

Project 2025. Then What?

Tuesdays, 10 - 11:30 a.m.

Note: Readings listed in this syllabus are from "Mandate for Leadership 2025: The Conservative Promise". You can download it from the course website.

Week 1: Introduction to Project 2025

(February 20, 2024)

The one in which we start our examination of Project 2025. Who's behind it? What is its relationship to Trump? What exactly does it consist of? Has anything like this been done before? What is the media saying about it? What are your initial impressions?

Read: Foreword, pages 1-17

Week 2: Executive Power

(February 27, 2024)

The one in which we look at the foundation of Project 2025 - expanded executive power. What is unitary executive theory? How has executive power changed over the years? Consider the difference between pushing norms and violating the Constitution. How might the same actions be viewed differently, depending on who is the actor? How do you reconcile increased executive power with decreased function of the executive branch? Are warnings of a Trump dictatorship overblown?

Read:

- Section One overview - Taking the Reins of Government, pages 19-21
- Browse Chapters 1 - 3 (pages 23-83) to get a feel for how many offices, councils, advisers, and staff are in the Executive Branch, not to mention the Cabinet agencies.

Week 3: Loyalty

(March 5, 2024)

The one in which we see just how this loyalty thing would work. What is the Project 2025 database? What does the job application look like? What does the application look like in the Biden administration? What is the Project 2025 training academy? Is it even possible to find enough loyalists to staff all the positions? We'll take a close look at the last few months of Trump's presidency and the surprising man that started the wheels in motion for his Loyalty Machine. That was a test run; the next administration would be full throttle.

Read: Chapter 3, Central Personnel Agencies - Fully Staffing the Ranks of Political Appointees, pages 82-83

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Week 4: Bureaucracy

(March 12, 2024)

The one in which we look at the federal bureaucracy, made up of several hundred agencies. Each one is created and funded by Congress, but oversight lies in the Executive Branch. What kind of conflict does that set up? What role do courts play in oversight? How can the President exert greater power over the bureaucracy? Aren't federal workers unionized and therefore protected from partisan firing? How does Schedule F affect this? Is our society running amok with bureaucracies that are out of touch with the public?

Read: Chapter 3, Central Personnel Agencies - pages 69-83

Week 5: Justice

(March 19, 2024)

The one in which we look at the Department of Justice. What are the new priorities as set out by Project 2025? How do they align with Trump's vow of "retribution"? Does it seem as if some of the calls that are logical on face value (e.g. guarding the constitutional rights of all Americans, vigorously enforcing federal civil rights laws, dismantling international criminal enterprises) would actually have opposite or hidden effects? Do you think it's a good thing for a government to prohibit the spread of misinformation/disinformation?

Read: Chapter 17, Department of Justice - pages 545-572

Week 6: Curbing Ideas

(March 26, 2024)

The one in which we look at policies for the Department of Education, Federal Communication Commission, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, media, and Big Tech. What effect do these new policies have on the free exchange of ideas in schools and media? Does addressing threats to individual liberty have a corollary effect of depriving the liberties of others? How far should parental consent go in schools? How much federal control should there be over schools? Has public broadcasting become a liberal forum, and if so, how would it represent other viewpoints?

Read:

- Chapter 8, Media Agencies - Corporation for Public Broadcasting, pages 246-248
- Chapter 11, Department of Education - Mission, Overview, Needed Reforms, pages 319-325
- Chapter 11, Department of Education - Parental Rights, pages 342-346
- Chapter 28, Federal Communications Commission - Reining in Big Tech, pages 847-850

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Week 7: Military/Foreign Policy

(April 2, 2024)

The one in which we look at the Department of Defense and State Department. What are some of the DOD's domestic policies in education and social issues? What is their role in border security? What about the Insurrection Act? What effect would Trump loyalists have on the military establishment? What is the role of the U.S. on this new stage? Does the President have more power in the national or international arena? Is China or Russia seen as a more formidable enemy?

Read:

- Chapter 4, Department of Defense overview, pages 91-92
- Chapter 4, Department of Defense - DOD Policy, pages 92-95
- Chapter 4, Department of Defense - DOD Personnel, pages 102-104
- Chapter 6, Department of State - Pivoting Abroad, pages 178-183

Week 8: Might They Have Some Points?

(April 9, 2024)

The one in which we try to understand what makes Project 2025 attractive. How can we better understand Trump voters? Has social engineering gone too far? Are universities too involved in issues outside research/education? Where are Democratic policies shifting closer to Republican attitudes? Did you find any recommendations that you agree with? After eight weeks, are you more or less optimistic about the future than when you started this course?

Read:

- scan the book looking for any policies you agree with