

Instructor

Rebecca Eissler
Assistant Professor

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Office Information **Location:** HUM 531
Thursdays 2-4 pm and by appointment (please email) via Zoom: [Click Here to Enter the Zoom Office](#)

About

Rebecca Eissler — Ph.D.

Please contact me via email, as I rarely check my voicemail. Additionally, please allow 24-48 hours for email responses.

Course Information

Regardless of who is in the White House, everyday citizens are constantly exposed to news about what the president is up to. From this, it becomes eminently clear that the president is an incredibly important political figure whose decisions have a way of affecting our lives. Yet, there are many questions about where he gets the power to make the decisions he makes and how he interacts with others inside and outside of government.

In this course, we will explore three key facets of the American Presidency. The first third of the course explores the history and evolution of the presidency, the powers of the presidency, and the presidential election. The second third of the class introduces the ways the president works with other political actors both inside and outside of government, covering the president's relationships with Congress, the executive branch, the courts, the public, and the media. Finally, the last third of the course will address the president in the policy process. Presidents have the ability to affect policymaking by working with others and on their own.

The American
Presidency

Class Number PLSI 0476

Section 01

Semester Fall 2020

Description

Prerequisite: Upper-division standing or consent of the instructor. Examination of the many facets of the American presidency: powers and person of the presidency, its history and evolution, interactions between the executive and other branches of U.S. government, the president in the policy process.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Describe the connections between the origins and historical powers of the American president and the modern role and powers of the institution.
- Identify the different relationships presidents have with other political actors, both inside and outside of government.
- Identify the president's role in the policy process.
- Analyze political and policy information.

Teaching Assistants

Shereef Abdallah - sabdallah@mail.sfsu.edu

Shereef's Office Hours: Fridays from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm. Please email Shereef to make an appointment for during that time. Just like Prof. Eissler, he is here to support your learning goals!

Materials

Readings will be posted on the class iLearn page, which I expect students to be checking multiple times a week. Students should also be reading the news/keeping up with current events in the presidency/the presidential campaign.

As this course is an online course, students will need access to a computer with reliable internet access. In addition to accessing readings on iLearn, students should be able to watch streaming videos and Zoom class discussions with both video and audio participation.

Students are not expected to be in a perfectly quiet environment, but to use their best judgment so as to be able to participate in class without excessive distractions. If there are questions about this or issues that arise throughout the semester, please contact me (reissler@sfsu.edu)!

Note: If ever a student can't access a reading via a web link, it is the responsibility of the student to contact me to let me know about the issue. Not being able to access a reading is not an acceptable reason for not having completed the reading.

Activities

Name	Contribution to Grade	Description
Presidential Politics as Puzzle Project	40%	An 7-part assignment due approx. every two weeks through the semester designed to help students develop a research project related to presidential politics.
Final Exam	30%	Cumulative final exam due during Exam Week (Open on December 13th through 16th.)
Discussion Leaders	20%	<p>Students will sign up for leading discussion on 3 synchronous days throughout the semester. On those days, students are expected to be fully prepared to discuss current events and the lectures/readings. They are also expected to have their webcam on and be in a reasonably quiet spot in order to participate in the discussion (exceptions to this policy will be granted by the professor for specific circumstances).</p> <p>These students are also expected to have come up with questions for the class to discuss related to the readings and lectures. These should be questions that help move understanding forward. Please see the Effective Questions handout on iLearn.</p> <p>After class (by Friday at 11:59 pm on the weeks that students were discussion leader) students would need to post to the class Google document one thing that they learned from the class lecture or readings <u>AND</u> one thing that they thought was interesting from the class discussion (200 words total).</p>

•The goal of this is to keep a healthy discussion going and to have a collaboratively created record of the progress of the class that all students can access as a study tool.

Attendance/Participation 10%

This is an interactive class; attendance at our discussion sessions is expected. Failure to attend class will negatively affect your attendance grade and overall performance in this course. Students are allowed 2 unexcused absences. If you miss more than two classes, your attendance and participation grade will start to go down for every additional missed class.

Additionally, there may be additional activities that will receive credit in this section.

White House Non-Fiction Book Report

Extra credit towards exam grade

Much of this course focuses on the heart of the presidency, the President. But most of the time, presidents are surrounded by some of the smartest minds advising and supporting the president. This **extra credit** book report gives students the opportunity to see the White House and politics through the eyes of people close to the president. See iLearn for more details about this project.

Get Out the Vote!

