



NYU DC

POL-UA9310001

The American Presidency

We know that you may be taking courses at multiple locations this semester. If you are enrolled in this course 100% remotely and are not a Go Local/Study Away student for this course site, please make sure that you've completed the online academic orientation via NYU Classes so you are aware of site-specific support structure, policies and procedures. Please contact the site academic staff (dc.academics@nyu.edu) if you have trouble accessing the NYU Classes site.

If you are attending in person, you will be assigned a seat on the first day and are expected to use that seat for the entire semester due to NYU COVID-19 safety protocol. Please note that you are expected to attend every class meeting in-person; however, this may change during the drop/add period if in-person student registration increases significantly or at any point during the semester if local COVID-19 regulations require additional physical distancing.

Instructor Information

- Professor Ronald Christie
- Class Session: Wednesdays, 6:15pm to 9:15pm
- Office Location/Office Hours: TBD between student and instructor via email.

Course Information

- POL-UA9310001
- The American Presidency
- This course is designed to explore the history and theories of the American presidency. While theoretical understanding of the executive branch will prove useful in explaining such concepts as executive power or relations with Congress and the Judicial branch. The instructor, a former special assistant to the president and deputy assistant to the vice president for domestic policy, will incorporate an historical approach while considering real world applications of theoretical concepts and abstract ideas.

Course Overview and Goals

Desired Outcomes of Course:

1. To understand how the American Presidency has evolved since 1789.
2. To understand the manner in which the president has worked with the other branches of government to formulate public policy.
3. To understand how the American Presidency operates at this juncture of the 21st Century.

Teaching Approach:

To build a sophisticated understanding of the policy process you will need to engage in all components of the course. I expect that you will complete all required reading in advance of the session for which they are listed, take notes on the material, and be prepared to summarize and critically evaluate it. You will help guide the discussion in our class meetings; your classmates are counting on you to bring your own perspective to small-group and whole-class conversations. Classes will include both lecture and discussion components – but feel free to ask on-topic questions at any point. I encourage the expression of diverse viewpoints in class and in your writing assignments; you should work within the framework presented but always think for yourself and feel comfortable articulating any questions/opinions you wish to share. Given the current climate in the political landscape today, this course will also examine how the push for social justice and racial equity have impacted the institution of the presidency.

Course Requirements

Class Participation

You are expected to attend class in person or remote synchronously. This is awarded for contributing to a productive learning environment over the course of the term. All of the students in the course benefit from high levels of class attendance and participation, so you are expected to prepare and attend.

Short Applications 1-2

These short writing assignments are brief responses to questions connecting the theory of the course to current events. They will aid you in applying the theoretical material presented in the course and prepare you for the exam. These will be due on **September 23, 2020 and November 18, 2020.**

Midterm Examination: TBD

Policy Analysis Assignment

This serves as the final, culminating assignment for the course and involves providing analysis of a real policy memo. This serves to both expose you to professional work and challenges you to apply the theoretical material to a complex policy problem. This will be due on **December 2, 2020.**

In-Class Final Examination

This is an in-class exam which will take place on...TBD... and cover materials from both the class lectures and readings from the course.

Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

Assignments/Activities	% of Final Grade
Class participation	10%
Short Applications 1-2	10% Each
Policy Analysis Assignment	20%
Midterm Examination	25%
In-Class Final Examination	25%

Letter Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Points	Percent
A	4.00	94-100
A-	3.67	90-93%
B+	3.33	87-89%
B	3.00	84-86%
B-	2.67	80-83%
C+	2.33	77-79%

Letter Grade	Points	Percent
C	2.00	74-76%
C-	1.67	70-73%
D+	1.33	67-69%
D	1.00	65-66%
F	.00	Below 65%

View Grades

Grades will be made available on NYU Classes following the midterm and final exams.

Course Schedule

Topics and Assignments

Week/Date	Topic	Reading
Session 1 2-Sept-20	Contextual Introduction to the US Presidential Democracy and its Constitutional Origins	Michael Nelson. <i>The Evolving Presidency</i> . pp 1-46. Chapters 1-5. Milkis & Nelson. Chapters 1-3 <i>Federalist Papers 69-73. The Constitution of the United States of America, Articles I, II, & III</i>
Session 2 16-Sept-20	Understanding the Nature of Presidential Power	Michael Nelson. <i>The Evolving Presidency</i> . pp. 102-119. Milkis & Nelson. Chapters 4-6 Michael Nelson "The Psychological Presidency" in Nelson <i>The Presidency and the Political System</i> . pp. 167-187.

