

POLS 3308: W01 The American Presidency
Fall 2019
Dr. Mark Saad Saka/Sul Ross State University
Email: Msaka@sulross.edu

The American Presidency

Course Description

POLS 3308 is an introduction to the historical and contemporary study of the American presidency. This course provides three hours of upper level Political Science credit that will satisfy part of the upper level requirements for students majoring in Political Science, the Social Sciences or in Interdisciplinary Studies.

Course Objectives

At the completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. compare the contemporary presidency with the office envisioned by the drafters of the Constitution and offer explanations for the major changes that have occurred between 1787 and the present;
2. describe and evaluate current presidential selection procedures and compare them with alternative election systems and proposed reforms;
3. compare/contrast the skills and abilities needed to win a presidential election with those needed to govern the nation;
4. identify those presidents that are generally recognized as the "great" or "near-great" presidents and explain why these presidents receive the acclaim that they have;
5. identify the major sources of presidential power and discuss why some presidents have made more effective use of these powers than others;
6. identify the major constraints on presidential power and discuss why some presidents have been more affected by these constraints than others;
7. describe the institutionalization of the presidency and the various staff structures presidents have used to assist them in carrying out their duties;
8. outline presidential responsibilities for national security and analyze the tensions that exist between traditional democratic values and maintaining national security in time of crisis;
9. analyze the impact of personality on presidential performance;
10. analyze the role of public opinion on presidential actions and the role of the president in shaping public opinion;
11. express and defend a judgement on the "proper" role of the president in the American system and identify those reforms and/or safeguards designed to insure presidential adherence to that "proper" role.

Course Requirements

There are a number of requirements for this course and its successful completion.

1. Within the first week of the course, email me at Msaka@sulross.edu and let me know that you have read the syllabus, have or are in the process of obtaining the books, and that you understand the requirements for the course.

There are two required books for this course.

The Development of the American Presidency; 3rd edition by Richard J. Ellis, Routledge Press, 2018, ISBN # 978-1—138-03924-7

Debating the Presidency: Conflicting the Perspectives on the American Executive, edited by Richard Elis, and Michael Nelson, Sage Press, 4th edition, 2018 ISBN # 978-1-5063-4448-5.

2. There will be weekly reading assignment and written chapter and topical reviews due weekly. The date of the assignment is listed below. At the end of the course, you will write a 12 to 15 page research paper on a topic pertaining to the American presidency.
 - The reviews must be double-spaced, and formatted according to APA, MLA, or Chicago style. Please see (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html) for templates for each format
 - The reviews must be written in a college/professional level tone and style. (It is strongly recommended that you make use of appropriate resources, including the writing center.)
 - The final paper will be screened for plagiarism using the SafeAssign tool. This database includes papers submitted previously by students in this course. Papers found to have an unacceptable SafeAssign match (as determined by the instructor) will receive an automatic "zero" (0).

How will your written assignments be assessed?

Paper Scoring Rubric

Rubric Criteria	Inadequate 1	Passing 2	Good 3	Excellent 4
Thesis/ Topic	No clear thesis/topic, or thesis/topic does not relate to purpose & audience.	Thesis/topic is not stated early; it is unconvincing because it is too broad/vague/unrelated to purpose/audience.	Thesis/topic is good and relates to purpose, although it could be revised to be more precise.	Thesis/topic is precise and clear and related to purpose

Development: Reasons & Evidence	The essay does not offer clear reasons and evidence to support thesis/topic. It may offer only reasons unsupported by evidence	The paper lists reasons and evidence but they are unconvincing and/or undeveloped. Lack of critical discussion of evidence.	The paper offers reasons and evidence that support thesis/topic; but more supporting details and other kinds of evidence would have demonstrated mastery.	Reasons and evidence are accurate, precise, and relevant. Thesis/topic is fully and convincingly developed.
Organization of entire paper and of paragraphs	An overall logical structure is lacking. Paragraphs lack cohesion. No transitions.	Overall logical structure is evident, but paragraphs may lack cohesion and transitions may be lacking.	The paper is supported with adequate overall structure and paragraph cohesion; sequence of ideas or transitions could be improved.	Paragraphs are coherent & unified, and connected with effective, eloquent transitions.
Style, Vocabulary, Grammar & Mechanics	The reader cannot understand the paper because of distracting patterns of error in word choice, sentence structure, grammar, and usage.	The often must reread because of distracting patterns of error in word choice, sentence structure, grammar, and usage.	The writing successfully communicates through effective grammar and mechanics, except for one or two patterns of error in word choice, grammar, or usage.	The writer chooses words aptly and observes the conventions of correct grammar and usage.
Documentation -In-text citations & bibliography page (APA)	Author does not cite in-text sources or provide a bibliography (works cited page) at the end of paper.	Author does not cite in-text sources accurately or consistently and/or does not format bibliography accurately/consistently	Author documents sources consistently with one or two minor inconsistencies or mistakes that do not damage writer's ethos.	Author documents sources accurately and consistently.
Total (out of 4)	Points (out of 100)			

Conversion Scale: 4.0 (100) – 3.5 (90) – 3.0 (85) – 2.5 (80) – 2.0 (75) – 1.5 (70)

- At the end of the course, I will add up your fourteen weekly assignments for a total of 1,400 points. Your grade will be assessed as such: each weekly assignment will be worth 100 points (90-100=A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C;60-69=D; 0-59=F).

Your research paper will count for up to 600 points. 540-600=A; 480-539=B; 420-479=C; 360-419=D; 0-359=F)

At the end of the course, I will add up all the points possible for a possible 2,000 points. 1800-2000=A; 1600-1799=B; 1400-1599=C; 1200-1399=D; 0-1199=F.

Distance Education Statement: Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, library resources, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should submit online assignments through Blackboard or SRSU email, which require secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act): Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students who need accessibility services should contact Kathy Biddick at 830-279-3003. The address is 2623 Garner Field Road, Uvalde, TX 78801.

TOPICAL OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Date:

Sept. 2 Chapter One of the "Development of the American Presidency"

Sept. 9 Chapter Two of the "Development of the American Presidency"

Sept. 16 Chapter Three of the "Development of the American Presidency"

Sept. 23 Chapter Four of the "Development of the American Presidency"

Sept. 30 Chapter Five of the "Development of the American Presidency"

Oct. 07 Chapter Six of the "Development of the American Presidency"

Oct. 14 Chapter Seven of the "Development of the American Presidency"

Oct. 21 Chapter Eight of the "Development of the American Presidency"

Oct. 28 Chapter Nine of the "Development of the American Presidency"

Nov. 04-Chapter Ten of the “Development of the American Presidency”

Nov. 11-Chapter Eleven of the “Development of the American Presidency”

Nov. 18-Chapters One through Five of “Debating the Presidency”

Nov. 25-Chapters Six through Ten of “Debating the Presidency”

Dec. 02-Chapters Eleven through Fourteen of “debating the Presidency”

Dec. 11-final paper due by 6:00 pm.