Extra credit toward presidential politics as puzzle grade

Voting is one of the critical ways individuals participate in the political process. To get this extra credit, use your creativity to create a get out the vote message that you could share with friends, family, and your community. You might write a satirical song, draw a cartoon, animate a video, write a spoken word poem, create a photo essay, create a Tiktok dance, etc. Use your imagination! The only requirements are that it includes a message about voting and a link to a website that helps people to vote (such as <https://www.whenweallvote.org>, <https://votesaveamerica.com>, <https://www.rockthevote.org/how-to-vote/>, <https://www.vote411.org>, or <https://registertovote.ca.gov> (CA specific)).

Grades

Percentage	Letter Grade
100.00% - 92.50%	A
92.49% - 89.50%	A-
89.49% - 86.50%	B+
86.49% - 82.50%	B
82.49% - 79.50%	B-
79.49% - 76.50%	C+
76.49% - 72.50%	C
72.49% - 69.50%	C- (This is the minimum required grade for Breadth Classes)
69.49% - 66.50%	D+
66.49% - 62.50%	D
62.49% - 59.50%	D-
59.49% - 0.00%	F

Policies

Academic Calendar

To review course drop, withdrawal, instruction dates, or other information related to important dates at the university, visit the SF State academic calendar, here: <https://webapps.sfsu.edu/public/webcal/acadcalendar>.

Attendance

Students are encouraged to attend every class. I will take attendance every class meeting. As we meet once weekly, students are allowed 2 excused absences. Students who miss in excess of 2 class sessions will see their attendance and participation portion of the grade affected. Students should come to class having read all material assigned up to and including that day. If you are absent from class, I am happy to discuss course material in my office hours after you have obtained the notes from another student.

Children/Pets/Family

In these COVID-19 times, I understand that we are all working in less than ideal learning environments. Some of you may be home taking care of young children or have other family around you as you are participating in class. My request is that you do your best to reduce distraction—I am not asking you to find “perfect” conditions. Keep yourself muted when you are not speaking, but if there is another noise when you are participating or people coming in and out of your video, well that’s just the reality of learning from home. You will not be penalized for it. We will work together and we will be understanding of the fact that we are all struggling.

Drops, withdrawals and WU grades

Students may drop a class during the first two week. Students are encouraged to drop before the end of the second week if they don't want the class and no longer plan to attend. Dropping the class is the responsibility of the student! However, I reserve the right of dropping you from the course if: (1) you fail to log in within 3 days after the start of the semester; (2) you fail to log in for more than one week during the session; (3) if you fail to turn in less than half the assigned work or exams.

Students who do not drop and no longer attend may receive a WU grade (withdrawal- unauthorized). Please be aware that a WU grade is counted as an F for GPA purposes. After the second week, you can withdraw from a class only if you have **serious and compelling reasons with current, relevant supporting documentation**. The following are examples of **non-serious and non-compelling reasons** and would be denied:

- Changing major
- Poor academic performance in class
- Course no longer needed
- Missing pre-requisite(s)
- Instructor forgot to drop
- More time needed for other classes

Unexpected changes in work schedule or serious accident, protracted illness, or family emergencies may be considered serious and compelling if appropriate supporting documentation is attached. The petition must be submitted within a reasonable timeframe (e.g., within 2 weeks of illness or change in work hours) and must include your unofficial transcripts. In the last two weeks of the semester, you may not withdraw from a class or the University, except only in the case of a **documented** serious illness or verified accident.

Withdrawals cannot be initiated electronically and must be submitted using a paper application. A maximum of 18 units can be withdrawn, and a course can only be repeated once with a failing grade.

Electronic Devices

Cell phones should be silent and kept in bags during class time. Laptops and tablets are permitted; however, many studies have shown that students absorb the material better and are less distracted in class if they take notes by hand.

Email policy

I attempt to respond to all student emails in a timely fashion, but please allow 48-72 hours for a response. I likely will not respond to email on the weekends, starting Fridays at 5 pm. Additionally, when emailing me, a professional and respectful style of correspondence is expected. Students are responsible for regularly checking iLearn and their email address that is on record with the University for communications. These will be the primary modes of communication outside of class.

Grade Appeals

How to appeal a grade: <https://senate.sfsu.edu/policy/grade-appeal-practices-and-procedures-current>.

Grading Questions

All questions regarding grades or exam questions must be submitted in writing no more than 10 days after the return of the graded assignment. Additionally, these questions must include a reasonable explanation of why the answer you gave on the test is accurate, including any citations from class lectures or readings to support your answer.

In-class Discussion

Occasionally, there will be in class discussions related to political issues and current events related to the course material. I expect and want to hear a range of opinions from the students in the class. Common kindness and courtesy are expected from all participants and all opinions will be treated with respect. My role is to ask follow-up questions and solicit counter-arguments related to the topic at hand; it is not my intention to sway your views and I encourage the respectful exchange of all ideas.

