

# POLS 472: The Presidency

---

**Semester:** Spring 2020

**Section:** 01

**Class Time:** Monday/Wednesday/Friday 10:00-10:50am

**Classroom:** Butte Hall 103

**Syllabus:**

<http://ccturner.yourweb.csuchico.edu/syllabi/472spring20.pdf>

**Instructor:** Dr. Charles C. Turner

**Email:** [ccturner@csuchico.edu](mailto:ccturner@csuchico.edu)

**Phone:** (530)898-6489 (office)

**Office:** 725 Butte Hall

**Office Hours:**

Mon/Wed 1:00-2:00pm

---

## Scope and Purpose

Welcome to The Presidency! We study the American Presidency for a number of different reasons. We want to know factual information about things that have happened in the past so that we can better understand our history. We want to understand the rules that shape our political institutions so we can appreciate the behaviors and constraints of our contemporary politics. We want to identify the qualities that have made for successful and less-successful leaders so that we can make good choices in the future. As the office of the Chief Executive, the presidency is the locus for understanding many of these important things. To what extent do presidents shape history? And to what extent are their presidencies shaped by the history that precedes them? As social scientists, we have the tools to make sense of people, events, and decisions in ways that others may not.

As this course is an upper-division elective in the General Political Science major, it provides a great opportunity for you to practice and/or demonstrate mastery of several of the student learning outcomes that are central to the major. Namely:

- Students can describe basic structural components of national government-legislative, executive, and judicial-and explain their relationship to each other and to subnational units (quizzes, final exam).
- Students can formulate hypotheses, construct research designs, and apply appropriate analytical skills, including quantitative reasoning, to the study of political science (midterm report, position papers).
- Students can locate appropriate sources by searching electronic and traditional data bases (midterm report).
- Students can use and cite appropriate sources correctly (all written work).
- Students can write and speak with sufficient clarity to convey their attitudes, knowledge and skills (all written work, midterm and position papers, class participation).

We will be discussing a wide range of issues in this course. Sometimes you will have questions: feel free to ask them. Sometimes you will disagree with a classmate. Sometimes you will disagree with me. That's okay! The political process is about deliberation and reasonable people often disagree. As long as we all treat each other with respect, we stand to learn a great deal from our discussions.

---

## Course Readings

You need to get two books for this class. They are available at the [Wildcat Store](#). Publisher websites are linked below. You are also welcome to purchase print or e-book versions from whatever source you like if you find that more convenient. If I were you, I would look for cheap, used versions. If ordering them, make sure they arrive by the end of the first week of class.

Ellis, Richard J. 2018. [\*The Development of the American Presidency\*](#), 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: Routledge.

Ellis, Richard J., and Michael Nelson, Eds. 2018. [\*Debating the Presidency\*](#), 4th edition. Los Angeles: Sage/CQ Press.

The books will be supplemented with readings from other sources. These additional readings are available on the internet (see links below). You will need to access this syllabus on the web on a regular basis in order to complete the readings and other class assignments. You will also need to conduct independent research to fulfill some of the course requirements.

---

## Course Requirements and Grading

For the University grading guidelines, consult the [University Catalog](#).

Your grade for the course will be based on the following:

These are the outcomes:

quizzes	80 pts.	20%
midterm report/paper	100 pts.	25%
position papers	60 pts.	15%
final exam	100 pts.	25%
participation/attendance	<u>60 pts.</u>	<u>15%</u>
	400 pts.	100%

A	372-400 pts.	93-100%
A-	360-371	90-92%
B+	352-359	88-89%
B	332-351	83-87%
B-	320-331	80-82%
C+	312-319	78-79%
C	292-311	73-77%
C-	280-291	70-72%
D+	272-279	68-69%
D	240-271	60-67%
F	0-239 pts.	59% and below

**Quizzes:** On several days throughout the semester, you will take a quiz. These will be unannounced "pop" quizzes. They will cover materials from the current or previous class readings. You may use your own hand-written notes during a quiz. This is to encourage you to take notes. Taking notes helps you learn things. Your score on the quizzes will comprise 20 percent of your semester grade.

**Midterm Report/Paper:** Early in the semester you will select a pre-modern president to write a report on (approximately 5-7 pages), which you will turn in via Blackboard. You will use your own independent research skills to assess this president's successes and failures. You will need to use at least four academic sources for this paper. On March 9-13 you will give a 5 minute presentation to the class. The paper and accompanying materials are due the day of your presentation. The assignment will be graded according to [a rubric](#) and is

worth 100 points. You will have the opportunity to **dress as your selected president** for up to 15 additional points.

**Position Papers:** Fridays will be Debate Days. We will use the chapters from the Ellis & Nelson book (and sometimes class picks!) to shape our conversations each week. You will need to come to class on each of these days with a typed argument of no more than 1 page. You need to **1)** take a side, **2)** apply evidence and reasoning based explicitly on the arguments in the book chapter (or article of your choice on class pick days), and **3)** respond to at least one contrary claim. These assignments will be worth a total of 60 points.

