

## **POLI 100A: The Modern Presidency [Spring Quarter 2017]**

### **The Basics**

#### **Lecture:**

T/Th 2:00-3:20pm [Center Hall 113]

#### **Instructor:**

Mona Vakilifathi [mvakilif@ucsd.edu]

*Office Hours:* T 11:30am-1:30pm [Social Sciences Building (SSB) 448]

#### **Teaching Assistants:**

Dang Do [n4do@ucsd.edu]

*Office Hours:* By appointment [SSB 328]

Kristy Pathakis [kpathakis@ucsd.edu]

*Office Hours:* By appointment [SSB 448]

Skyler Roth [seroth@ucsd.edu]

*Office Hours:* By appointment [SSB 352]

### **Course Goals**

The goal of this course is to provide an overview of the U.S. executive branch, the political science research on executive politics, and the current debates on executive politics reform. This course will address the following topics: presidential elections; the executive branch; and the checks and balances among the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judicial branch; and executive politics reform. In addition, this course will extensively review and discuss executive politics under the Obama and Trump administrations.

### **Course Evaluation**

*Policy Memos* [30%] – Students are expected to submit **two** two-page policy memos throughout this course. The due date for each policy memo will vary based on your random assignment to two topics on executive reform. Refer to the “Policy Memo Assignment” section in this syllabus for more information.

*Midterm* [30%] – The midterm exam will be held in class on **Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup> 2:00pm-3:20pm**. 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 **Tuesday, June 13<sup>th</sup> 3:00pm-5:59pm [Location TBA]**. The final exam will be cumulative. **Please bring a bluebook for the final exam.**

## Required Readings

1. *Debating the Presidency: Conflicting Perspectives on the American Executive* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) – Richard J. Ellis and Michael Nelson
2. *The Candidate: What It Takes to Win – and Hold – the White House* – Samuel L. Popkin
3. *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership* (4<sup>th</sup> edition) – Samuel Kernell
4. Additional academic book chapters and journal articles [These materials are posted on TritonEd under the “Course Readings” folder.]

## How to [Access](#) and Use TritonEd?

Log in with the same username and password used for UCSD e-mail, click on “POLI 100A – Vakilifathi [SP17]” link on home page, and click on the “Content” section for course documents.

## General vs. Individual Questions About the Course

It’s common for many students to e-mail the instructor and teaching assistants the same questions about course details. To minimize students’ clarifying questions for this course, please post general questions regarding the course assignments and exams on the discussion board under the “Discussions” tab on TritonEd. One of the teaching assistants will respond to your question the following Monday, Wednesday, or Friday.

For individual questions about the course assignments and exams, please e-mail Kristy Pathakis regarding policy memos assignments, Dang Do regarding the midterm exam, and Skyler Roth regarding the final exam.

## How to [Set Up the UCSD Proxy Server](#) to Access Articles Off-Campus?

Follow the directions on the website based on the internet browser you typically use.

## 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](#).

## Learning Disabilities

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

## Policy Memo Assignment

As an executive/legislative staffer or a policy analyst at a think tank, it is vital that you provide your policy recommendation in a clear and concise manner. Throughout this course, you will submit two, two-page policy memos for or against a policy proposal related to the executive branch. You will be assigned **two** of the following policy reforms on the executive branch by your last name. You may write your memo for or against your assigned proposal.

Policy Proposal	Assigned Reading	Last Name	Due Date
Political parties should nominate candidates for the presidency through a national primary election.	<i>Debating the Presidency</i> [Chapter 3]; <i>The Politics of the Presidency</i> [Chapter 2]	A-G	4/18
The President should be elected directly by the people, rather than by the Electoral College.	<i>Debating the Presidency</i> [Chapter 4]; <i>The Politics of the Presidency</i> [Chapter 2]	H-M	4/18
The President should have the power to issue presidential signing statements.	<i>Debating the Presidency</i> [Chapter 11]; <i>The Politics of the Presidency</i> [Chapter 5]	N-Z	5/2
The President should be given the power to introduce legislation in Congress.	<i>Debating the Presidency</i> [Chapter 8]; <i>The Politics of the Presidency</i> [Chapter 5]	A-G	5/11
The President should have unilateral power to declare war.	<i>Debating the Presidency</i> [Chapter 9]; <i>The Politics of the Presidency</i> [Chapter 10]	H-M	5/23
The President should be able to nominate judges to the Supreme Court without Senate confirmation.	<i>Debating the Presidency</i> [Chapter 13]; <i>The Politics of the Presidency</i> [Chapter 7]	N-Z	5/25

