

PS 102: Introduction to American Politics

Paper Prompts

Due Date. Essay is due at the **beginning** of lecture on Thursday, May 4th.

Late Papers. Late papers will be penalized severely - an essay handed in late will lose one third of a grade on the first day (e.g., from A- to B+); each additional day will result in another third of a grade. **Pass/Fail:** For those taking the class pass or fail, you must receive a passing grade on this paper to receive a passing grade in the course.

Instructions. After careful reading and consideration, please develop a **5-6 page**, double-spaced, typed paper (1-inch margins; 12-point Times New Roman font) that responds to **one** of the following questions. In developing your answer, please try to frame it as a **persuasive argument**. To do this, you need to take a clear position on the question, and you need to present solid and documented **evidence** to support your position. This is not a research paper. Instead, it asks you to think about and synthesize the materials we have discussed and considered to this point in the course.

There is no need for a lengthy introduction: we encourage you to state your **thesis**, present a **roadmap** for the argument (that is, to describe in a sentence or two how the argument will be developed in the paper), and then proceed with the arguments you wish to make.

Prompt #1: Scholars have long maintained that the U.S. President is relatively weak in the realm of domestic affairs. While empowered by the Constitution to lead on foreign relations, the President possesses few explicit powers to shape domestic policy. Is the **President really so ineffective, or is this an outmoded theory?** Consider the formal and informal powers that the President uses to influence policy. *Be sure to draw on course readings and concrete examples when answering this question.*

Prompt #2: In *Federalist* #78, Hamilton asserts that the Judiciary is the “least dangerous branch” as it has neither the sword nor the purse. What does the Judicial Branch have then? Do you agree with Hamilton’s assessment? Why or why not? *Consider historical examples and Supreme Court cases when making your argument.*