POLI 100A: The American Presidency
Fall Quarter 2017

Lecture:
Tuesday/Thursday 11:00am-12:20pm [Mandeville Center B-210]

Instructor:
Skyler Roth [seroth@ucsd.edu]
Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00pm-3:00pm [Social Sciences Building (SSB) 352]

Teaching Assistants:
Mackenzie Lockhart [mwlockha@ucsd.edu]
Office Hours: By appointment [SSB 330]

Charlie McClean [cmcclean@ucsd.edu]
Office Hours: By appointment [SSB 346]

Zoe Nemerever [znemerev@ucsd.edu]
Office Hours: By appointment [SSB 324]

Course Overview

This course is designed to provide students with an overview of the role of the president within modern American politics, drawing from political science research as well as historical and current events. It is meant to make students consider the benefits and drawbacks of our current system for governmental efficiency and stability, democratic accountability, and the quality of policy outcomes. Topics include: presidential elections and campaigns; sources of presidential power and presidential limitations; governmental structures and procedures that influence executive policymaking; the influence of inter- and intra-party conflict on presidential success; and current debates on executive politics reform.

Course Evaluation

Policy Memos [30%] – Students are expected to submit two 1.5- to 2-page (single-spaced) policy memos via TritonEd; the first is due at 11am (prior to class) on October 26th, and the second is due at 11am (prior to class) on November 21st. However, certain memo topics are related to earlier class material, and therefore it may be easiest to complete the assignment ahead of time. An additional reading will be required depending on your choice of topic. Refer to the “Policy Memo Assignment” guide on TritonEd for instructions.
Midterm [30%] – The midterm exam will be held in class on Tuesday, October 31st 11:00am-12:20pm. All content covered prior to the day of the midterm exam may be included in the exam. Please bring a bluebook for the midterm exam.

Final [40%] – The final exam will be held on Wednesday, December 13th 11:30am-2:30pm [Location TBA]. The final exam will be cumulative, with an emphasis on material from after the midterm. Please bring a bluebook for the final exam.

Required Readings

   [Note: The 3rd edition will also be usable for the class material. Differences in chapters are noted in the reading list.]


4. Additional academic book chapters, journal articles, and news articles [These materials are posted on TritonEd under the “Course Readings” folder, or a link is provided in the syllabus.]

How to Access and Use TritonEd?

Log in with the same username and password used for UCSD email, click on “POLI 100A – Roth [FA17]” link on home page, and click on the “Content” section for course documents.

Questions about the Course

Please post general questions regarding the course assignments and exams, or about course material, on the discussion board under the “Discussions” tab on TritonEd. You can check the discussion board to see if your question has already been asked.

For individual questions about the course assignments and exams, please email the instructor. If you know a particular TA graded your assignment and have questions about the reasoning behind your score, you may email them.
How to **Use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to Access Articles Off-Campus?**

I believe all linked articles are available to anyone; however, you may find that certain articles require a subscription. These should be accessible when on campus, or you can follow the directions on the website linked above. Remember to turn the VPN client off when you are done.

**Late Assignment and Rescheduling Policy**

Policy memos that are not turned in before class time on the due date will receive a penalty of 5% for each 24 hours (or fraction thereof) that they are late. Memos that are not turned in within one week of the due date will not be accepted. It is your responsibility to confirm that the memos have been properly uploaded.

Exams can be rescheduled with a university-documented excuse. Please contact the instructor as soon as possible if you need to reschedule.

**Academic Dishonesty**

You are expected to complete the assignments and exams on your own without the assistance of others. The midterm and final exams are closed note and closed book. For more information on academic dishonesty, please refer to the UCSD policy on integrity of scholarship.

Remember that we have software available to detect plagiarism on the policy memo assignments. Violations of the UCSD policy on plagiarism can result in serious penalties.

**Learning Disabilities**

If you have a UCSD-documented learning disability, please email the instructor and teaching assistants to inform us of your academic needs.
Course Schedule

Week 1:
September 28, 2017 – Course Overview; Presidential Democracy in Context

Week 2:
October 3, 2017 – The Constitutional Powers of the President; The Rise of the Modern Presidency
U.S. Constitution and Amendments (especially Article 2; 12th, 20th, 22nd, 23rd, and 25th amendments – see TritonEd for a version with relevant sections highlighted/annotated)
Debating the Presidency – Ellis and Nelson (2017) [Chapter 1]
Presidential Government – Ginsberg (2016) [Chapter 3]

October 5, 2017 – Presidents within a Polarized Society
“The Ways that the 2016 Election Was Perfectly Normal” – Vavreck (2017)
“‘Negative Partisanship’ Explains Everything” – Abramowitz and Webster (2017)
“No Matter Who Wins the Election, America Could be Barreling towards a Constitutional Crisis” – Kierz (2016)
“Why Republicans Can’t Govern” – Azari (2017)

