

# POLITICAL SCIENCE 312: AMERICAN PRESIDENCY

Syllabus, Spring 2021

**Instructor:** Michael S. Rocca, Associate Professor

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**Office:** Virtual (Zoom)

**Class Time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00am – 12:15pm, Zoom

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00-10:30am (or by apt), Zoom

**Course Website:** [learn.unm.edu](http://learn.unm.edu)

## SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This course is designed to meet three goals. *First, I hope to increase your understanding of the presidency as an institution.* Over the course of the quarter we will review how institutional rules influence presidential politics. For instance, how do electoral rules affect presidential candidates' campaign strategies? How does our system of separation of powers influence presidents' policy decisions? What role does the president play in the legislative and judicial processes? Though the focus of this course will be on presidential behavior vis-à-vis political institutions, we will be attentive to the lasting impact of individual presidents. Specifically, we will discuss how and why certain presidencies changed the executive branch more than others.

*The second goal of this course is to introduce you to important theoretical and empirical works in the US presidency.* Each week we will discuss some of the most influential debates in presidential literature. I hope these topics will introduce you to how scholars think about the executive branch and familiarize you with important concepts and ideas in the political science discipline. For instance, are presidents single-minded reelection seekers or do other goals also drive their behavior? And which theories best explains how presidents make decisions?

*The third and final goal of the course is to train you to think like a political scientist. We will use our discussions and analysis of the US presidency to think deeply about important theories and approaches in the study of American politics.* For example, what are institutions and what explains their emergence and consequences? What are the determinants and consequences of individual political behavior? What are the most effective ways to analyze American politics, particularly when studying an institution that is so dominated by a single individual? How do you identify a research question worth asking, and are there any more unanswered questions in research on the US presidency?

## REQUIRED READINGS

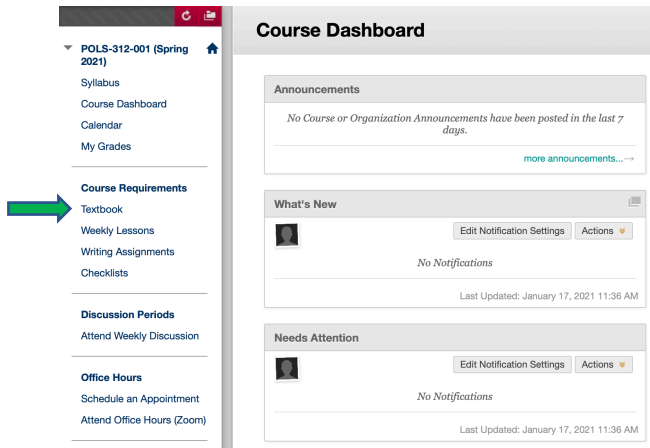
### *Textbook*

- Pika, Joseph A and John Anthony Maltese. 2020. *The Politics of the Presidency*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press. 10<sup>th</sup> ed. E-book.

This book is available through UNM's "inclusive access" program which provides an electronic version of the book. This program is convenient for you, because you only need to log into Blackboard Learn to access your material - no need to stand in line or send away for anything. Your textbook will be charged to your Bursar Account after the add/drop deadline. It is also a lot cheaper than buying the textbook.

If you would prefer a hard copy of the book, you can opt out. You should have already received an email from the UNM Bookstore explaining how to opt out. If you would like to learn more about Inclusive Access, or need help, please visit the Bookstore's webpage: [https://bookstore.unm.edu/t-lunm\\_inclusiveaccess.aspx](https://bookstore.unm.edu/t-lunm_inclusiveaccess.aspx) If you do opt out, you should be able to find the textbook online (e.g. Amazon).

You will access the textbook from our Learn page:



### Other Readings

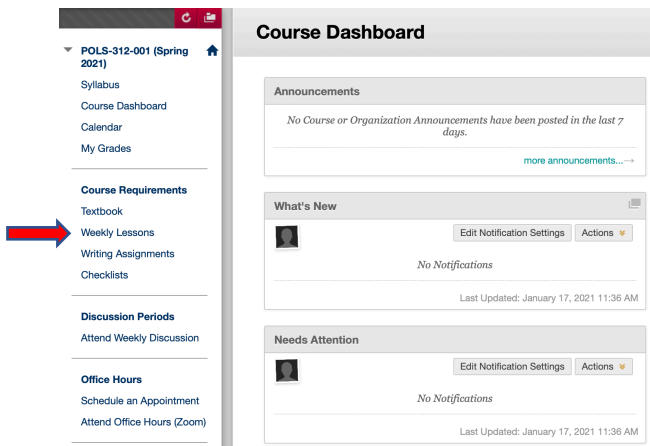
All other required readings will be available through online resources or made available through our Learn course page.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course is consistent with the “flipped classroom” approach to learning. That is, you will be doing a number of tasks outside of the (virtual) classroom so that we can spend more time *discussing* ideas during class as opposed to me *lecturing*. This will be particularly helpful given the online nature of the class. Here is how it will work:

### Weekly Lessons

Students are expected to complete all weekly lessons *prior* to each relevant discussion period (discussed below). Weekly lessons can be found on our Learn course page:



Weekly lessons may consist of any of the following: (1) **readings**, such as from the textbook, academic journals, presidential speeches, or entries from blogs or news outlets; (2) **watching** videos, such as documentaries or clips of landmark presidential moments; (3) **reviewing** graphics from newspapers or other outlets; and/or (4) **doing** interactive online exercises. Each task under “Weekly Lessons” is designed to be completed in the order in which they appear on the page. But you can skip around if you prefer.

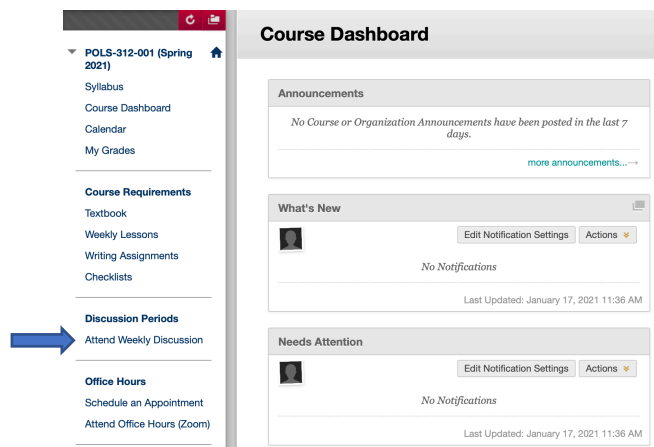
These weekly lessons will directly relate to each of our discussion periods. I strongly encourage you to complete the weekly lessons before attending our discussions. In fact, an effective discussion period will depend on it.

- *How much time will these weekly lessons take?* I would set aside 3-6 hours per week for your weekly lessons, in addition to the hour and fifteen minutes you will spend in the virtual classroom. The national average for college homework is around 2-3 hours per credit hour, which would mean 6-9 hours for a single course. I have always preferred depth over breadth, so the *number* of readings and assignments will generally be below the national average. My expectation, however, is that you *take your time* with the lessons. Keep in mind that some weeks will have more (or less) reading and activities than others. The amount of work will usually depend on the complexity of the topic.

### *Weekly Discussion Periods*

Regular attendance and participation are expected of you for this class. Learning the material and performance in the course are both greatly affected by your attendance and engagement. Discussion and dialogue among students and the instructor about course concepts, current and past events related to the presidency, and course readings are strongly encouraged. Respect for others' opinions is an essential part of a university education – disagreements should be voiced in a courteous and civil manner.

This class will be administered synchronously through Zoom. The best way to enter the class period is through our Learn course page. You can find the link to our Zoom class on the left margin of the class website:



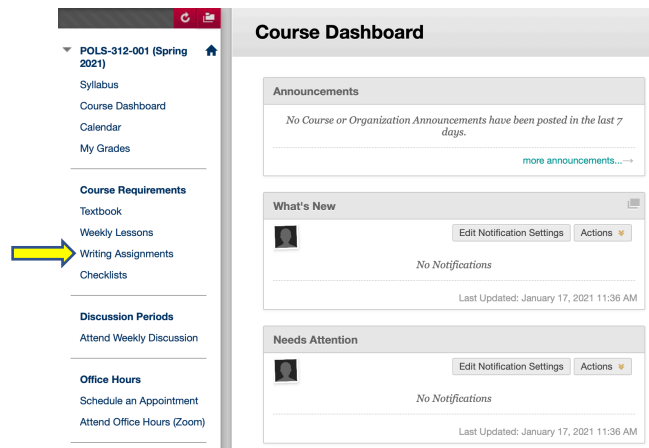
If you enter through a direct link, you must log onto Zoom through your UNM account. Only students with an authorized UNM account will receive access to our Zoom call. This is an important security precaution to help prevent unauthorized users from entering our class. Of course, one of the challenges of running an online, synchronous class is that it requires a reliable internet connection. If you cannot access our class due to internet issues, troubleshoot as best as you can. If all options fail, email me and visit my office hours to catch up. If *my* internet fails, please remain on the Zoom call for 5 minutes until I return to the call. If I do not return after 5 minutes, check your email for updates.

The size of this class (60 students) will make facilitating discussion over Zoom a bit challenging. To encourage a learning environment more conducive to thoughtful dialogue, this class will be broken into two, smaller cohorts. One cohort will meet every Tuesday during the scheduled class time, while the other cohort will meet every Thursday. If you need to switch cohorts for personal reasons, feel free to let me know. (Should that occur, I may ask for another student to trade cohorts in order to maintain two evenly divided groups.)