Start your memo with a header clarifying the recipient of the memo, who it is from, the subject of the memo, and the date. (Please review the links to the guides and example memos below for a visual example.) You can choose an existing person or organization to be the recipient. You will be the author of the memo, but you may make up your affiliation with an existing organization (e.g. a specific legislator's office, an advisor to the president, a national party committee, a super PAC, etc.). The subject of the memo will be a brief statement declaring your position in support or opposition to one of the listed policy proposals. The date will be the due date.

Be mindful of the recipient and your own role/affiliation while writing the memo. In the first sentence of the memo, you must clearly state your recommendation for or against one of these reforms. In the first section, you must provide an executive summary regarding the crux of the debate and the main reasons for your position in one paragraph. (I recommend that you write this paragraph last.) In the second section, you must provide background on the policy proposal in one or two paragraphs. In the third section, you must detail your recommendation and your suggested plan to execute this recommendation in two to four paragraphs. In this section, you must discuss at least one counterargument and your response to such an argument. Your memo must be two single-spaced pages in 12-point font with one-inch margins. (Click here for guides on policy memos from Duke University [#1](#) and [#2](#), [Harvard University](#), [MIT](#), and the [University of Michigan](#).)

You are strongly encouraged to use relevant course readings to support your recommendation for or against a policy proposal. You may cite outside sources on the condition that the number of outside sources is less than the number of in-class readings. You may cite in-class readings only in text, but you must provide a works cited section if one or more outside sources are cited in your memo. You should write out the memo generally in complete sentences, but you may use headers, formatted text, bullet points, tables, and figures to support your argument. (Click here for an example from [Harvard University](#) on acceptable formatting.)

Please feel free to contact me or Kristy Pathakis at any point during the course if you would like to review a rough draft of the memo or if you have any questions about this assignment. Have fun with it!

## Course Schedule

### Week 1:

*April 4, 2017 – Course Overview; Historical Origins of the U.S. Presidency*

*April 6, 2017 – The Constitutional Powers of the President; The Rise of the Modern Presidency*

U.S. Constitution and Amendments (especially Article 2; 12<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup> amendments)

*Debating the Presidency* – Ellis and Nelson (2015) [Chapter 1]

*Presidential Government* – Ginsberg (2016) [Chapter 3]

### Week 2:

*April 11, 2017 – No Lecture; Watch Frontline’s [“Divided States of America”](#) (Parts 1-2)*

[“How Donald Trump Did It, In 5 Images”](#) – Bump (2016)

[“Five Key Lessons from Donald Trump’s Surprising Victory”](#) – Sides (2016)

[“The Bad Faith of the White Working Class”](#) – Vance (2016)

[“The Hard Question Isn’t Why Clinton Lost – It’s Why Trump Won”](#) – Klein (2016)

[“2016 Was an Ordinary Election, Not a Realignment”](#) – Bartels (2016)

*April 13, 2017 – Presidential Elections (Part 1)*

*The Candidate: What it Takes to Win - and Hold - the White House* – Popkin (2012) [Prologue; Chapters 1, 2]

### Week 3:

*April 18, 2017 – Presidential Elections (Part 2)*

*Debating the Presidency* – Ellis and Nelson (2015) [Chapters 3, 4]

*The Politics of the Presidency* [Chapter 2] – Pika et al. (2016) **(Required reading for students writing a policy memo due 4/18 only)**

*April 20, 2017 – Presidential Elections (Part 3)*

*Campaigns and Elections* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) – Sides et al. (2015) [Chapter 13]

*The Gamble: Choice and Chance in the 2012 Presidential Election* – Sides and Vavreck (2014) [Chapter 2]

