

**Political Science 423: Presidents and the Presidency**  
**Fall 2017**  
**Class meets in VKC 102**  
**Prof. Christian Grose**

T-Th 8:00am-9:20am  
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:30am-10:45am  
(office hours are drop-in, no appt. needed)

**Course Description, Goals, and Objectives:**

This semester is an amazing time in U.S. history to learn about presidents and the presidency. This course focuses on the U.S. presidency. In it, you will learn how to analyze the behavior, incentives, and actions of presidents and other executive branch officials. We will examine theories and empirical examples of executive branch decision-making and the institution of the presidency. In addition, we will study the electoral roots that underlie presidential actions. A basic understanding of American politics is encouraged for this course.

The broad goal of this course is to provide an introduction to the study of the American presidency. Beyond this, the course has four additional goals. The first is to introduce students broadly to the presidency as an institution, its history, its design, how it operates, and how it interacts with the other branches in the U.S. separation of powers system. Some questions the course will address are: What are the president's constitutional powers? How does the president influence the legislature? What is the president's role in foreign policy and domestic policy? How does the president attempt to manage and control his appointees? The latter portion of the course will deal with these issues and questions.

The second goal of the course is for students to learn about the electoral constraints on presidents. How are presidents elected and what role does the unique American system of electing presidents play in decisions made while running for office and once elected to office? Do actions of modern presidents differ in the first versus second terms? How do the primary/caucus nomination process and the general election process affect presidential election outcomes? We will begin the course focusing on the electoral roots of the modern presidency to answer these questions.

The third goal of the course is to compel students to think critically about the presidency as an institution, to learn about individual presidents (especially in the contemporary era) and to allow students to sharpen their critical thinking skills. While you will learn about the presidency, a goal of this course is to learn how to think critically and analyze. Students should know more about the presidency than a person who reads the *New York Times* or the *L.A. Times* every day. While I encourage each student to read reputable national or international news sources during the semester, students should be able to go beyond the news to analyze, critique, and make educated predictions by the end of the class. Students should be able to analyze presidential activities and understand why presidents make the choices they do given the constraints of other branches of government and public opinion.

The final goal of the course is to motivate further study of the presidency beyond what is offered in this course. Students are encouraged to read outside the course and approach me for additional suggestions. I hope you will find the presidency as interesting as I do and want to investigate it further.

**My role as an instructor:** Beyond these aforementioned goals, I also want to help you think critically about the topic and to learn the subject matter. To do this, I intend to explain as clearly as possible difficult concepts, methods, or subjects that come up during the course. If you have any trouble following or comprehending the readings or the lectures, please ask me in class or during office hours. My intention is to be accessible to my students to address any questions or concerns about the class materials you may have. In terms of evaluation, I also intend to evaluate your work fairly. While this course will be academically rigorous and challenging, I hope that you will have learned quite a bit by the end of the course and that your interest in the subject of the presidency and in political science has been piqued.

**Required Readings:** There are a number of articles and readings that are available by web link, or through JSTOR or other academic journal sources. There are also book-length texts required for this course. They are not at the bookstore, but can be purchased through numerous online sources (e.g., Amazon.com, Powells.com, etc.). There is so much interest in the U.S. presidency right now, and with the election of Donald Trump, there are a significant number of new readings I have added to the syllabus since I last taught the course. I reserve the right to change, delete, or add readings to the syllabus; and/or make any other changes to the syllabus as needed.

Books to purchase for the course:

Green, Joshua. 2017 *Devil's Bargain: Steve Bannon, Donald Trump, and the Storming of the Presidency*. New York: Penguin Press.

William G. Howell and Terry M. Moe. 2016. *Relic: How Our Constitution Undermines Effective Government – and Why We Need a More Powerful Presidency*. New York: Basic Books.

In addition to these texts, we will also read many other articles. These articles are available at the web links listed in the syllabus on the date we will discuss the articles, are available via JSTOR or other sources through the USC library, or will be made available on reserve on blackboard. Some lectures will also include my summaries of political science and academic research on the executive branch and political institutions above and beyond the readings.