**Final Exam:** During finals week we will have a final exam. The exam will consist of short answer, identification/definition, and essay questions. It will be comprehensive. The questions will cover a range of topics discussed in class and in the readings. We will review for this exam during the final regularly scheduled class meeting on May 8th. It is worth 100 points.

**Attendance and Participation:** Think of school like a job. Over your 16 weeks of employment, you will accrue 3 personal days. You may use these when you are ill or have another obligation, but you will need to make arrangements in advance to make up any missed assignments. Beginning with your fourth absence, your pay will be docked in a progressive manner for each additional absence (3 points, then 4, then 5, and so on). Come to class! 15% (60 points) of your grade is based on participation because I want to reward you for taking an active role in your education. I also want to encourage you to pay attention, answer questions, and join in class discussions. I will sometimes call on you to answer questions. I'm not expecting "right" answers-- sometimes there isn't a right answer; I *am* expecting thoughtful and intelligent answers that demonstrate you have kept up with the readings and assignments and are paying attention. Additionally, in-class activities and other required events will become part of your attendance and participation grade.

---

## **Other Details**

You must make arrangements with the instructor ahead of time if you cannot attend a class session or complete an assignment on time. **Late assignments will be assessed a full one letter grade penalty (10%) for each class period they are late.** Students are expected to complete their *own* work. Academic dishonesty will result in a zero on the assignment and formal charges with [Student Conduct, Rights, and Responsibilities](#). For questions or concerns about plagiarism, please ask me or consult the [University Catalog](#)'s section on [Academic Honesty](#) and the University's [Policy on Academic Integrity](#). The instructor reserves the right to check papers via [Turnitin.com](#). (If you object to the use of turnitin.com, you are welcome to choose an alternative recommended by turnitin: "turn in a photocopy of the first page of all reference sources used, an annotated bibliography, and a one page paper reflecting on your research methodology.") If you are unhappy with a grade you receive on an assignment, do not understand my comments, or believe that I have misinterpreted your writing, come talk to me. It is always possible that I have erred. This syllabus is subject to change and/or revision during the academic term. Turn off cell phones and other distracting devices during class. If your cell phone rings during class you will be expected to leave the classroom for the remainder of the period.

## **Title IX: Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting**

As a Chico State instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for Chico State students. It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct with the University.

Students may speak to someone confidentially by contacting the Counseling and Wellness Center (898-6345) or Safe Place (898-3030). Information about campus reporting obligations and other Title IX related resources are available here: [www.csuchico.edu/title-ix](http://www.csuchico.edu/title-ix)

## Americans with Disabilities Act:

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Please also contact the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) as they are the designated department responsible for approving and coordinating reasonable accommodations and services for students with disabilities. ARC will help you understand your rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act and provide you further assistance with requesting and arranging accommodations. Accessibility Resource Center: [www.csuchico.edu/arc](http://www.csuchico.edu/arc) , 530-898-5959, Student Services Center 170, [ArcDept@csuchico.edu](mailto:ArcDept@csuchico.edu)

Since even graduating seniors are not perfect writers, you are encouraged to take advantage of Chico State's [Student Learning Center](#). Indeed, there are many writing assignments, so you should look at this class as an opportunity to enhance your writing skills. Writing well is a lifelong learning process, so don't feel like you have to be a "bad" writer to take advantage of student writing services, or that there is no need for help once you are a "good" writer. There is always room for improvement! Also, if you do not already own one, a writing guide/manual is an invaluable tool. Our library has [several web sites that provide citation guides](#). You can even use an online tool to help you learn citation: <http://www.citationmachine.net/>. Some good print examples of style guides are:

Baglione, Lisa A. [Writing a Research Paper in Political Science](#). 4th Edition, Sage. 2019.

Hacker, Diana. [A Writer's Reference](#). 9th Edition, Macmillan. 2018.

Lunsford, Andrea. [EasyWriter: A Pocket Reference](#). 7th Edition, Macmillan. 2019.

Strunk, William, Jr. [Elements of Style](#).

---

## Semester Schedule

<b>Readings should be completed before each class meeting.</b>			
<u>WEEK</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPICS</u>	<u>READINGS</u>
<b>1</b>	<b>Jan.</b>	22 Introduction and discussion of syllabus; pre-test	none
		24 Getting to know the institution	<a href="#">The U.S. Constitution, The Republican Platform, The Democratic Platform</a>
<b>2</b>		27 Visions of the Presidency	Ellis chapter 1, p. ix-16
		29 Visions of the Presidency	Ellis chapter 1, p.16-20
		31 The Framers and the Modern Presidency	Ellis & Nelson chapter 1
<b>3</b>	<b>Feb.</b>	3 Selecting the President	Ellis chapter 2, p.27-57
		5 Selecting the President	Ellis chapter 2, p.57-72
		7 Political Time vs. Presidential Character	Ellis & Nelson chapter 7
<b>4</b>		10 FDR: The First Modern President? The Public Presidency	Ellis chapter 3, p.79-103
		12 The Public Presidency	Ellis chapter 3, p.103-128
		14 Party Primaries and the President	Ellis & Nelson chapter 3
<b>5</b>		17 Harry Truman: Missourian The President and Congress	Ellis chapter 4, p.139-170
		19 The President and Congress	Ellis chapter 4, p.170-187
		21 Electing the President	Ellis & Nelson chapter 4
<b>6</b>		24 Dwight D. Eisenhower: Kansan	Ellis chapter 5, p.197-225

