	The Politics of National Security Policy	<i>Chapter 4</i> <i>Chapter 10</i> <i>Chapter 12</i> Chapter 10 (pp. 553-625) <i>The Politics of the Presidency (Pika et al.)</i>
		Chapter 19 (pp. 524-541) <i>The Presidency and the Political System (Nelson)</i>

Week 11	Topic	Required Reading
06.10.20	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	

### Course Evaluations:

Instructor and course evaluations provide valuable feedback that can improve teaching and learning. The greater the level of participation, the more useful the results. As students, you are in the unique position to view the instructor over time. Your comments about what works and what doesn't can help faculty build on the elements of the course that are strong and improve those that are weak. Isolated comments from students and instructors' peers may also be helpful, but evaluation results based on high response rates may be statistically reliable. As you experience this course and material, think about how your learning is impacted.

Your honest opinions about your experience in and commitment to the course and your learning may help improve some components of the course for the next group of students. Positive comments also show the department chairs and college deans the commitment of instructors to the university and teaching evaluation results are one component used in annual performance reviews (including salary raises and promotion/tenure). The evaluation of the instructor and course provides you an opportunity to make your voice heard on an important issue – the quality of teaching at DePaul. Don't miss this opportunity to provide feedback!

### Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities:

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. There are two office locations:

- Loop Campus – Lewis Center #1420 – (312) 362-8002
- Lincoln Park Campus – Student Center #370 – (773) 325-1677

Students who are registered with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact me privately to discuss how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will use in this course. This is best done early in the term. Our conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

Taken from the [Center for Students with Disabilities](#).

### Academic Honesty:

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could

result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit Academic Integrity at DePaul University (<http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu>) for further details.

### **Writing Center:**

I strongly recommend you make use of the Writing Center throughout your time at DePaul. The Writing Center provides free peer writing tutoring for DePaul students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Writing Center tutors work with writers at all stages of the writing process, from invention to revision, and they are trained to identify recurring issues in your writing as well as address any specific questions or areas that you want to talk about. Visit [www.depaul.edu/writing](http://www.depaul.edu/writing) for more information.

### **Sexual and Relationship Violence:**

As a DePaul community, we share a commitment to take care of one another. Classroom relationships are based on trust and communication. Sometimes, material raised in class may bring up issues for students related to sexual and relationship violence. In other instances, students may reach out to faculty as a source of help and support. It is important for students to know that faculty are required to report information reported to them about experiences with sexual or relationship violence to DePaul's Title IX Coordinator. Students should also know that disclosing experiences with sexual or relationship violence in course assignments or discussion does not constitute a formal report to the University and will not begin the process of DePaul providing a response. Students seeking to report an incident of sexual or relationship violence to DePaul should contact Public Safety (Lincoln Park: 773-325-7777; Loop: 312-362-8400) or the Dean of Students and Title IX Coordinator (Lincoln Park: 773-325-7290; Loop: 312-362-8066 or [titleixcoordinator@depaul.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@depaul.edu)). Students seeking to speak confidentially about issues related to sexual and relationship violence should contact a Survivor Support Advocate in the Office of Health Promotion & Wellness for information and resources (773-325-7129 or [hpw@depaul.edu](mailto:hpw@depaul.edu)). More information is available at <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/hpw/shvp.html>. Students are encouraged to take advantage of these services and to seek help around sexual and relationship violence for themselves as well as their peers who may be in need of support.