

Political Science 229  
Fall Semester, 2010

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 30 and a second on November 9. There will be a final examination. The midterms will count 30 percent each; the final 40 percent, and class participation may increase the class grade for two or three B plus 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, **sixth** edition (2010). This edition is about 1/6 different from the previous fifth edition.

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, or you can check amazon.com or other book sources. The Road to the White House 2008 is available in used form; however, the previous 2004 edition should not be purchased.

## BOOKS ASSIGNED:

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

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

## SCHEDULE

### PART ONE: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

- Aug 24      Introduction. The Electoral College.  
The Road to the White House, Stephen Wayne, 3-26  
The Modern Presidency, James Pfiffner, 8-10; 32-40.
- Aug 26      The Electoral College. The nomination process, the primaries.  
Wayne 116-172
- Aug 31      The nomination process, the primaries..  
Wayne, 116-172 (finish above reading)  
Pfiffner, 19-26
- Sept 2      *No class. The instructor attends the American Political Science Association  
convention in Washington, D.C.*
- Sept 7      The nomination process. Campaign funding.  
Wayne, 32-68
- Sept 9      The American Voter.  
Wayne, 75-107.
- Sept 14     The American Voter (continued).  
Pre-convention and convention stage.  
Wayne, 173-206.
- Sept 16     The convention and the general election campaign.  
Wayne, 214-247; Pfiffner, 26-34
- Sept 21     The election campaign and the media.

Wayne 254-289  
Pfiffner, 41-53

Sept 23 Understanding presidential elections  
Wayne, 300-336

Sept 28 Reform of the election system?  
Wayne, 343-371

Sept 30 MIDTERM EXAMINATION

## PART TWO: SEPARATION OF POWERS IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM

Oct 5 The Presidency in the Constitution.  
Look up the constitution in The Modern Presidency .  
Also, Pfiffner, 6-15.

Oct 7 Development of the constitutional powers of the President.

Oct 12 Complete the above.  
Start reading Pfiffner, Ch. 3.

Oct 14 Jackson and Lincoln.

Oct 19 The Modern Presidency.  
Continue reading Pfiffner, Ch. 3.

Oct 21 The Presidency and the judiciary.  
Continue reading Pfiffner, Ch. 3.

Oct 26 The Presidential office.  
Pfiffner, Ch. 3 and also Chapter 4.

Oct 28 Presidential decision-making.  
Pfiffner, Ch. 4.

Nov 2 The President and the executive branch.  
Pfiffner, Ch. 4  
This is election day.

Nov 4 The President and the executive branch.  
Pfiffner, Ch. 4

Nov 9 SECOND MIDTERM EXAMINATION

### PART THREE: THE PRESIDENT AND POLICY MAKING

- Nov 11 Domestic policy-making.  
Start reading Pfiffner, Ch. 5
- Nov 16 Domestic Policy-making (continued).  
Pfiffner, Ch. 5
- Nov 18 The President and Congress.  
Pfiffner, Ch. 5.
- Nov 23 The President and the public.  
Pfiffner, 45-53.
- Nov. 25 *Thanksgiving Holiday.*
- Nov 30 The President and foreign policy.  
Pfiffner, Ch. 6.
- Dec 2 Abuse of power and legacy.  
Pfiffner, Chapter 7.
- Dec FINAL EXAMINATION  
Will e-mail date, time, and place.