Political Science 4036
The American Presidency
Fall 2008

Professor: Kevin V. Mulcahy
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Note: The use of laptops and cell phones is prohibited during class. The course packet of PowerPoint slides will be e-mailed to students for their convenience. I wish to have your undivided attention and for you to have the uninhibited opportunity for exchanges with your fellow students and myself.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to provide an overview of various theories on the institution of the American presidency. Two major areas relating to the American presidency will be highlighted in this course: Becoming President and Being President. Additionally, specific presidents in the post-New Deal era are discussed. However, this course does not provide a historical survey of the presidents from Washington to Bush. This course emphasizes the presidency as an institution. This course is intended to enable the student to obtain a general understanding of the presidential election process and of the administrative and policymaking processes of the presidency.

Course Texts

Appleby, Joyce
Greenstein, Fred I.
Leuchtenburg, William
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Mulcahy, Kevin V.
Thomas Jefferson (American Presidents Series)
The Presidential Difference
Calvin Coolidge (American Presidents Series)
In the Shadow of FDR: From Harry Truman to George W. Bush
Course Packet: Readings on the American Presidency

Grading


- Two quizzes on the Jefferson & Coolidge biographies - 25pts each
- Two non-cumulative exams (midterm & final) - 100pts each
  o Exams will cover lecture material, textbook readings and videos
- One paper [5,000 words ~ 15 pages] - 150pts
  o To what extent do you believe the presidency has evolved over time? Does this series of developments reflect a change in the Presidents themselves, or in those who elect them? Do you believe the institution will continue to evolve, or has the expansion of its role been circumscribed by the empowering of other agencies [such as the media, Congress, etc.]? It is essential that responses be presented clearly, concisely and with frequent, extensive in-text citations [ex: (Greenstein, 58)]. Citations are to be drawn exclusively from lecture material, videos and (both) texts. What is not desired is a series of facts about Presidents; analysis is necessary.
  Double-spaced; 12pt Times New Roman font; 1" top & bottom - 1.25" side margins

Class Attendance

- Class participation is expected and required. As attendance is the sine qua non of participation, more than two absences will result in a letter-grade reduction of your final course grade.
- Be a good citizen about arriving on time and staying for the entire class.
- Arriving late and/or leaving class early is only allowed in the case of a dire emergency and only after consultation and approval from the instructor.
Course Outline

August 25  Introduction; discussion of syllabus
         Evolution of the Presidency I
         Evolution of the Presidency II

September 01  Labor Day Holiday (No Class)

Part One: Becoming President

A. Nomination Process: Delegates

September 08  Presidential Selection Process I
              Video: Thirteen Days (2hr 27min)

September 15  Presidential Selection Process II
              Presidential Selection Process III
              Presidential Selection Process IV

B. Election Process: Electors

September 22  Quiz 1: Thomas Jefferson
              Presidential Campaigns I
              Presidential Campaigns II

September 29  Electoral College
              President’s Constitutional “Hats”

October 06  Movie: Path to War (2hrs., 44min)

October 13  Midterm Exam
              Documentary: “Vietnam: How We Went to War”

Part Two: Being President

A. Domestic Affairs

October 20  The President and Congress
            Documentary: “The Fog of War” (1hr., 47min.)

October 27  The Cabinet
            The Federal Bureaucracy

November 03  Quiz 2: Herbert Hoover
              The Federal Budget
              The White House Staff

B. Foreign Affairs

November 10  Constitution, The Presidency and Foreign Affairs
              Foreign Policy Departments: State, Defense, and the CIA

November 17  The National Security Council
              Models of Foreign Policy-making

November 24  The Presidency in the Cold War

December 01  Paper due
              The Presidency in the Post-Cold War World

December 08  Final Exam (8:00 - 10:00pm)