Late Work Policy

Be sure to pay close attention to deadlines—there will be no make up assignments or quizzes, or late work accepted without a serious and compelling reason and instructor approval.

Makeup Exams

Makeup exams will only be given in the case of medical reasons or in extraordinary circumstances. Students must notify me in advance of the exam to schedule such a makeup. The format of the makeup exam is at my discretion, so as to preserve academic integrity. Additionally, written documentation of the medical reason or extraordinary circumstance will be required and students should expect the documentation to be verified.

Office Hours

Students are encouraged to attend my office hours to discuss course material and assignments. This is an opportunity to get better, more in-depth answers to any concerns. I am happy to schedule appointments during university business hours, should there be conflicts with my standard weekly office hours. Additionally, I welcome you to come to my office hours to meet with me for major advising or any other concerns.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism includes using someone else's exact words, or even their ideas but not their exact words, without proper citation. It is a good rule of thumb that if you did not know the information before you started the assignment, you must cite your source. If you are still unsure of how to cite, ask your instructor or a librarian.

For more information on Standards for Student Conduct, visit the Office of Student Conduct site, here:

<https://conduct.sfsu.edu/standards>.

Religious Observance

If you will miss class due to religious observance, please notify me at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance. If you must miss a class or quiz or an examination for religious observance, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Syllabus Change Policy

Disclaimer: This syllabus is subject to change.

University Grading Information

Information regarding grades: <https://cms.sfsu.edu/content/grades-student-information>.

Land Acknowledgement

The campuses of San Francisco State University on the San Francisco peninsula and north bay are located within the occupied territories of the Ohlone peoples and the Coastal Miwok (who, along with the Southern Pomo, are organized as the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria). This acknowledgment demonstrates a commitment to beginning the process of working to dismantle the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism.

For more information about land acknowledgments and the Ohlone people:

<http://www.muwekma.org/home.html>

<https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>

https://badndns.blogspot.com/2020/02/land-acknowledgment-why-do-it.html?fbclid=IwAR3Tc0zJ-8Jf0k5-7PdYr8YeCyaMnjcN6EM3VkiBPZcH2_5g0_DKcpJI9IA

Schedule

Date	Topics & Activities	Deliverables
8/24/2020	Introduction to course and the Presidency	
8/31/2020	Presidential Powers	Syllabus Quiz due 9/4@ 11:59 pm Politics as Puzzle Part A Due 9/4@ 11:59 pm
9/7/2020	Presidential Primaries	
9/14/2020	General Election Campaign	Politics as Puzzle Part B Due 9/18 @ 11:59 pm
9/21/2020	The President and the Executive Branch	
9/28/2020	The President and Congress	Politics as Puzzle Part C Due 10/2 @ 11:59 pm
10/5/2020	The President and Court	
10/12/2020	The President and the Public	Politics as Puzzle Part D Due 10/16 @ 11:59 pm
10/19/2020	The President and the Media	
10/26/2020	Presidential Decision Making	Politics as Puzzle Part E Due 10/30 @ 11:59 pm
11/2/2020	Election Break-down	
11/9/2020	Agenda Setting and Unilateral Action	
11/16/2020	The President and Economic Policy	Politics as Puzzle Part F Due 11/20 @ 11:59 pm
11/23/2020	Fall Break *No Class* 🍁	
11/30/2020	The President and Foreign Policy	
12/7/2020	The Presidency: Looking Back and Looking Forward *Last week of class! Be sure to study!*	Politics as Puzzle Part G Due 12/11 @ 11:59 pm
12/14/2020	FINAL WEEK	Exam open on 12/13 though 12/18

Resources

Disability Programs and Resource Center – DPRC

<https://access.sfsu.edu>

We work with students and employees with disabilities to ensure all aspects of life on campus including academics, events and employment are accessible.

Library Research Assistance

<https://library.sfsu.edu/>

The librarians at SFSU can help you develop research questions, identify research strategies, search for relevant and reliable information and data, select the best sources for your paper or project, and cite that information. A librarian can meet with you in person (one-on-one or in groups), and provide assistance via email, phone, or chat. While every SFSU Librarian is able to help students with a project in any discipline, each department has a designated librarian to support the research needs of the students in that department.

SF State Policies

Disclosures of Sexual Violence (Title IX)

SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Dean of Students. To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact:

- The SAFE Place – (415) 338-2208; psyservs.sfsu.edu/content/safe-place
- Counseling and Psychological Services Center – (415) 338-2208; psyservs.sfsu.edu

Disability Access

Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The [Disability Programs and Resource Center](#) (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email to dprc@sfsu.edu.