1. Tuesday cohort: last names A → L
2. Thursday cohort: last names M → Z

### Writing Assignments

There will be four papers, each worth 100 points. Each paper is worth 100 points for a total of 400 points. Each paper will be a minimum of 500 words (about 2 pages) in length using double-spaced pages and 12-point Times New Roman font. A grading rubric will be provided and can be accessed and reviewed under each assignment. All paper assignments can be accessed through our Learn page. Students are required to submit the assignment through Learn; I will not accept any papers through email (unless you encounter a problem with Learn).



- ✓ All assignments are due by the dates and times below. Late papers will be penalized 5 points for every day that it is late. The first “day” begins at midnight (12:00am). There are no exceptions to this rule.
  - ✓ **Reflection Paper 1: February 15, 11:59pm**
  - ✓ **Reflection Paper 2: March 12, 11:59pm**
  - ✓ **Reflection Paper 3: April 12, 11:59pm**
  - ✓ **Reflection Paper 4: May 10, 11:59pm**

You will be asked to respond to a question directly related to the previous weeks’ material. In addition to basic mechanics (e.g. grammar, formatting, organization) your answer will be evaluated on your understanding of the material, whether you state a clear thesis statement, and how well your paper develops and supports the main idea. More information will be posted on Learn.

The format of the papers will be open-book, open-note essays. The prompts for reflection papers 1, 3, and 4 will be made available Thursday evening prior to the due date (i.e. February 11, April 8, May 6). The prompt for reflection paper 2 – the week prior to spring break – will be made available Monday, March 8<sup>th</sup>.

- **Re-grading Policy:** If you have a question about a grade, you must provide me with a written explanation of your concerns. I re-grade the entire assignment. You will receive the new grade – higher or lower. You will have 7 days from the day the paper is returned to submit a request for a re-grade. Note that the clock starts on the day that the paper grade is uploaded onto Learn. I will not accept requests more than 7 days after they are returned.

## Grading

The maximum grade you can receive is 400 points (4 papers each worth 100 points). The course grade breakdown is as follows:

<u>Point Breakdown</u>	<u>Percentage Breakdown</u>
387 – 400 = A+	97% – 100% = A+
370 – 386 = A	93% – 96% = A
358 – 369 = A-	90% – 92% = A-
346 – 357 = B+	87% – 89% = B+
330 – 345 = B	83% – 86% = B
318 – 329 = B-	80% – 82% = B-
306 – 317 = C+	77% – 79% = C+
290 – 305 = C	73% – 76% = C
278 – 289 = C-	70% – 72% = C-
266 – 277 = D+	67% – 69% = D+
250 – 265 = D	63% – 66% = D
238 – 249 = D-	60% – 62% = D-
Less than 238 = F	Less than 60% = F

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically regarding political problems, trends, and developments.
- The students will demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively.
- The students will demonstrate strong analytical writing skills.
- The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of fundamental concepts and theories in political science.
- The students will be able to apply political science theories and/or concepts to real-world cases or be able to apply a case or set of cases using an appropriate theory.
- The students will be able to evaluate theories, either in light of empirical evidence or on theoretical grounds.

## CLASS POLICIES

- If you have a serious problem, you should contact me IMMEDIATELY. I can do more to help you if you let me know what is happening before you miss deadlines.
- All withdraws (W) from the course must be initiated by *the student* through LoboWeb or the Registrar's Office during the semester.
- Questions are ALWAYS appropriate.
- I encourage students to challenge the ideas discussed in this class. In all discussion, everyone must provide his or her fellow students with full respect and courtesy.
- Cheating and plagiarism will be punished to the fullest extent possible.

- All lectures, handouts, assignments and exams are the property of the professor and may not be published on the web or in any other manner without permission.

## **RESPECTFUL CAMPUS STATEMENT**

Our classroom and our university should always be spaces of mutual respect, kindness, and support, without fear of discrimination, harassment, or violence. Should you ever need assistance or have concerns about incidents that violate this principle, please access the resources available to you on campus, especially the LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center and the support services listed on its website (<http://loborespect.unm.edu/>). Please note that, because UNM faculty, TAs, and GAs are considered "responsible employees" by the Department of Education, any disclosure of gender discrimination (including sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sexual violence) made to a faculty member, TA, or GA must be reported by that faculty member, TA, or GA to the university's Title IX coordinator. For more information on the campus policy regarding sexual misconduct, please see: <https://policy.unm.edu/university-policies/2000/2740.html>.