Week/Date	Topic	Reading
Session 3 23-Sept-20	Presidential Power in Political Times	Milkis & Nelson. Chapters 7-8, 11-13 Stephen Skowronek "The Development of Presidential Power: Conservative Insurgency and Constitutional Construction" In Nelson's <i>The Presidency and the Political System</i> . Chapter 3, beginning on Pg. 66.
Session 4 30-Sept-20	The President and the Public	Milkis & Nelson. Chapter 9-10 Thurber. <i>Rivals for Power</i> , Chapter 8: The President, Congress and the Media. Additional Readings to be Assigned.
Session 5 7-Oct-20	Elections	Lara M. Brown: "The Presidency and the Nominating Process: Politics: Aspirants, Parties and Selections." In Nelson's <i>The Presidency and the Political System</i> . Chapter 7 George C. Edwards III: "The Faulty Premise of the Electoral College," <i>Nelson's The Presidency and the Political System</i> , Chapter 8. Milkis and Nelson, <i>The American Presidency</i> . Chapter 14. <i>Bush v. Gore</i> , Nelson's <i>The Evolving Presidency</i> , Chapter 51.
Session 6 14-Oct-20	Presidency as an Institution	John Burke. "The Institutional Presidency" in Nelson's <i>The Presidency and the Political System</i> . Chapter 13. <i>Madison on the Removal of Power; Articles of Impeachment against Andrew Johnson</i> . Chapter 20; along with Chapter 27 In Nelson's <i>The Evolving Presidency. Federalist Papers 76-77</i> . Thurber, <i>Rivals for Power</i> , Chapter 3.
Session 7 21-Oct-20	Interbranch Relations	<i>Youngstown Sheet & Tube v. Sawyer</i> (1952) In Nelson's <i>The Evolving Presidency</i> . Chapter

Week/Date	Topic	Reading
		<p>33. Discussing different approaches to restraining presidential power;</p> <p><i>Hamden v. Rumsfeld (2006)</i>, An adverse ruling from the Supreme Court leads Bush to ask Congress for legislation authorizing military tribunals to try suspected non-uniformed enemy combatants in the war on terrorism. Chapter 55 in Nelson's <i>The Evolving Presidency</i>.</p> <p>Matthew Dickinson. "The President and Congress" In Nelson's <i>The Presidency and the Political System</i>. Chapter 15.</p> <p>Thurber, <i>Rivals for Power</i>, Chapters 2,6.</p> <p>David Yalof. "The Presidency and the Judiciary" In Nelson's <i>The Presidency and the Political System</i>. Chapter 15.</p>
Session 8 28-Oct-20	Two Presidencies	<p>Nelson's <i>The Presidency and the Political System</i>: Chapter 1: The Two Constitutional Presidencies.</p> <p>Nelson's <i>The Evolving Presidency: Pacificus-Helvidius Letters</i> (Chapter 7); <i>US v. Curtiss-Wright Export Corp.</i> Chapter 28;</p> <p>Lee Sigelman. "A Reassessment of the Two Presidencies Thesis." <i>Journal of Politics</i>. 41(4):1195-1205.</p> <p>George C. Edwards III. 1986. "The Two Presidencies: A Reevaluation" <i>American Politics Quarterly</i>. 14(3):247-63. American Presidency Spring, 2007</p> <p>Milikis and Nelson: <i>The American Presidency</i>, Chapter 10: The Consolidation of the Modern American Presidency.</p>
Session 9 4-Nov-20	Midterm	
Session 10 11-Nov-20	Political Parties and Interest Groups	Nelson's <i>The Presidency and the Political System</i> , Chapter 11.

Week/Date	Topic	Reading
		<p>Thurber, <i>Rivals for Power</i>, Chapter 7.</p> <p>Nelson's <i>The Evolving Presidency</i>, Chapter 57: Barack Obama's Health Care Address.</p> <p>Additional readings to be assigned.</p>
<p>Session 11 18-Nov-20</p>	<p>Public Opinion and the Presidential Use of Force</p>	<p>Nelson's <i>Evolving Presidency</i>, Chapter 52. George W. Bush's War on Terrorism Speech; Chapter 53: The Bush Doctrine.</p> <p>Nelson's <i>The Presidency and the Political System</i>: Chapter 19: The Presidency at War.</p> <p>Thurber, <i>Rivals for Power</i>, Chapter 11: The President, Congress and Foreign Policy.</p>
<p>Session 12 25-Nov-20</p>	<p>Evaluating the American Presidency</p>	<p>Nelson's <i>The Presidency and the Political System</i>. Chapter 5: Presidential Competence.</p> <p>Thurber, <i>Rivals for Power</i>, Chapter 15: Assessing Presidential and Congressional Relations: A Need for Reform?</p> <p>Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. "Rating the Presidents: From Washington to Clinton." <i>Political Science Quarterly</i>. 112: 179-190.</p> <p>Wilentz, Sean. "The Worst President in History?" <i>Rolling Stone</i>. May 4, 2006.</p>
<p>Session 13 2-Dec-20</p>	<p>Bringing it all Together: Where are we Now and Where are We Going in the Trump Era.</p>	<p>Nelson's <i>Evolving Presidency</i>: Chapter 59: President Donald Trump's Inaugural Address, Chapter 60: Donald Trump's Tweets.</p> <p>Milkis and Nelson. <i>The American Presidency</i>. Chapters 15-16.</p> <p>Nelson's <i>The Presidency and the Political System</i>. The Three Presidencies: Power and Policy. Chapter 18.</p>
<p>Session 14 9-Dec-20</p>	<p>Review Session</p>	

