

Political Science 229
Fall Semester, 2008

Mr. McFarland

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY: CLASS SCHEDULE

This class meets Tuesday and Thursday from 2:00 to 3:15 P.M. The course will be basically a lecture class, but with discussion by students in class. The lectures are keyed to the readings, but will frequently depart from the readings to include interpretations by the professor.

There will be two midterms (75 minute exams), one on October 2 and a second on November 13. There will be a final examination. The midterms will count 30 percent each; the final 40 percent, and class participation will increase the class grade for a few students. The exams will be 80% essay exams, with 20% being short identifications.

The first third of the class will consider presidential elections, how they work and whether the process should be reformed. This part of the class is linked to a standard textbook on the subject, The Road to the White House 2008 by Stephen Wayne. The second part of the class will consider the constitutional background of presidential powers, and will emphasize the President's actions in the situation of constitutional separation of powers. In particular, separation of powers implies that the President must continually consider the actions of Congress in the initiation and passage of public policy and in the implementation of that policy. And maintaining a position of power and public respect in competition with Congress means that the popularity of the President is an important aspect of that office. The second and third parts of the class refer to the short textbook by James P. Pfiffner The Modern Presidency, **fifth** edition (2008).

Separation of powers also involves the condition of the executive branch. To what extent can the President control what is being done in the President's name? How can the President dislodge the entrenched interest coalitions of agencies, congressional committees, and lobbyists who work to control power on their own turf?

Then we consider the President's role in making policy, such as budgets, and in national security policies of foreign affairs and national defense. Finally we look at presidential scandals, such as those leading to impeachment procedures, and the legacy of presidents.

The reading for this class consists of two textbooks, each of which is standard for college classes. They are available at the CCC bookstore with a number of used copies available. Or you can check amazon.com or other book sources.

BOOKS ASSIGNED:

The Road to the White House, 2008: 2008 edition, updated from the 2004 edition;
Stephen J. Wayne, Thomson/Wadsworth.

I am **not** assigning the Wayne's short monograph on the 2008 primary election which you might see assigned for another class.

The Modern Presidency, fifth edition (2008), James P. Pfiffner, Thomson/Wadsworth.
Updated from earlier editions.

SCHEDULE

PART ONE: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

- Aug 26 Introduction. The Electoral College.
 The Road to the White House, Stephen Wayne, 3-26
 The Modern Presidency, James Pfiffner, 9-11, 31-35
- Aug 28 *No class. The instructor must attend the American Political Science
Association
 national convention.*
- Sept 2 The Electoral College. The nomination process, the primaries.
 Wayne 116-172
- Sept 4 The nomination process, the primaries..
 Wayne, 116-172 (finish above reading)
- Sept 9 The nomination process. Campaign funding.
 Wayne, 32-68
- Sept 11 The American Voter.
 Wayne, 75-107.
- Sept 16 The American Voter (continued).
 Pre-convention and convention stage.
 Wayne, 173-206.
- Sept 18 The convention and the general election campaign.
 Wayne, 214-247
- Sept 23 The election campaign and the media.
 Wayne 254-289

Sept 25 Understanding presidential elections
Wayne, 300-336

Sept 30 Reform of the election system?
Wayne, 343-371

Oct 2 MIDTERM EXAMINATION

PART TWO: SEPARATION OF POWERS IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM

Oct 7 The Presidency in the Constitution.
Look up the constitution in The Modern Presidency .

Oct 9 Development of the constitutional powers of the President.

Oct 14 Complete the above.
Start reading Pfiffner, Ch. 3.

Oct 16 Jackson and Lincoln.

Oct 21 The Modern Presidency.
Continue reading Pfiffner, Ch. 3.

Oct 23 The Presidency and the judiciary.
Continue reading Pfiffner, Ch. 3.

Oct 30 The Presidential office.
Pfiffner, Ch. 3 and also Chapter 4.

Nov 4 Presidential decision-making.
Pfiffner, Ch. 4.
November 4 is election day.

Nov 6 Discussion of presidential election on Nov. 4.

Nov 11 The President and the executive branch.
Pfiffner, Ch. 5.

Nov 13 SECOND MIDTERM EXAMINATION

PART THREE: THE PRESIDENT AND POLICY MAKING

Nov 18 Domestic policy-making.

- Start reading Pfiffner, Ch. 6
- Nov 20 Domestic Policy-making (continued).
Pfiffner, Ch. 6.
- Nov 25 The President and Congress.
Pfiffner, Ch. 6.
- Nov. 27 *Thanksgiving Holiday.*
- Dec. 2 The President and the public.
Pfiffner, 45-54.
The President and foreign policy.
Pfiffner, Ch. 7.
- Dec 4 Abuse of power and legacy.
Pfiffner, Chapter 8.
- Dec FINAL EXAMINATION
Time not yet available, 8-8-08.