

# **Course Syllabus: PS 3308: The American Presidency**

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**Course Description:** This course involves studies in the nature and growth of executive power, an analysis of the many faceted roles of the President, and attention to the types of performances of different individuals in the office.

**Required Texts:** \*Sidney Milkis and Michael Nelson, The American Presidency: Origins and Development, 1776-2021 9th edition. ISBN # 978-1-0718-2461-0

**Primary Learning Objectives** At the successful conclusion of this course, through performance on short written assignments, papers and a final examination, the student will be able to

- Demonstrate knowledge about the history of the Presidency and its important personalities; the key institutions of the executive branch; the key powers of the executive branch; constitutional issues relating to the Presidency and the exercise of presidential powers; and the role of the executive branch in implementing public and foreign policy
- Exercise critical thinking skills and demonstrate informed judgment in evaluating issues and answering questions relating to the exercise of Presidential power, and the President's broader role in our constitutional structure.
- Improve and build on writing skills.

**Course Requirements:**

**1. Weekly reading summaries (25%):** Each week, you will be required to write an approximately six page summary of the weekly reading assignments. These assignments will require you to locate and elaborate on the key points and issues contained in the readings. You may exercise your own discretion in presenting these assignments, or you may answer the corresponding questions that appear below. Please turn in these assignments through Blackboard. A total of 10 short assignments will be due for this course.

**2. Long Paper 1 (Chapters 1-7) (25%):** In six to ten page formal written paper, explain what the framers had in mind in creating the office of the President and summarize the evolution of the office of the Presidency up to 1900. What did the framers hope the President would be able to do? What were their concerns? Did any of these concerns prove to be correct as the office of the President evolved through the next century? Please turn in this paper through Blackboard.

**3. Long Paper 2 (Chapters 8-14) (25%):** In three to four page formal written paper, summarize the evolution of the Presidency from the beginning of the 20th Century (1900) to the present time. Has the Executive Branch become the most powerful of the three branches of government? If so, explain how. What were the key turning points in the evolution of the Presidency over the past century? Has the strengthening of this office been a positive development for the nation? If yes, explain. If not, explain. Please turn in this paper through Blackboard.

**4. Final Examination (25%):** The final examination will consist of 100 multiple choice questions. These questions will be drawn from my lectures. Please indicate the correct answer in Microsoft Word using the bold or highlight feature and submit to Blackboard. You will be given two opportunities to take the test. On the first opportunity, I will indicate which questions you answered incorrectly. You will then have a second opportunity to answer the questions correctly. Grading Methodology: The weekly reading summaries will be evaluated on a 10-point scale (100 points total). The short papers and final examination will be graded on a 100-point scale. 90-100 (A) 80-89 (B) 70-79 (C) 60-69 (D)

### **Classroom Courtesy and Respect:**

Please express your opinions and ideas openly but please be respectful and courteous of other student's ideas and opinions, no profanity or demeaning language.

**Marketable Skills for Political Science** • Students can effectively communicate ideas and information verbally, visually, and in writing • Students can distinguish between credible/relevant information and information lacking credibility/relevance • Students can identify critical and common institutions of political decision-making and policymaking across different nation-state settings • Students can engage with social and political problems and use critical thinking to develop logical solutions

**Plagiarism** on any written assignment will result in an automatic grade of "0" for the assignment and may result in disciplinary action from the university.

**ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act):** SRSU Disability Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. RGC students seeking accessibility services should contact Paulette Harris, Executive Assistant to the Vice President and Dean, at 830-279-3023 or email [pharris@sulross.edu](mailto:pharris@sulross.edu). Ms. Harris's office is at 2623 Garner Field Road, Uvalde, TX 78801 (this is the mailing address, too).

**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.