Week/Date	Topic	Reading
	Finals Week – December 15 – December 18, 2020	

Course Materials

Required Textbooks & Materials

- There are four books required for the course - available in print and e-book format:
 - Milkis, Sidney & Michael Nelson. *The American Presidency: Origins & Development, 1776 – 2014*. Sage/Congressional Quarterly Press. 7th Edition. 2016. ISBN: 978-1483318691
 - Nelson, Michael. *The Evolving Presidency*. Congressional Quarterly Press, 6th Edition. 2019. ISBN: 9781544323169
 - Nelson, Michael. *The Presidency and the Political System*. Congressional Quarterly Press, 10th Edition. 2014. ISBN: 978-1452240435
 - Thurber, James (edited). *Rivals for Power: Presidential-Congressional Relations*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishing. 5th Edition. 2013. ISBN: 978-1442222588

Optional Textbooks & Materials

- Additional reading materials will be posted on NYU Classes.
- Most weeks will have supplemental readings (often presented as part of the lecture) which will be made available on NYU Classes.

Resources

- **Access your course materials:** [NYU Classes](https://nyu.edu/its/classes) (nyu.edu/its/classes)
- **Databases, journal articles, and more:** [Bobst Library](https://library.nyu.edu) (library.nyu.edu)
- **Assistance with strengthening your writing:** [NYU Writing Center](https://nyu.mywconline.com) (nyu.mywconline.com)
- **Obtain 24/7 technology assistance:** [IT Help Desk](https://nyu.edu/it/servicedesk) (nyu.edu/it/servicedesk)

Course Policies

Hygiene/Physical Distancing policies

Students will be assigned/choose a seat on the first day of class. For NYU COVID-19 Safety protocols, please use the same seat for the duration of the semester.

Attendance and Tardiness

Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. **To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is mandatory, and unexcused absences will affect students' semester grades.** Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure. At all Global Academic Centers, unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade (for courses that meet once per week; for courses that meet twice per week, it is a one percent reduction per missed class).

To seek an excused absence for medical reasons, students must use the online absence reporting form within 24 hours of their first missed class. Students may be required to produce a doctor's note with that day's date, especially if the student has missed any classes already that semester or if exams/presentations/papers occurred in the missed class.

Non-medical absences must be discussed with the Academic Staff at least 7 days before the missed date(s) in question. If faculty members do not receive notification of an excused absence, the student has not procured an excused absence.

NYU Washington, DC expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks), to be attentive, and to remain for the duration of the class. If full class attendance and participation becomes a problem, it is the prerogative of each lecturer to apply the rule for unexcused absences, which may include a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade.

Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. This means they should initiate email and/ or office hour discussions to discuss any missed lectures and assignments and arrange a timeline for submitting missed work.

Final exams must be taken at their designated times. Final exams may not be taken early, and students should not plan to leave Washington, DC before the end of the finals week.

Please note that for classes involving a field trip or other external visit, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student's responsibility to arrive at the announced meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion. Staff members may always be reached by cell phone for advice regarding public transportation.

Late Assignment

- 1) Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.
- 2) Late work should be emailed to the faculty as soon as it is completed.
- 3) Late work will be reduced for a fraction of a letter grade (e.g., A to A-, A- to B+, etc.) for every day it is late, including weekends.
- 4) Written work during the semester that is submitted 5 days after the submission date (including weekends) without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.
- 5) Students who arrive to class late for an exam do not have automatic approval to take extra time to complete the exam.

- 6) Students who miss an exam (including the final) without previously arranged permission will receive a zero on that exam.
- 7) Assignments due during finals week that are submitted more than 3 days without previously arranged extensions will not be accepted and will receive a zero. Any exceptions or extensions for work during finals week must be discussed with the Site Director.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

As the University's policy on "[Academic Integrity for Students at NYU](#)" states: "At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others." **Students at Global Academic Centers must follow the University and school policies.**

The presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images, or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

NYU Washington, DC takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. All your written work must be submitted as a hard copy AND in electronic form to the lecturer. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form.