### **Class Schedule:**

Tues. 8/22	Introduction and Course Overview Assignment for Tuesday: Rate President Trump based on first 200+ days relative to other presidents: Where does he rank 1 through 45? Write and explain your answer in one paragraph in less than one page.
Th. 8/24	1-paragraph rating the current president historically due in class. Rottinghaus, Brandon and Justin Vaughn, 2015, "Measuring Obama Against Great Presidents." <i>Brookings</i> . <a href="https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2015/02/13/measuring-obama-against-the-great-presidents/">https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2015/02/13/measuring-obama-against-the-great-presidents/</a> Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. "Rating the Presidents: Washington to Clinton." Excerpt on PBS Frontline (original from <i>Political Science Quarterly</i> ): <a href="http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/choice2004/leadership/schlesinger.html">http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/choice2004/leadership/schlesinger.html</a>

## Part I. The Electoral Foundations of the Modern Presidency

- Tues. 8/29                      Discussion of Constitution (provisions relating to executive), powers of presidency, basics of electoral college
- “The Constitution and the Presidency,” Appendix C, from Pika, Maltese, and Rudalevige.
- “What is the Electoral College?” U.S. National Archives. [hives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/about.html](https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/about.html)
- “Frequently Asked Questions” about the Electoral College, U.S. National Archives. <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/faq.html>
- Th. 8/31                         Electoral College continued
- Tues. 9/5                       Contextualizing the 2016 presidential general election
- Patel, Jugal K. and Wilson Andrews. 2016. “Trump’s Electoral College Victory Ranks 46<sup>th</sup> in 58 Elections.” New York Times. December 18.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/12/18/us/elections/donald-trump-electoral-college-popular-vote.html>
- Sides, John, Michael Tesler, and Lynn Vavreck. 2017. “How Trump Lost and Won.” *Journal of Democracy* 28:34-44.
- Anderson, Carol. 2017. “The Policies of White Resentment.” *New York Times*, Sunday Review Opinion. 5 August.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/05/opinion/sunday/white-resentment-affirmative-action.html?smid=tw-share>
- To watch clips in class: PBS Frontline, “The Choice 2016.” Documentary.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7uScWHcTzk> [1 hour and 54 minutes].
- Thurs. 9/7                      Paul Abramson, John Aldrich, and David Rohde. 1987. “Progressive Ambition among United States Senators: 1972-1988.” *Journal of Politics* 49:3-35.
- Martin, Jonathan and Alexander Burns. 2017. “Republican Shadow Campaign for 2020 Takes Shape as Trump Doubts Grow.” New York Times August 5.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/05/us/politics/2020-campaign-president-trump-cotton-sasse-pence.html?action=click&contentCollection=U.S.&region=Footer&module=WhatsNext&version=WhatsNext&contentID=WhatsNext&moduleDetail=undefined&pgtype=Multimedia>
- Tues. 9/12                      Vavreck, Lynn and John Sides. 2013. “The Republicans Almost Went Insane.” *Salon.com*  
[http://www.salon.com/2013/09/21/the\\_republicans\\_almost\\_went\\_insane\\_santorum\\_really\\_could\\_have\\_beaten\\_romney/](http://www.salon.com/2013/09/21/the_republicans_almost_went_insane_santorum_really_could_have_beaten_romney/)
- Apple, R.W. “The 1992 campaign; Democrats; Clinton the Front-Runner is Also the Prey as the First Primary Nears.” New York Times, February 8.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1992/02/08/us/1992-campaign-democrats-clinton-front-runner-also-prey-first-primary-nears.html>

Toner, Robin. 1992. "The 1992 campaign: New Hampshire; Bush Jarred in First Primary; Tsongas Wins Democratic Vote." *New York Times*, February 19.  
<http://www.nytimes.com/1992/02/19/us/1992-campaign-new-hampshire-bush-jarred-first-primary-tsongas-wins-democratic.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

In class: Selection of 16 for '16 PBS: Buchanan and Dean:  
<http://www.pbs.org/video/contenders-16-16-dean-and-buchanan-flamethrowers/>

Th. 9/14

Presidential Elections – general elections

Heilemann and Halperin. 2013. "The Intervention" *New York* 2 November.  
<http://nymag.com/news/features/heilemann-halperin-double-down-excerpt-2013-11/>

Scherer, Michael. 2012. "Inside the Secret World of the Data Crunchers Who Helped Obama Win." *Time.com* <http://swampland.time.com/2012/11/07/inside-the-secret-world-of-quants-and-data-crunchers-who-helped-obama-win/>

Nicholas Confessore and Danny Hakim. 2017. "Data Firm Says Secret Sauce Aided Trump; Many Scoff." *New York Times*. March 6.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/06/us/politics/cambridge-analytica.html?mcubz=1>

"The Data That Turned the World Upside Down." Motherboard.  
[https://motherboard.vice.com/en\\_us/article/mg9vvv/how-our-likes-helped-trump-win](https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/mg9vvv/how-our-likes-helped-trump-win)

