

POLITICAL SCIENCE 3960
AMERICAN PRESIDENCY AND THE 2008 ELECTION
3 CREDIT HOURS
MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS 8:05 – 9:25
FALL SEMESTER 2007
BUC 304

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 9:30 to noon and by appointment

Course Description:

This course is about the American presidency and the upcoming 2008 presidential election. As a special topics class, we will combine a study of the basic institutional structure of the American presidency with the current events surrounding the upcoming presidential election. A significant portion of this class will be spent examining current events combined with an analysis of each presidential candidate.

“I Pray Heaven to bestow the best of blessing on THIS HOUSE, and All that shall hereafter Inhabit it. May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof!

John Adams

(President Franklin D. Roosevelt had this lettered in gold in the marble over the fireplace in the State Dining Room of the White House. The quotation above follows the capitalization used in the inscription.)

“There is a tragic flaw in our precious Constitution, and I don’t know what can be done to fix it. This is it: Only nut cases want to be president.” *Kurt Vonnegut*

“No man will ever bring out of the Presidency the reputation which carries him into it. To myself, personally, it brings nothing but increasing drudgery and daily loss of friends.” *Thomas Jefferson*

“All the president is, is a glorified public relations man who spends his time flattering, kissing, and kicking people to get them to do what they are supposed to do anyway.” *Harry S. Truman*

“The presidency has made every man who occupied it, no matter how small, bigger than he was; and no matter how big, not big enough for its demands.” *Lyndon B. Johnson*

Texts:

Pfiffner, James 2008. *The Modern Presidency*. United States: Thomson Wadsworth.
(Fifth Edition)

Kernell, Samuel 2007. *Going Public*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

(Fourth Edition) This text is on reserve at the library.

Most readings are on electronic reserve at the library. Some of the readings will need to be checked out at the reserve desk because they could not be put on electronic reserve.

The New York Times online. Students are expected to log on to www.nytimes.com each day and browse the articles that pertain to presidential candidates and the 2008 election.

Course Requirements:

1. Three exams:

First Midterm	Monday, September 24th	100 points
Second Midterm	Monday, November 5 th	100 points
Final Exam	Friday, December 14 th 8:00 am	150 points

2. Research paper and class presentation 100 points

Each student will draw the name of a presidential hopeful out of a hat. He/she will then research that candidate and present to the class (and to the instructor in written form) an analysis of that candidate. Specific details will be provided at a later date.

3. Class attendance and participation - 50 points

You are expected to attend class and participate in class discussions. If you are not in class, your absence will be noticed and exams will be very difficult.

Total points possible 500

Your grade will be determined on a percentage basis. For example, if you earn 424 of the 500 points possible, your grade will be 85% or a B.

Course Outline:

All of the listed reading should be completed before coming to class.

Monday, August 20th Introductions

Wednesday, August 22nd Constitutional Foundations of the Presidency

Readings:

The Modern Presidency Chapter 1. "The Presidency: Origins and Powers" and Appendices A, B and C.

On Reserve:

The Presidential Dilemma Chapter 2. "America's Leadership Aversion System."

August 27th and 29th Rating the Presidents--- How We Rate the Presidents and Why We Rate Them as We Do

Readings:

The Modern Presidency Chapter 2. "The President and the Public."

On Reserve:

Schlesinger, Arthur M. Jr. 1997. "Rating the Presidents: Washington to Clinton." *Political Science Quarterly* 112 (2): 179-190.

Bose, Meena and John J. Dilulio Jr. 2007. *Classic Ideas and Current Issues in American Government*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Chapter 10

Shenkman, Richard. 2000. "Is Presidential Character Everything?" *National Forum* (Winter 2000): 17-25.

September 5th Presidential Greatness: Timing versus Character

Readings:

On Reserve:

Barber, James David. 1992. *The Presidential Character*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall. Chapters 1 and 2.