## **ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT**

In accordance with University Policy 2310 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as he/she are not legally permitted to inquire. Students who may require assistance in emergency evacuations should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow. Contact Accessibility Resource Center at 277-3506 for additional information.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT**

Each student is expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in academic and professional matters. The University reserves the right to take disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, against any student who is found guilty of academic dishonesty or otherwise fails to meet the standards. Any student judged to have engaged in academic dishonesty in course work may receive a reduced or failing grade for the work in question and/or for the course.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, dishonesty in quizzes, tests, or assignments; claiming credit for work not done or done by others; hindering the academic work of other students; misrepresenting academic or professional qualifications within or without the University; and nondisclosure or misrepresentation in filling out applications or other University records.

## **TITLE IX STATEMENT**

A Note About Sexual Violence and Sexual Misconduct: As a UNM faculty member, I am required to inform the Title IX Coordinator at the Office of Equal Opportunity ([oeo.unm.edu](http://oeo.unm.edu)) of any report I receive of gender discrimination which includes sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and/or sexual violence. You can read the full campus policy regarding sexual misconduct at <https://policy.unm.edu/university-policies/2000/2740.html>. If you have experienced sexual violence or sexual misconduct, please ask a faculty or staff member for help or contact the [LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center](#).

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

*See "Weekly Lessons" on our Learn page for all required readings and assignments*

- WEEK ONE (1/18): INTRODUCTION

## I. THE PRESIDENT AND THE PUBLIC

- WEEK 2 (1/25): STUDYING THE PRESIDENCY

Textbook Readings: Begin *The Politics of the Presidency*, Chapter 1

- WEEK 3 (2/1): THE POWERS OF THE PRESIDENCY

Textbook Readings: Finish *The Politics of the Presidency*, Chapter 1

- WEEK 4 (2/8): THE NOMINATION PROCESS

Textbook Readings: *The Politics of the Presidency*, Chapter 2 (pgs. 44-70)

**\*\*REFLECTION PAPER 1 DUE 2/15**

- WEEK 5 (2/15): THE GENERAL ELECTION

Textbook Readings: *The Politics of the Presidency*, Chapter 2 (pgs. 70-111)

- WEEK 6 (2/22): PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL & PUBLIC OPINION

Textbook Readings: *The Politics of the Presidency*, Chapter 3 (pgs. 112-126)

- WEEK 7 (3/1): THE RHETORICAL PRESIDENCY & GOING PUBLIC

Textbook Readings: *The Politics of the Presidency*, Chapter 3 (pgs. 126-144)

- WEEK 8 (3/8): THE PRESIDENT & THE MEDIA

Textbook Readings: *The Politics of the Presidency*, Chapter 3 (pgs. 145-176)

**\*\*REFLECTION PAPER 2 DUE 3/12**

**\*\* 3/15-3/19 IS SPREAK BREAK**

- WEEK 9 (3/22): PRESIDENTIAL CHARACTER & PERFORMANCE

Textbook Readings: *The Politics of the Presidency*, Chapter 4 (all)

## II. THE PRESIDENT AND THE GOVERNMENT

- WEEK 10 (3/29): PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESS IN CONGRESS

Textbook Readings: *The Politics of the Presidency*, Chapter 5 (all)

- WEEK 11 (4/5): THE PRESIDENT AS ADMINISTRATOR

Textbook Readings: *The Politics of the Presidency*, Chapter 6 (all)

- WEEK 12 (4/12): SUPREME COURT NOMINATIONS

Textbook Readings:    *The Politics of the Presidency*, Chapter 7 (all)

**\*\*REFLECTION PAPER 3 DUE 4/12**

## II. THE PRESIDENT AND PUBLIC POLICY

- WEEK 13 (4/22):            THE PRESIDENT’S ROLE IN DOMESTIC POLICY

Textbook Readings:    *The Politics of the Presidency*, Chapter 8 (all)

- WEEK 14 (4/29):            THE PRESIDENT’S AFFECT ON THE ECONOMY

Textbook Readings:    *The Politics of the Presidency*, Chapter 9 (all)

- WEEK 15 (5/5):            THE WARTIME PRESIDENT

Required Readings:    *The Politics of the Presidency*, Chapter 10 (all)

**\*\*REFLECTION PAPER 4 DUE 5/10**

**\*\* 5/10-5/15 IS FINALS WEEK**

## A FINAL THOUGHT

This is the first time I have taught this course remotely, so I expect there to be some hiccups along the way. If you notice something amiss on your end, please email me as soon as possible and I will address it as soon as I can. I may also make a few adjustments to our chapter lessons and website as I gain more experience. I will keep you informed if I do.

I am really excited about all of the possibilities remote teaching affords us. We’ll have the chance to watch entertaining and informative videos, engage with data and online exercises, and read articles from some of the most important political analysts around. I am going to do my best to provide an engaging, informative, and organized class for you. On your end, please remain patient, communicative, and, most important, *engaged*.

This is a GREAT time to study American politics!