

## **PSCI 3011-001, THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY**

Instructor: Dr. Mike Kanner  
Tuesday, Thursday 9:30 to 10:45 AM  
HUMN 250

### **Contact information**

E-Mail: [michael.kanner@colorado.edu](mailto:michael.kanner@colorado.edu)  
Office Location – Ketchum 114F  
Office Hours – Monday, Wednesday, Friday – 10:30 to 11:30 AM  
Campus Box Office: 333 UCB

### **Communication Policies:**

The best way to contact me is by e-mail. My normal response time is 8 to 12 hours (although it may just be an acknowledgment). If you do not hear from me within 24 hours, contact the political science office (303.492.7871) and ask them to call me.

### **Instructor Biography:**

I have been a lecturer in political science and international affairs since 2001. During this time, I have taught courses in all American political institutions except for the Court system. I also teach courses in international relations from security studies to development to international behavior.

While my bachelor's degree was in science with a concentration in engineering, I also have a masters' in managerial science, international relations, and a Ph.D. from the University of Colorado, Boulder where I focused on political psychology and its effect on foreign policy decision making. A significant part of my dissertation was the development of a model of individual decision making under prospect theory.

Prior to joining academia, I had a career in the US Army serving as an operations officer from brigade to theater army level in the United States, Latin America, and Europe.

My publications include models of decision making as well as teaching. Additionally, I was an analyst for Defense Department studies on a diverse set of subjects including expert decision making, low-intensity conflict, and preventive diplomacy.

### **Course Description** (from course catalog)

Examines the constitutional, institutional and historical development of the presidency and the federal bureaucracy. Explores the changing role of the executive branch in the U.S. political system over time and competing views of executive power.

Approved for arts and sciences core curriculum: United States context.

### **Objectives**

1. Identify the formal and informal powers of the president.

2. Explain the selection and election process.
3. Describe the relationship between the president, the bureaucracy, Congress and the courts.
4. Explain the ways in which presidents make policy.
5. Examine the major issues in presidential politics.

**Questions.** There are two questions that frame our discussions.

1. How did we go from the president as the servant of Congress to it becoming the dominant institution?
2. Has the presidency gotten too big?

### **Overview**

Classes usually start with a short presentation (5-10 minutes) on the day's topic ending with a debate question from the text (if we are reading *Debating the Presidency* that day or one of my own choosing based on the essay we have read). During these debates, students will present the reasoning behind their position and evidence (current or historical) in support of their position.

Assigned readings provide the basis for these discussions. However, just because something is published, does not mean you must accept the argument. A secondary purpose of the course is to promote your ability to analyze arguments. In addition to the content, you should also analyze articles for these elements.

1. Identify the assumptions or statements that frame the argument.
2. Examine the accuracy and validity of these assumptions.
3. Analyze how these assumptions result in different perspectives about the world
4. Compare the different policies that may come from the different assumptions.

### **Required Texts**

Ellis, Richard J. and Michael Nelson. 2018. *Debating the Presidency: Conflicting Perspectives on the American Executive. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition.* Washington, D.C.: Sage Publishing/CQ Press.

Nelson, Michael. ed. 2018. *The Presidency and the Political System, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition.* Washington, D.C.: Sage Publishing/CQ Press

These books are available from the University bookstore as a single package to get a discounted price. If you want, you can also order them online as either physical text or e-book.

However, you **MUST** have access to textbooks since I do not repeat what is in the readings.

Ensure that you have the correct editions of the required texts. They are regularly updated and previous editions do not correspond with the more recent editions.

### **Student Responsibilities**

1. Show up to class. Readings are only part of what goes on in class.
2. Be on time. Lateness is a sign of disrespect to me and the other students.

3. Do the readings. The class is based on discussions so being uninformed will decrease everybody's learning experience.
4. Keep up with the news. It is always an interesting time to study politics, especially during a presidential campaign. We will be using current events to illustrate and apply what we learn in class.

### Grading

Grading is based on a 100-point scale.

<b>A</b>	94-100	<b>B+</b>	87-89	<b>C+</b>	77-79	<b>D+</b>	67-69	<b>F</b>	0-59
<b>A-</b>	90-93	<b>B</b>	83-86	<b>C</b>	73-76	<b>D</b>	63-66		
		<b>B-</b>	80-82	<b>C-</b>	70-72	<b>D-</b>	60-62		

Your final grade will be a function of the points you achieve. Points are allocated on the following basis.

Exams – 2 at points 25 each; Final – 35 points	85 points
Attendance and participation	15 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 points</b>

### Exams

The three exams (including the final exam) will be in class, closed book exams. Each will consist of seven short answer questions (one paragraph essay) from which students will select five. The final will consist of nine questions of which the student will need to answer seven. These questions are mostly drawn from the in-class discussion questions and will require some synthesis of the subjects discussed since the last exam. A review sheet for the exam will be published at least one week prior to the exam.

### Attendance.

Absences will only be excused based on illness, incarceration, religious observation, work, sports team or ROTC commitments, or family emergencies. Documentation for the absence may be requested.

### Class Schedule

<b>August</b>	
<b>28 – Syllabus; PPS 2</b>	<b>30 – PPS 1</b>
<b>4 – DTP 1</b>	<b>6 – PPS 3</b>
<b>11 – PPS 4</b>	<b>13 – PPS 7</b>
<b>18 – DTP 3</b>	<b>20 – PPS 8</b>
<b>25 – DTP 4</b>	<b>27 - EXAM</b>
<b>October</b>	
<b>2 – PPS 5</b>	<b>4 – DTP 7</b>
<b>9 – PPS 6</b>	<b>11 – PPS 13</b>
<b>16 – DTP 2</b>	<b>18 – PPS 17</b>
<b>23 – DTP 12</b>	<b>25 – EXAM</b>
<b>30 – PPS 9</b>	

November	
	1 – DTP 8
6 – PPS 10	8 – DTP 6
13 – PPS 11	15 – PPS 12
20 – Fall Break	22 - Thanksgiving
27 – PPS 14	29 – PPS 15
December	
4 – PPS 16	6 – PPS 18
11 – PPS 19	13 – PPS 20
<b>Final – Sun. Dec. 16, 4:30 to 7 PM</b>	
Legend	
<b>PPS</b>	Nelson, Michael. ed. 2018. <i>The Presidency and the Political System, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition</i> . Washington, D.C.: Sage Publishing/CQ Press
<b>DTP</b>	Ellis, Richard J. and Michael Nelson. 2018. <i>Debating the Presidency: Conflicting Perspectives on the American Executive. 4<sup>nd</sup> Edition</i> . Washington, D.C.: Sage Publishing/CQ Press.

**Policies** (as established by the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education)

## SYLLABUS STATEMENTS

### ACCOMMODATION FOR DISABILITIES

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or [dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu) for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

### CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

## HONOR CODE

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

## SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND/OR RELATED RETALIATION

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, exploitation, harassment, dating or domestic violence, and stalking), discrimination, and harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or [cureport@colorado.edu](mailto:cureport@colorado.edu). Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

## RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, see me and we will work on any necessary accommodation. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.