Pfiffner, James P. and Roger H. Davidson. 2007. *Understanding the Presidency*. New York: Pearson Longman. Reading number 11 pages 58-68.

Ellis, Richard J. and Michael Nelson. 2006. *Debating the Presidency*. Washington D.C.: CQ Press. Chapter 11 – "Resolved, Psychological Character is a Powerful Predictor of Presidential Performance."

September 10th and 12th Race and Gender and the Presidency—Is America Ready for a Woman or an African American President?

Readings:

On Reserve:

Watson, Robert P. and Ann Gordon. 2003. *Anticipating Madam President*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. Chapter 1 "Introduction: The White House as Ultimate Prize;" Chapter 2 "Breaking the Final Glass Ceiling: When (Not If) a Woman Becomes President;" Chapter 6 "Can Women Enter the 'Big Tents'?" Chapter 19 "Madam President: Sooner or Later?"

September 17th and 19th Religion and the Presidency

Readings:

On Reserve:

Wills, Garry. 2006. "A Country Ruled by Faith." *The New York Review of Books* 53: (November 16).

Hecl, Hugh. 2007. *Christianity and American Democracy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapter 1 "Christianity and Democracy in America"

September 24th First Midterm

September 26th October 1st and 3rd - Presidents and the Media

Readings:

Going Public Chapter 4 “The President and the Press,” Chapter 5 “The Growth of Going Public” and Chapter 6 “President Reagan and his First Three Budgets: A Classic Case of Going Public in Action”

On Reserve:

Ellis, Richard J. and Michael Nelson 2006. *Debating the Presidency*. Washington D.C.: CQ Press. Chapter 5 “Resolved, the Media Are Too Hard on Presidents”

October 8th and 10th Fall Break

October 15th and 17th Campaign Finance—Where the Money Comes From and How Much it Costs to Become President

Readings:

On Reserve:

Wayne, Stephen J. 2008. *The Road to the White House 2008*. United States: Thomson Wadsworth. Chapter 2 “Campaign Finance”

October 22nd and 24th The Nomination Process

Readings:

Going Public Chapter 3 “How the Politicians Entering Washington Have Changed: Outsiders and Divided Government”

On Reserve:

Ellis, Richard J. and Michael Nelson 2006. *Debating the Presidency*. Washington D.C.: CQ Press. Chapters 2 “Resolved, Political Parties Should Nominate Candidates for the Presidency Through a National Primary” and Chapter 3 “Resolved, The President Should be Elected Directly by the People”

October 29th and 31st The President and Congress

Readings:

The Modern Presidency Chapter 6 “The President and Congress”

November 5th Second Midterm

November 7th The President and War “Why We Fight”

November 12th and 14th Continuation of the President and War

Readings:

The Modern Presidency Chapter 7 “The President and National Security”

On Reserve:

Allison, Graham T. 1971. “Conceptual Models and The Cuban Missile Crisis.”
American Political Science Review 63: 689-718

Ellis, Richard J. and Michael Nelson 2006. *Debating the Presidency*.
Washington D.C.: CQ Press. Chapter 8 “Resolved, Presidents Have Usurped the War
Power That Rightfully Belongs to Congress”

**November 19th and 21st Presidential Abuse of Power – When is Secrecy
Acceptable?**

Readings:

The Modern Presidency Chapter 8

On Reserve:

Ellis, Richard J. and Michael Nelson 2006. *Debating the Presidency*.
Washington D.C.: CQ Press. Chapter 9 “Resolved, A Broad Executive Privilege is
Essential to the Successful Functioning of the Presidency.”

November 26th and 28th The President and his Staff

Readings:

The Modern Presidency Chapter 3 “The White House Staff and Organization”
Chapter 4 “The Institutional Presidency”

December 3rd and 5th The President and his Cabinet

Readings:

The Modern Presidency Chapter 5 “The Cabinet and the Executive Branch”

December 14th 8:00 am Final exam

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.