

Political Science 106 – The U.S. Presidency
Section 01 – MW 12:00 to 1:15
Fall 2016 – James Brent

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Office hours:
Mondays 8:00 to 9:00 and 10:30 to 12:00
Wednesdays 8:00 to 9:00 and 10:30 to 12:00

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand the major provisions of the U.S. constitution related to the presidency
- Discuss the process of nominating presidential candidates
- Explain the Electoral College and its effects on presidential campaigns
- Display an understanding of the factors that contribute to presidential success or failure
- Discuss the president's role in the legislative process
- Understand the relationship between the president and his top advisors, as well as with the rest of the executive branch
- Explain how the White House develops both domestic and foreign policy
- Discuss the president's relationship with the federal judiciary
- Conduct basic research on the presidency, including primary sources

Required Textbooks

Pika, Joseph A. and John A. Maltese. (2016). *The Politics of the Presidency* (15th ed.). Washington DC; CQ Press.

Ellis, Richard J., and Michael Nelson (eds.) (2015). *Debating the Presidency: Conflicting Perspectives on the American Executive*. Washington DC: CQ Press.

Elements of Your Grade

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

Midterm (October 8)	15%
Final Exam (December 15 @9:45 a.m.)	15%
Presidential Case-Study Papers (3 @ 5% each)	15%
Oral Presentation	10%
Quiz About Oral Presentations (December 12)	10%
Research Paper (due Dec. 1)	15%
Participation	10%
Book Summary and Analysis	10%

Midterm and Final Exam – The exams will consist of essay and short-answer questions. They will be closed-book, closed note exams. The final exam will not be cumulative.

Presidential Case Study Papers and Oral Presentation – These are explained more fully at the end of this syllabus.

Quiz About the Oral Presentations – On the last day of class (December 10), students will take an in-class quiz about the student presentations that have been made earlier in the semester. Students will be permitted to utilize one page of notes to assist them, as long as those notes have been submitted to me in advance. More details to be given in class.

Research Paper – Students should pick one of the proposals discussed in chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12 or 13 of *Debating the Presidency* and write a 8-10 page research paper in which they argue for or against the proposal they have selected. This paper should mainly use academic (political science and history) journals and other high-quality sources. Proper attribution must be used, and paper are partially evaluated on their spelling and grammar.

Participation – In-class participation counts for 10% of your grade. Asking questions counts as participation. Attendance does not, although if you miss a lot of classes, your participation grade will necessarily suffer.

Book Summary and Analysis – Each student will be asked to read a book about a U.S. president that is at least 300 pages in length and write a 5-7 page summary and analysis.

Miscellaneous Policies

Late Assignments – I am fairly flexible about allowing makeup exams when a student has an unavoidable conflict or an unexpected emergency. I am not at all flexible about due dates for the paper, because the due date is not the only day that you may submit your paper – it is merely the last day you may submit your paper without penalty. The penalty for submitting the papers late – regardless of excuse – is 10% of the total points possible for that assignment.

Anonymity – I grade all assignments anonymously. Please do not put your name on any written assignment, as I will not grade them. Rather, please identify yourself by the last four digits of your student ID number.

Academic Integrity-- Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San José State University, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development.

The policy on academic integrity can be found at: <http://www2.sjsu.edu/senate/S04-12.pdf>. The website for the Office of [Student Conduct and Ethical Development](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html) is: http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html

Accommodation -- If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an

appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with AEC (formerly DRC) to establish a record of their disability

Succeeding in a Four-Unit Course

At SJSU, students are expected to spend two hours outside of class for every one hour of class time. Because this is a **four-unit class**, you can expect to spend a minimum of eight hours per week in addition to time spent in class and on scheduled tutorials or activities. Careful time management will help you keep up with readings and assignments and enable you to be successful in all of your courses. In this class, one of the four units is an engagement unit, which consists of online quizzes, and data exercises. You are expected to spend 45 hours this semester (both to prepare for and to complete the work) to successfully complete this unit.