			The President and War	
		26	The President and War	Ellis chapter 5, p.225-248
		28	Term-Limiting the President	Ellis & Nelson chapter 5
<b>7</b>	<b>Mar.</b>	2	Kennedy: Cold Warrior?	Ellis chapter 6, p.257-283
			The President and Unilateral Action	
		4	The President and Unilateral Action	Ellis chapter 6, p.283-304
		6	Current events debate	Class pick debate article
<b>8</b>		9	<b>MIDTERM DAY 1</b>	<b>give your speech and turn in your paper</b>
		11	<b>MIDTERM DAY 2</b>	<b>give your speech and turn in your paper</b>
		13	<b>MIDTERM DAY 3</b>	<b>give your speech and turn in your paper</b>
<b>9</b>		16-20	<b>Spring Break! No Class!</b>	<b>none</b>
<b>10</b>		23	Lyndon Johnson: Politician	Ellis chapter 7, p.317-342
			Understanding the 1960s	
			The President the Administrative State	
		25	The President the Administrative State	Ellis chapter 7, p.342-364
		27	Current events debate	Class pick debate article
<b>11</b>		30	Richard Nixon: Crook?	Read about Nixon
	<b>Apr.</b>	1	Presidential Persuasion	Ellis & Nelson chapter 8
		3	Gerald Ford: Accidental President	Ellis chapter 8, p.377-403
			The President and Hiring and Firing People	
<b>12</b>		6	The President and Hiring and Firing People	Ellis chapter 8, p.403-421
		8	Overextending Executive Power	Ellis & Nelson chapter 12
		10	Jimmy Carter: Morality and Malaise	Ellis chapter 9, p.431-457
			The President and the Judiciary	
<b>13</b>		13	The President and the Judiciary	Ellis chapter 9, p.457-481
		15	Presidents and Legislation	Ellis & Nelson chapter 9
		17	Ronald Reagan: Postmodernist?	Ellis chapter 10, p.488-519
			The President and Obeying Laws	
<b>14</b>		20	The President and Obeying Laws	Ellis chapter 10, p.519-536
		22	Presidents and War Power	Ellis & Nelson chapter 10
		24	George H.W. Bush: Strategy vs. Tactics	Ellis chapter 11, p.547-565
			Evaluating the Presidency	
<b>15</b>		27	Evaluating the Presidency	Ellis chapter 11, p.565-577
		29	Current events debate	Class pick debate article
		1	Bill Clinton: Multitasker; George W. Bush: Decider	Review knowledge of Clinton and Bush
<b>16</b>	<b>May</b>	4	Barack Obama and Lessons of the Modern Presidency; Donald Trump: Unique?	Review knowledge of Obama and Trump
		6	Current events debate and review of semester	Prepare for debate (no paper due)
		8	preparing for the final exam	review semester materials
<b>17</b>		13-17	<b>FINAL EXAM (day and time to be announced after census)</b>	Good luck!

## **Some Sources for Information on Political Science and the Presidency**

- Chico State Career Center: <http://www.csuchico.edu/careers/index.shtml>
- The American Political Science Association: <http://www.apsanet.org/>
- The Gallup Organization: <https://news.gallup.com/>
- The American National Election Studies: <http://www.electionstudies.org/>
- Data on Congress: [http://web.mit.edu/17.251/www/data\\_page.html](http://web.mit.edu/17.251/www/data_page.html)
- Data on the Presidency: <http://www.thepresidency.org/>
- The American Presidency Project: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/>
- Data on Campaign Finance: <http://www.opensecrets.org/>
- Census Bureau: <http://www.census.gov/>
- [The White House](http://www.whitehouse.gov/)--<http://www.whitehouse.gov/>
- [The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwfr.html)--<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwfr.html>
- [Supreme Court Cases \(Legal Information Institute\)](http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/index.html)-- <http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/index.html>
- [Speeches of Abraham Lincoln](http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/speeches.htm)--<http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/speeches.htm>
- [Presidential Studies Quarterly](http://www.cspresidency.org/psq/index.htm)--<http://www.cspresidency.org/psq/index.htm>
- [Atlas of Presidential Elections](http://www.uselectionatlas.org/)--<http://www.uselectionatlas.org/>
- [Polling Report](http://www.pollingreport.com/)--<http://www.pollingreport.com/>

---

*page last updated 1 January 2020.*