

Political Science 229
Fall Semester, 2009

Mr. McFarland

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY: CLASS SCHEDULE

This class meets Tuesday and Thursday from 3:30 to 4:45 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 **September 29** and a second on **November 5**. 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 paperback textbook Winning the Presidency, 2008, edited by William Crotty. 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 of Pfiffner available. The Crotty book has just been published. Or you can check amazon.com or other book sources.

BOOKS ASSIGNED:

Winning the Presidency, 2008. William J. Crotty, editor. 2009. Paradigm Publishers.

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

SCHEDULE

PART ONE: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

- Aug 25 Introduction. The Electoral College.
Winning the Presidency, 2008. "Electing Obama," 20-47.
The Modern Presidency, James Pfiffner, 9-11, 31-35
- Aug 27 The Electoral College. The nomination process, the primaries.
"When Democracy Works: The 2008 Presidential Nominations."
Crotty, ed., 40-69.
- Sept 1 The nomination process, the primaries.
"The Nominating Process: Change, More Change, and Continuity."
Crotty, ed. 70-86
- Sept 3 The nomination process. Campaign funding.
"The Invisible Primary Becomes Visible."
Crotty, ed. 87-109.
- Sept 8 The American Voter.
"The Scope of Participation in the 2008 Presidential Race."
Crotty, ed. 110-122.
- Sept 10 The American Voter (continued).

"Clinton and Obama: The Impact of Race and Sex on the 2008 Democratic
Presidential Primaries." Crotty, ed. 135-151

- Sept 15 The convention and the general election campaign.
 “E-Politics and the 2008 Presidential Campaign.”
 Crotty, ed. 135-151.
- Sept 17 The election campaign and the media.
 “Hot and Not-so-Hot Buttons in the 2008 Presidential Election.”
 Crotty, ed. 152-168.
- Sept 22 Understanding presidential elections
 “A Mandate for Change? Decisive Victory in a Time of Crisis.”
 Crotty, ed. 169-184
- Sept 24 Reform of the election system?
 “A Transforming Election: How Barack Obama Changed American Politics.”
 Crotty, e. 185-208.
- Sept 29 **MIDTERM EXAMINATION**

PART TWO: SEPARATION OF POWERS IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM

- Oct 1 The Presidency in the Constitution.
 Look up the constitution in The Modern Presidency .
- Oct 6 Development of the constitutional powers of the President.
- Oct 8 Complete the above.
 Start reading Pfiffner, Ch. 3.
- Oct 13 Jackson and Lincoln.
- Oct 15 The Modern Presidency.
 Continue reading Pfiffner, Ch. 3.
- Oct 20 The Presidency and the judiciary

 Continue reading Pfiffner, Ch. 3.
- Oct 22 The Presidential office.

Pfiffner, Ch. 3 and also Chapter 4.

Oct 27 Presidential decision-making.
Pfiffner, Ch. 4.

Oct 29 The President and the executive branch.
Pfiffner, Ch. 5.

Nov 3 The President and the executive branch.
Pfiffner, Ch. 5.

Nov 5 **SECOND MIDTERM EXAMINATION**

PART THREE: THE PRESIDENT AND POLICY MAKING

Nov 10 Domestic policy-making.
Start reading Pfiffner, Ch. 6

Nov 12 Domestic Policy-making (continued).
Pfiffner, Ch. 6.

Nov 17 The President and Congress.
Pfiffner, Ch. 6.

Nov. 19 The President and the public.
Pfiffner, 45-54.

Nov. 24 The President and foreign policy.
Pfiffner, Ch. 7.

Nov. 26 Thanksgiving holiday.

Dec. 1 Abuse of power and legacy.
Pfiffner, Chapter 8.

Dec. 3 Catch up class.

Dec 11 FINAL EXAMINATION
100-300 P.M. Friday.