Course Purpose This course seeks to help you do better the two things citizens must do well if the presidency is to work: choose and judge presidents. It tries to offer useful answers to the question, “Where should I look and what should I look for to better choose and judge?” The concepts and information presented are similar to those found in other presidency courses, but with one important difference. Here they are subordinated to the citizen’s-eye-view of the presidency and tested for relevance to the evaluation of presidential performance and presidential candidate qualifications.

Course Organization The course is organized into the following three parts and associated lecture topics

A. Presidential Precedents How do past presidents (and national experience, and changing circumstances) influence the way an incumbent chief executive performs and is judged?

1. Introduction: Functions and Values
2. The Presidency Defined and Launched: Washington
3. The Presidency Democratized: Jefferson and Jackson
4. Presidential Morality and Power: Polk and Lincoln
5. The Presidency Modernized: TR, Wilson, FDR
7. The Impact of Vietnam and Watergate: Johnson and Nixon
8. Preliminary Appraisals: From Ford to Bush II
9. The Lessons of Presidential History

B. Current Presidential Operations. What is the president's "job description", and how can we tell if the incumbent is performing well?

1. Introduction: The Grounds for Judgment
2. The Campaign for Office
3. The Domestic Policy Arena
4. Confronting Congress
5. Media: The Classic Dilemma
6. The Budget and Economic Policy
7. Foreign Policy
8. Presidential Competence and the Public Interest

C. Evaluating Presidential Candidates. What are the reasons for preferring one presidential candidate to another?

1. Introduction: Five Dimensions of Presidential Leadership
2. Candidate Qualifications
3. Character: Avoiding Troubled Candidates

D. Course Conclusion: The Division of Labor

Student Responsibilities

1. Attendance is required. More than three absences=lower course grade (one-half letter grade reduction for each absence after 3).

2. Make-up exams are for emergencies only, not for scheduling convenience. Eligibility will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Students facing emergencies must notify the instructor or a T.A. before missing an exam unless it is physically impossible.

3. Unexcused absences from any scheduled exam may result in a score of zero for that exam.

Grading Criteria

2 multiple choice mid-term examinations 30% each
1 mixed-mode (multiple choice and essay) final exam, 40%

Required Readings


Other readings on Blackboard (as indicated on weekly schedule)

**Fall, 2011**

**WEEKLY READING AND EXAM SCHEDULE**

Complete readings by date indicated

1. Aug. 30

   - P, 1-31 The Changing Presidency
   - N, xiii-xv User's Guide

2. Sept. 1

   - N, 1-40 Founding Documents
   - P, 461-478 Obama Transition
   - Blackboard: Greenstein, Obama Leadership Style

3. Sept. 8

   - N, 41-79 Addresses, Debates and Doctrines
   - P, 92-134 Public Politics

4. Sept. 15

   - N, 80-118 Jackson to Lincoln
   - N, 118-134 Power Expanded, Debated and Asserted

5. Sept. 22

   - N, 135-173 Investigations, Removals, and FDR
   - N, 174-207 Truman to LBJ

6. Sept. 29
***FIRST MID-TERM THURSDAY Sept. 29***

7. Oct. 6

N, 207-282 Nixon to Clinton

8. Oct. 13

N, 283-314 Bush II
P,36-83 Election Politics
P, 200-237 Legislative Politics

9. Oct. 20

P, 245-288 Executive Politics
P, 298-328 Judicial Politics

10. Oct 27

***SECOND MID-TERM THURSDAY Oct. 27***

11. Nov. 3

P, 334-364 The Politics of Domestic Policy
P, 368-411 The Politics of Economic Policy
Blackboard: Obama House on a Rock Speech

12. Nov. 10

N 314-326, Obama Campaign Speech on Race
Blackboard: Obama West Point Speech
N, 326-339 Obama Health Care Speech

13. Nov. 17
P, 412-446 The Politics of National Security Policy
Blackboard: Obama Nobel Prize Speech

14. Dec. 1. Last 312P class day

P, 146-190 Presidential Character and Performance
Review previous readings for final examination

***FINAL EXAMINATION***

TUESDAY DEC 13
9-12