**Assignment for 9/14:** Data analysis of presidential elections using CCES survey data; or precinct data in state.

Tues. 9/19

Joshua Green, *Devil's Bargain*, Ch. 1-2

Thurs. 9/21

Joshua Green, *Devil's Bargain*, Ch. 5-6 [skip or skim Ch. 3-4]

Tues. 9/26

Joshua Green, *Devil's Bargain*, Ch. 7-8

Thurs. 9/28

Joshua Green, *Devil's Bargain*, Ch. 9-11

Schaffner, MacWilliams, Nteta. "Explaining White Polarization in the 2016 Vote for President."  
[http://people.umass.edu/schaffne/schaffner\\_et\\_al\\_IDC\\_conference.pdf](http://people.umass.edu/schaffne/schaffner_et_al_IDC_conference.pdf)

Tues. 10/3

Joshua Green, *Devil's Bargain*, Ch. 9-11 continued

Streb, Matthew J., Barbara Burrell, Brian Frederick, and Michael Genovese. "Social Desirability Effects and Support for a Female American President." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 72:76-89.

Toner, Robin. 1992. "The 1992 campaign: Political Memo; Backlash for Hillary Clinton." *New York Times* <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/09/24/us/1992-campaign-political-memo-backlash-for-hillary-clinton-puts-negative-image.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

## Part II. The Institution of the Presidency and Governance

- Thurs. 10/5 Moe and Howell, "Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*  
<http://home.uchicago.edu/~whowell/papers/UnilateralAction.pdf>
- Tues. 10/10 Moe and Howell, "Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*  
<http://home.uchicago.edu/~whowell/papers/UnilateralAction.pdf>
- Jeffrey Crouch, Mark J. Rozell, Mitchel A. Sollenberger, 2017. "The Law: The Unitary Executive Theory and President Donald J. Trump." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/psq.12401/full>
- Thurs. 10/12 Unilateral presidential action continued
- Tues. 10/17 Constraints on the president: impeachment
- Julia Azari, "Presidential Impeachments are about Politics, Not Law." <https://www.vox.com/mischiefs-of-faction/2017/5/15/15638286/presidential-impeachments-political>
- Anthony Bertelli and Christian Grose. 2006. "The Spatial Model and the Senate Trial of Bill Clinton." *American Politics Research*.  
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1532673X05282848>
- Thurs. 10/19 Midterm exam**
- Tues. 10/24 **Discussion of final paper assignment – Two choices: (1) Executive branch financial holdings and policy choices; or (2) Can Trump politically control his appointees?**
- Loyalty-competence tradeoff  
George C. Edwards III, "Why not the best? The Loyalty-Competence Trade-Off in Presidential Appointments," *Brookings*  
<http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2001/03/spring-governance-edwards>
- Gates, Robert M. 2014. "The Wars of Robert Gates." *Wall Street Journal*. January.  
<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303848104579310772780856370?mg=reno64-wsj&url=http%3A%2F%2Fonline.wsj.com%2Farticle%2FSB10001424052702303848104579310772780856370.html>

Smith, Matt and Gregory Wallace. 2014. "The Bob Gates Memoir: Five Notable Quotes." *CNN.com* <http://www.cnn.com/2014/01/08/politics/bob-gates-book-excerpts/>

Lizza, Ryan. 2017. "Anthony Scaramucci Called Me to Unload about White House Leakers, Reince Priebus, and Steve Bannon." *New Yorker* 27 July. <http://www.newyorker.com/news/ryan-lizza/anthony-scaramucci-called-me-to-unload-about-white-house-leakers-reince-priebus-and-steve-bannon>

Th. 10/26

Presidential scandals

Presidential scandals

Jeremy Venook, 2017. "The Trump Administration's Conflicts of Interests: A Crib Sheet" *Atlantic Monthly*.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/01/trumps-appointees-conflicts-of-interest-a-crib-sheet/512711/>

"Worse than Watergate? The Ultimate White House Scandal Matrix."

<http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2013/05/white-house-scandal-matrix/>

Troy, Gil. 2016. "How an Outsider President Killed a Party: The Whigs Chose Power over Principles when they Nominated Zachary Taylor in 1848. The Party Never Recovered." *Politico* June 2.

<http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/06/history-campaign-politics-zachary-taylor-killed-whigs-political-party-213935>

Tues. 10/31

Presidential approval and success in Congress

George Edwards, 2016. "The Essence of Presidential Leadership."

<https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/the-essence-of-presidential-leadership>

Dawsey, Josh. 2017. "Trump Blindsided by Implosion of GOP health care bill."