Course Topics and Readings

- I. Presidential Elections -- Pika and Maltese, Chapter 2; Ellis & Nelson, Chapters 3, 4 and 5
 - A. The Primary Season
 - B. Presidential Nominating Conventions
 - C. The General Election and the Electoral College

- II. The Constitutional Presidency -- Pika and Maltese, Chapter 1; Ellis & Nelson, Chapter 1
 - A. The Pre-Constitutional Experience
 - B. The President in the Constitution
 - C. Constitutional Amendments

- III. The President as Chief Executive – Pika and Maltese, Chapters 6, 8 and 9; Ellis & Nelson Chapter 12
 - A. The Cabinet, EOP and Other Advisors
 - B. The President & the Bureaucracy
 - C. Domestic & Economic Policy Development

- IV. The President as Chief Legislator -- Pika & Maltese, Chap 5; Ellis & Nelson, Chaps. 8 & 11
 - A. Formal Powers
 - B. Informal Powers

MIDTERM

- V. The President as Chief Diplomat -- Pika and Maltese, Chapter 10
 - A. The Two Presidencies Thesis
 - B. The Foreign Policy Process
 - C. The Treaty Power
 - D. Executive Agreements & Other Diplomatic Tools

- VI. The President as Commander-in-Chief – Ellie & Nelson, Chapter 9
 - A. The President & the Military
 - B. Congress & The War Powers Act

- VII. The President & the Courts -- Pika and Maltese, Chapter 7; Ellie & Nelson, Chapter 13
 - A. The Selection of Federal Judges
 - B. Judicial Review of Presidential Actions

- VIII. Presidential Success & Failure -- Pika and Maltese, Chapters 3 and 4; Ellie & Nelson, Chapter 6
 - A. The President as Head of State
 - B. Explanations for Presidential Greatness
 - C. Case Studies in Success and Failure

Presidential Case Study Papers & Presentations

Every student will select one (1) presidential term to study in depth. Over the course of the semester, you will submit three (3) mini-papers about your president. Each paper should be 3-5 pages long. You will also give an in-class oral presentation on your president of 10-15 minutes in length.

Selecting Your President – Students may write about any presidential term longer than 3 years in length, with the exception of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush or Barack Obama. However, each student must write about a different presidential term. Students who write about one-term presidents will receive a 5% bonus added to the combined grade of their papers.

Case Study Papers

After you have been assigned a specific presidential term, you will write three (3) short (3-5 pages) papers during the semester, each one having a different focus as follows:

- 1) Paper #1 -- The Presidential Election – in this paper, you will discuss the election that resulted in the election (or re-election) of your president. Who was the opponent? What were the major campaign issues and events? What was the result and how was the vote distributed? (due: September 14)
- 2) Paper #2 – Your President & Domestic Politics – What major legislation did your president endorse or favor (or at least sign)? What legislation did he veto? How were his relations with Congress in general? What executive orders (if any) did your president issue? What scandals (if any) regarding domestic politics did this president experience? What was his leadership style? (due October 17)
- 3) Paper #3 – Your President & Foreign Affairs – What major international crises confronted your president, and how did he handle them? What treaties (if any) did your president negotiate, and what was their fate? What military conflicts did this president oversee? (due: November 16)

Papers will be graded on their academic quality (which is based partially on the quality of the sources used) and the strength of the writing.

Oral Presentations

All students are required to give a 10-15 minute oral presentation on the presidential term that they have chosen. I would like these presentations to occur in chronological order, and a schedule will be established very soon after the start of the semester. I will give a 5% bonus to all presentations delivered before the midterm exam.

Political Science Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the Political Science major program, students should be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

PSPLO1: Breadth

Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.

PSPLO2: Application

Students should be able to apply a variety of techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.

PSPLO3: Disciplinary methods

Student should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, have competence in systematic data gathering using library sources, government documents, and data available through electronic sources, should be able to evaluate research studies, and should be able to critically analyze and interpret influential political texts.

PSPLO4: Communication Skills

Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to apply these skills in the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.

PSPLO5: Citizenship

Students should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of lifelong participation in political processes.

Final letter grades for the course will be assigned based on the following scale:

A = 93-100%	B = 83-87%	C = 73-77%	D = 63-67%
A- = 90-92%	B- = 80-82%	C- = 70-72%	D- = 60-62%
B+ = 88-89%	C+ = 78-79%	D+ = 68-69%	F = 59% or less