Week 3:
October 10, 2017 – Presidential Elections (Part 1 – Overview and the Invisible Primary)
The Candidate: What it Takes to Win - and Hold - the White House – Popkin (2012) [Prologue; Chapters 1, 2]

October 12, 2017 – Presidential Elections (Part 2 – Primary and General Elections)
Debating the Presidency – Ellis and Nelson (2017) [Chapters 3, 4]

Week 4:
October 17, 2017 – Presidential Elections (Part 3 – Campaigns and Forecasting)
Campaigns and Elections (2nd edition) – Sides et al. (2015) [Chapter 13]
The Candidate: What it Takes to Win - and Hold - the White House – Popkin (2012) [Chapter 9]

October 19, 2017 – Presidential Power (Part 1)
Candidate Trump’s Contract with the American Voter (October 2016)
Debating the Presidency – Ellis and Nelson (2017) [Chapter 8] (Chapter 7 in 3rd edition)
“How LBJ Saved the Civil Rights Act” – O’Donnell (2014) (You may stop reading at this sentence, above the picture of Johnson signing: “Johnson’s very comprehensiveness is what jarred the sluggish and paralyzed Capitol into action and ultimately moved the bill.”)
Week 5:
*October 24, 2017 – Presidential Power (Part 2)*
[Chapters 1, 2, 5]
“Trump’s NFL Attacks Appear to Fuel Huge Facebook Gains for Breitbart and Fox” – Klapper (2017)

*October 26, 2017 – Presidential Power (Part 3)*
*First policy memo due.*
*Debating the Presidency* – Ellis and Nelson (2015) [Chapter 11]
(Skim) President George W. Bush’s “Statement on Signing the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2002”
(Skim) President Trump’s “Executive Order Protecting The Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into the United States” (2017)

Week 6:
*October 31, 2017 – Midterm Exam*

*November 2, 2017 – The Executive Branch*
“The Deep State is Real – But it Might Not Be What You Think” – Crowley (2017)
“Why Donald Trump Needs the ‘Administrative State’ that Steve Bannon Wants to Destroy” – Lewis (2017)

Week 7:
*November 7, 2017 – The President and Congress (Part 1 - Lawmaking)*
*Debating the Presidency* – Ellis and Nelson (2015) [Chapter 9] *(Chapter 8 in 3rd edition)*

*November 9, 2017 – The President and Congress (Part 2 – Federal Budget)*
“In Wielding Rarely Used Veto, President Obama Puts Budget Heat on Republicans” – Davis (2015)

Week 8:
*November 14, 2017 – The President and Congress (Part 3 – Bureaucratic Delegation)*
“Caught in the Middle: The President, Congress, and the Political-Bureaucratic System” from *The Executive Branch* – Weingast (2005)
November 16, 2017 – The President and Congress (Part 4 – Foreign Policy)
Debating the Presidency – Ellis and Nelson (2015) [Chapter 10] (Chapter 9 in 3rd edition)

Week 9:
November 21, 2017 – The President and the Federal Courts
Second policy memo due.
“If Obama Appoints Scalia’s Successor, the Supreme Court Will Really Jump Leftward” – Cottrell and Shipan (2016)
Debating the Presidency – Ellis and Nelson (2015) [Chapter 13]

November 23, 2017 – No class due to Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 10:
November 28, 2017 – The Enactment of the “Affordable Care Act”
(Skim) Summary of the “Affordable Care Act” – Kaiser Family Foundation (2017)
“How They Did It” – Cohn (2010)

November 30, 2017 – Attempts to Repeal and Replace “Obamacare”
(The readings for this week may be modified based on recent events. Please check TritonEd for any announcements about changes to the syllabus.)
“Implementing the Affordable Care Act: The Promise and Limits of Health Care Reform” – Oberlander (2016)
(Skim) Summary of the “American Health Care Act” – Kaiser Family Foundation (2017)
“President Trump Couldn’t Pass Obamacare Repeal. This is Why.” – Rudalevige (2017)

Week 11:
December 5, 2017 – Governors

December 7, 2017 – Political Reform?
The Washington Post’s series on the modern presidency:
“Is the Modern President Too Powerful? A Primer” – Gebelhoff (2016)
“Imagine There’s No Congress” – Vermeule (2016)
“Obama is Maintaining the Balance of Powers, Not Overturning It” – Gorod (2016)
“Obama Can’t Rewrite the Law” – Slattery (2016)
“Strong Presidencies May Threaten Democracy. Luckily, We Don’t Have One.” – Carey (2016)
“Obama is Upending the Role of the Presidency” – Yoo (2016)

December 13, 2017 – Final Exam (11:30-2:30, location TBA)