*Politico* <http://www.politico.com/story/2017/07/18/trump-blindsided-by-healthcare-collapse-240657>

Hulse, Carl. 2017. "McCain Provides a Dramatic Finale on Health Care: Thumb Down." *New York Times*, July 28.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/28/us/john-mccains-real-return.html?mcubz=1>

Begin: Moe and Howell, 2016, *Relic: How Our Constitution*, Introduction Ch. 1

Th. 11/2

Moe and Howell, 2016, *Relic: How Our Constitution*, Introduction & Ch. 1

Tues. 11/7

Moe and Howell, 2016, *Relic: How Our Constitution*, Ch. 2

Th. 11/9

Moe and Howell, 2016, *Relic: How Our Constitution*, Ch. 3

Tues. 11/14

Moe and Howell, 2016, *Relic: How Our Constitution*, Ch. 4

**Th. 11/16**

**Midterm 2 in class**

Tues. 11/21	Student presentations on final paper
Th. 11/23	No class - Thanksgiving
Tues. 11/28	Student presentations on final paper
Th. 11/30	Last day of class. Student presentations on final paper. <b>Final papers due in class, or can be turned in before class period. (5-8 pages of text double-spaced; no more than 10 pages of text not including bibliography)</b>

### Grading and Evaluation:

Your grade will be determined as follows

Midterm 1	27%
Midterm 2	30%
Final paper	30%
Class participation & group presentation	10%
Final class presentation	3%

There will be two exams (see dates on course schedule above). The first midterm will include all readings and lectures until that date. The second midterm will include all readings, lectures, and material covered after the first midterm through the date of the second midterm. There is no final exam. Both midterms will be taken in the class and must be completed during the regularly scheduled class time. Anyone missing class the day the midterm is administered will receive a grade of F on the written midterm unless you notify me that you will be absent **in the first two weeks of class**. These midterm exams may be difficult and you will need to prepare extensively. The final paper will be about the last set of readings and will be 5-8 pages of text in length (8 page limit does not include bibliographic citations) and should be double-spaced. It is due in class on the last day of class.

Participation and discussion in class is also a component of the “Class Participation” portion of the grade. Participation generally is measured as speaking in class, discussing the material, and responding to fellow students during discussion. Quality as well as quantity of discussion and participation will be considered. Also, an indication that you are regularly keeping up with the readings (based on class discussion) will be crucial to your participation grade. Early in the semester when I may not have yet learned your name, please use your name when you raise your hand to speak in class so I can give you credit for participation.

There will also be group presentations held throughout the semester to coincide with one of the readings. These presentations should be 15 minutes or less in total. Around the first or second week of class, I will divide the class into groups of students, and you will be responsible for group presentations on the readings for that day. Specifically, I expect you to summarize the author’s argument; present evidence for the author’s argument; present criticisms or critiques of the reading; and come up with questions raised in the readings that remain unanswered or only partially answered. In addition to the group presentation, there will be an individual presentation from each student on their final paper in the last 2 weeks of the semester. I will discuss the presentations (both group and final individual

presentation) in class in greater detail. The group presentation is part of your participation grade, and the individual final presentation is also part of your final grade.

By including these multiple methods of evaluation (midterms, final paper, participation), your final grade will be determined by demonstrating proficiency in a variety of areas. I think multiple evaluation methods are fairer than simply one big paper or exam.

Finally, I want to note that **plagiarism is unacceptable** and can result in serious penalties (the first of which will be a case taken to the academic honesty review board, which typically results in an F in the entire class, or worse). If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, please consult the USC student affairs web site that details plagiarism: <https://dornsife.usc.edu/usc-policies/#plagiarism>. Please feel free to ask me as well if you have any questions or concerns. Copying text directly from any source without quotations is one form of plagiarism, as is writing similarly-phrased words and sentences without attribution. Again, please consult the above link for a very detailed description of the types of plagiarism (all of which are unacceptable).

**How to Reach Me:** My office hours for this term will be held in my office in VonKleinSmid Center 230A from 9:30am-10:45am on Tuesdays. These office hours are drop-in and first-come, first-serve, no appointment needed. If you cannot make office hours, the best way to contact me is by email, which is [cgrose@usc.edu](mailto:cgrose@usc.edu). While I regularly respond to email, keep in mind it may take me 1-2 days to get back to you depending on when you email me (e.g., if you email me Friday afternoon, I might not get back to you until Monday; though often times I will be able to respond much more quickly during the week).



## Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

### Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

### Support Systems:

*Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. [engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255*

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. [engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp)

*Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: [sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu)

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086*

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. [equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu)

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support)

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs*

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. [dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu)

*Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa)

*Diversity at USC*

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. [diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

*USC Emergency Information*

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

*USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.*

Provides overall safety to USC community. [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)