It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you MUST inform your professor.

For guidelines on academic honesty, clarification of the definition of plagiarism, examples of procedures and sanctions, and resources to support proper citation, please see:

[NYU Academic Integrity Policies and Guidelines](#)

[NYU Library Guides](#)

Disability Disclosure Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

Religious Observances

Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday.

Students must notify their professor and the Washington, DC Academics team in writing via email at least 7 days before being absent for this purpose.

Inclusion, Diversity, Belonging and Equity

NYU is committed to building a culture that respects and embraces diversity, inclusion, and equity, believing that these values – in all their facets – are, as President Andrew Hamilton has said, “...not only important to cherish for their own sake, but because they are also vital for advancing knowledge, sparking innovation, and creating sustainable communities.” At NYU DC, we are committed to creating a learning environment that:

- fosters intellectual inquiry, research, and artistic practices that respectfully and rigorously take account of a wide range of opinions, perspectives, and experiences; and
- promotes an inclusive community in which diversity is valued and every member feels they have a rightful place, is welcome and respected, and is supported in their endeavors.

About Your Instructor

Ron Christie is Founder and CEO of Christie Strategies LLC, a full-service communications and issues management firm in Washington, D.C. Christie is also the author of three books. His most recent title, *Blackwards: How Black Leadership is Returning America to the Days of Separate But Equal* was published in September 2012. His two previous books were *Acting White: The Birth and Death of a Racial Slur* (2010, St. Martin's Press) and *Black in the White House* (2006, Thomas Nelson/Nelson Current). Christie served as a Resident Fellow at the John F. Kennedy School of Government Institute of Politics for the Fall 2011 term at Harvard University. Christie presently teaches as an Adjunct Professor at the McCourt Graduate School of Public Policy and the McDonough School of Business at Georgetown University. In August 2015 he was named to the Board of Advisors for the inaugural Georgetown University Institute of Politics and Public Service. He was an inaugural Fellow in Residence at the University of Southern California's Center on the Political Future for the Fall 2019 term. Starting this Fall, Christie is also a Senior Practitioner Fellow at the University of Virginia Miller Center on Presidential Studies.

Mr. Christie, a veteran senior advisor of both the White House and the Congress, brings years of government relations experience. Most recently, Christie served as Vice President of Navigators LLC – a strategic consulting and communications firm. He previously served as Executive Vice President and Director of Global Government Affairs at Ruder Finn and Of Counsel at the DC law firm of Patton Boggs, LLP. From 2002 to 2004, he was Acting Director of USA Freedom Corps and special assistant to President George W. Bush. He began service at the White House in 2001 as deputy assistant to Vice President Cheney for domestic policy, advising the Vice President on policy initiatives in health care, budget, tax and other policy areas. Prior to joining the Vice President's staff, he briefly served as counsel to U.S. Senator George Allen (R-VA). He also served as senior advisor to former House Budget Committee Chairman and current Ohio Governor John Kasich from 1992 - 1999.

A frequent commentator on current political events, Christie serves as the North American Political Analyst for BBC World Television. He first joined the BBC for their global 2012 presidential election night coverage. He reprised this role to cover the 2014 midterm election cycle. He has appeared as a political/legal analyst on *The Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer*, *On the Record with Greta Van Susteren*, *Real Time with Bill Maher*, *Lou Dobbs Tonight*, *Hardball with Chris Matthews*, *Fox News Sunday* and *Hannity*. Christie presented his first radio documentary for the BBC World Service in February 2019 entitled “*The Trumped Republicans*” examining the presidency of Donald Trump – a documentary which received more than 100 unique impressions around the world. In April 2020 the piece was awarded the bronze medal for the best Editorial or Viewpoint program in the world by New York Festivals Radio Awards – with entrants from more than 60 countries around the world. [BBC Program Webpage](#).

Active in international affairs, he was elected as a term member to the Council on Foreign Relations in 2001 and as a life member in 2019. While serving in the White House, Christie was asked by President Bush to lead an American delegation to an international conference on volunteerism and civic engagement hosted by then Prime Minister Tony Blair in London, England. Subsequent to the volunteerism summit, Christie worked with then Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown to devise an expanded call for civic engagement in Great Britain.

A native of Palo Alto, California, he received his B.A. from Haverford College and his J.D. from the George Washington University National Law Center. He serves as a member of the Board of Directors for The Prevent Cancer Foundation and the American Conservative Union.

SAG-AFTRA eligible as a background actor, you can catch Christie in the 2015 seasons of *House of Cards* and *VEEP*. He was commissioned as a member of the Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels in 2011.