Course Objectives

This course is designed to provide an overview of various theories on the institution of the American presidency. It is principally focused on the triune relationship between Domestic Affairs, Foreign Affairs and the Election Process that all successful Presidents must balance carefully. However, this course does not provide a historical survey of the presidents from Washington to Obama; it emphasizes the presidency as an institution.

Course Texts

The Presidential Difference - Greenstein, Fred
Martin Van Buren - Widmer, Ted
Herbert Hoover - Leuchtenburg, William
Calvin Coolidge - Greenburg, David

Grading

A: 400-358 B: 357-318 C: 317-278 D: 277-238 F: 237-000

• Three non-cumulative exams - 100pts each
  o Lecture material, discussion, biographies, textbook chapters and videos

• One Paper [4,500 words ~ 15 pages] - 100pts
  o Compare and contrast the Presidents of the three biographies, evaluating them in terms of relative success. Should each be considered a success or failure, and why? How would you rank their performance? Were you surprised by the biographers' portrayals? 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 biographies, lecture material, and the Greenstein text. What is not desired is a series of facts about the Presidents; analysis is necessary. Double-spaced; 12pt Times New Roman font; 1” top, bottom and side margins; include header page numbers.

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 by 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.
The Domestic Presidency

Jan 19: Introduction; discussion of syllabus
Jan 21: Evolution of the Presidency
Jan 26: Presidential Character & Greatness
Jan 28: President's Constitutional "Hats"

Feb 02: The President and Congress
Feb 04: The Cabinet and Appointments
Feb 09: The Federal Bureaucracy
Feb 11: Budget & Executive Office of the President
Feb 16: Mardi Gras (No Class)
Feb 18: Video: Dwight Eisenhower
Feb 23: Exam 1

The Foreign Policy Presidency

Feb 25: The Constitution and Foreign Affairs
Mar 02: Foreign Policy: State, Defense & CIA
Mar 04: The National Security Council
Mar 09: Models of Foreign Policy-making
Mar 11: Video: Lyndon Johnson
Mar 16: The Presidency in the Cold War
Mar 18: Video: Richard Nixon
Mar 23: The Presidency in the Post-Cold War World
Mar 25: Video: Ronald Reagan
Mar 30: Exam 2

The Selection / Election Process

Apr 01: Presidential Selection Process
Apr 06: Spring Break (No Class)
Apr 08: Spring Break (No Class)
Apr 13: Primaries and Caucuses
Apr 15: Presidential Campaigns
Apr 20: Video: Bill Clinton
Apr 22: Paper Due and discussion
Apr 27: Political Parties
Apr 29: Media in Elections
May 04: Electoral College
May 06: Electoral College Reform

Final Exam: Friday, May 15th 5:30pm - 7:30pm