**Week 4:**

***April 25, 2017 – Presidential Power (Part 1)***

*Debating the Presidency* – Ellis and Nelson (2015) [Chapter 7]

“Targeting the Treatment: The Strategy Behind Lyndon Johnson’s Lobbying” – Beckmann et al. (forthcoming)

President Trump’s [Contract with the American Voter](#) (October 2016)

***April 27, 2017 – Presidential Power (Part 2)***

*Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership* (4<sup>th</sup> edition) – Kernell (2006) [Chapters 1, 2, 5]

**Week 5:**

***May 2, 2017 – Presidential Power (Part 3)***

“Unilateral Action and Presidential Power: A Theory” – Moe and Howell (1999)

*Debating the Presidency* – Ellis and Nelson (2015) [Chapter 11]

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”](#) (2016) (skim)

*The Politics of the Presidency* [Chapter 5] – Pika et al. (2016) (**Required reading for students writing a policy memo due 5/2 only**)

***May 4, 2017 – Midterm Exam***

**Week 6:**

***May 9, 2017 – The Executive Branch***

“Staffing Alone: Unilateral Action and the Politicization of the Executive Office of the President, 1988-2004” – Lewis (2005)

[“Bannon Vows a Daily Fight for ‘Deconstruction of the Administrative State’”](#) – Rucker and Costa (2017)

[“Trump Wants to Reorganize the Executive Branch. Good Luck with That.”](#) – Rudalevige (2017)

[“Why Donald Trump Needs the ‘Administrative State’ that Steve Bannon Wants to Destroy”](#) – Lewis (2017)

***May 11, 2017 – The President and Congress (Part 1)***

“The President’s Playbook: White House Strategies for Lobbying Congress” – Beckmann (2008)

*Debating the Presidency* – Ellis and Nelson (2015) [Chapter 8]

*The Politics of the Presidency* [Chapter 5] – Pika et al. (2016) **(Required reading for students writing a policy memo due 5/11 only)**

**Week 7:**

***May 16, 2017 – The President and Congress (Part 2)***

“Presidential Influence on Congressional Appropriations Decisions” – Kiewiet and McCubbins (1988)

“Presidential Particularism and Divide-the-Dollar Politics” – Kriner and Reeves (2015)

***May 18, 2017 – The President and Congress (Part 3)***

“Caught in the Middle: The President, Congress, and the Political-Bureaucratic System” from *The Executive Branch* – Weingast (2005)

**Week 8:**

***May 23, 2017 – The President and Congress (Part 4)***

*Debating the Presidency* – Ellis and Nelson (2015) [Chapters 9, 10]

*The Politics of the Presidency* [Chapter 10] – Pika et al. (2016) **(Required reading for students writing a policy memo due 5/25 only)**

***May 25, 2017 – The President and the Federal Courts***

“The Supremes” (Season 5, Episode 17) from *The West Wing* [Available on Netflix streaming]

[“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]

*The Politics of the Presidency* [Chapter 7] – Pika et al. (2016) **(Required reading for students writing a policy memo due 5/25 only)**

**Week 9:**

***May 30, 2017 – The Enactment of the “Affordable Care Act”***

[Summary of the “Affordable Care Act”](#) – Kaiser Family Foundation (2017) (skim)

[“How They Did It”](#) – Cohn (2010)

***June 1, 2017 – Attempts to Repeal and Replace “Obamacare”***

“Implementing the Affordable Care Act: The Promise and Limits of Health Care Reform” – Oberlander (2016)

[Summary of the “American Health Care Act”](#) – Kaiser Family Foundation (2017) (skim)

[“This is Why the Republicans Struggle Over Obamacare”](#) – Binder (2017)

[“President Trump Couldn’t Pass Obamacare Repeal. This is Why.”](#) – Rudalevige (2017)

**Week 10:**

***June 6, 2017 – Governors***

“Governors and the Executive Branch” from *Politics in The American States: A Comparative Analysis* – Ferguson (2012)

***June 8, 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)

***June 13, 2017 – Final Exam***