

## Governing in Crisis Teaching Guide

Chuck Rosenberg, Former Acting Administrator of Drug Enforcement Administration  
The Rule of Law and the United State Department of Justice

### Interview Summary

The separation of politics and criminal law enforcement has long been viewed as a critical feature of our American system of governance. Beginning with the 2016 presidential campaign and its cries of “lock her up” directed at the opposing candidate, there have been questions about the extent to which the current administration would respect that separation or, instead, would move the country away from its fundamental commitment to the rule of law. Those concerns have grown in intensity because of actions by the President and Attorney General in characterizing the Mueller report before its release to the public; seeking the reduction of criminal penalties, supporting the withdrawal of guilty pleas, and exercising pardon and commutation powers to benefit friends and allies of the President; the launching of an investigation with the apparent intent to impact the upcoming election; and the labeling of certain communities as “anarchist cities” as a step toward cutting back on federal financial support. Building on his extraordinary career in federal law enforcement, Chuck Rosenberg, who has held a series of high-ranking positions in the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), including the FBI and the Drug Enforcement Administration, and who is a widely respected legal analyst, offers his perspectives on this important issue.

To watch the video interview please visit: <https://youtu.be/BUyjJ6t2wEM>.

The Governing in Crisis series videos, podcasts, and resource materials are available at:  
[www.iop.pitt.edu/governing-crisis](http://www.iop.pitt.edu/governing-crisis).

### Video Topics

- (0:00) Introduction
- (3:17) The Importance of the Oath of Office and the Rule of Law
- (10:25) Overview of Recent U.S. Department of Justice Controversies
- (31:29) Politicization of the U.S. Department of Justice
- (50:19) Qualities of a Good Leader
- (55:01) Conclusion

### Potential Uses:

- Post a governance series video on Canvas and ask students to respond to a discussion question about the video, as well as comment on 1-2 of their classmates’ posts.
- Show a clip of the video during class to enrich learning, emphasize a point, and/or contextualize a topic.
- Create a resource folder on Canvas that includes governance series videos, accompanied by “learn

and do more” documents, as well as other links to support student growth related to current events.

- ❑ Incorporate a governance series video into pre-class readings for a live discussion using or adapting the questions below.

## Suggested Written Reflection Questions

- ❑ What is the role of the Attorney General? When can and cannot the Attorney General make politically driven decisions?
- ❑ According to Chuck Rosenberg, “There's always a tension between staying because you think you're doing something worthwhile, and you're making a difference, and you're trying to fix stuff and leaving when you can no longer abide with what the leadership is saying.” If you were a government employee, when would it be appropriate to resign over a dispute with your superior? What factors would you consider when making that decision?
- ❑ What did you find interesting in the interview? What is something that you disagreed with?

## Suggested Classroom Discussion Questions

- ❑ According to Chuck Rosenberg what is the rule of law? What do you believe is the rule of law and why is it so important?
- ❑ How does the structure of the U.S. Department of Justice protect against political interference? How does the politicization of our criminal justice system threaten democracy?
- ❑ In addition to toughness, kindness, humility, and confidence, what qualities do you think make a great leader? What does emotional intelligence mean to you?

## Related Reading

- ❑ Read the [World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2020](#).
- ❑ Check out the Washington Post editorial, [The DOJ has been indispensable for 150 years. It needs a renewed emphasis on its founding spirit](#).
- ❑ View Brookings’s [the rule of law is under duress everywhere](#).
- ❑ See how [President Trump’s interference with Roger Stone’s sentencing shows the real lesson he took from impeachment: that he has impunity](#).
- ❑ Visit [Lawfare](#) for a historic overview of the DOJ and an evaluation of its relationship with the President.
- ❑ Review a report from the Center for American Progress on [Restoring Integrity and Independence at the U.S. Justice Department](#).
- ❑ Learn how [Politics Influenced Justice Department In Roger Stone Case, DOJ Lawyer Tells Hill](#).

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