Syllabus for the American Presidency

INSTRUCTOR: Dukhong Kim

CONTACT INFORMATION:
Scott Hall
Political Science Department
Northwestern University
601 Library Place
Evanston, IL 60208
Email: dhkim@northwestern.edu

DEPARTMENT-COURSE # - SECTION #: Political Science 320, Section 66

COURSE TITLE: The American Presidency

EVENING: Wednesday QUARTER/YEAR: Spring 2007

TIME: 6:15-9:15 pm CAMPUS: Chicago

OFFICE HOURS: by appointment

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF COURSE CONTENT AND PREREQUISITES:

This course studies the origin and evolution of the American presidency. We will examine different perspectives of understanding presidential leadership. With these perspectives we will be able to pursue the questions of what makes good presidents and how we define successful presidents. We also deal with the issue of the nomination and election of presidents; the way the presidential office works and is organized; and presidential governance in relation to the public, the mass media, Congress, other executive branches, and the Judiciary. Lastly, we will look at how presidents engage and exert power in making domestic, economic, and foreign policies.

Pre-requisite: American government and politics (Pol220) or permission of the instructor

TEACHING METHODS: Lecture and Discussion.

METHOD OF EVALUATION: Grades will be based on a midterm examination (30%), a final examination (45%), and class participation (25%). The exams will consist of essays and identification questions, and a full class hour will be allotted for each of the exams. Each student is required to make a presentation of a topic of their choosing, and will receive a discussion grade based on the presentation, engagement with the readings and with the ideas of other students.

Discussion and Presentation: I believe in the exchange of ideas, discussions, and debates as important tools for learning about the American Presidency. Thus, it is important to engage in constructive debates in the class as well as to make good comments on the subjects and issues. It is
necessary to read the text and the other books in advance to prepare for and participate in the discussions. Each student (or a group of students) will have at least one chance to present topics that they choose for themselves. The format of the presentations is informal.

Grading standard: Letter grades will be assigned according to the following scoring scheme.

A range: 90-100%
B range: 80-89%
C range: 70-79%
D range: 60-69%
F range: below 60%

A - outstanding work, showing creativity, knowledge of the readings, and engagement with the subject matter.

B - very good work, demonstrating a command of the material presented and the ability to interact with it and with the class in a knowledgeable way.

C - good work, exhibiting the completion of the readings and all required assignments.

D - marginal work, with late assignments, assignments inadequately completed, and little class participation.

F - poor work, assignments not turned in or consistently turned in late without adequate explanation, lack of participation in class discussions.

Note: If an emergency arises during the quarter that makes fulfillment of class requirements difficult, please discuss the situation with me as early as possible, so we can discuss how to resolve the problem and maintain your good standing.

Academic honesty: Students should follow Northwestern University regulations regarding academic integrity which are laid out in the Student Handbook. Students are strongly advised to read and familiarize themselves with these regulations. If students violate standards of academic honesty -i.e., by cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, or academic interference, they will get a failing grade for the class and may face expulsion from the University.

REQUIRED READINGS:


Other articles and book chapters will be available through Blackboard, a class website.

RECOMMENDED:

This reading schedule is subject to change depending on the progress of the class.

Reading Schedule

March 28. Introduction and organization

April 4: Origins and Evolution

    Edwards and Wayne ch.1
    Rudalevige, ch 1 and 2
    The Federalist Papers #47 and #70:
    The Constitution of the United States, Article II

PERSPECTIVES ON THE PRESIDENCY

April 11: Perspectives on the presidency

    Neustadt's “Power to Persuade” : a copy will be provided.

    Historical approach:
    Skowronek's "Presidential Leadership in Political Time" in Michael Nelson.

    Psychological approach:

April 18: Electing presidents – Nomination and Elections

    Edwards III and Wayne ch 2-3

Video:

April 25: The President, Public Opinion, and the Mass Media
   Edwards III and Wayne ch. 4 and 5.

May 2: Midterm

May 9: The President's Office / Bureaucracy
   Edwards and Wayne ch. 6, 7 and 9
   Lewis, David E., “Presidents and the Bureaucracy” in Nelson
   Reference: Hess’s entire book

THE PRESIDENCY AND GOVERNANCE

May 16: The President and Congress
   Edwards and Wayne ch. 10
   Dickinson, Mathew J., "The President and Congress," in Nelson,
   Video:
   Rudalvege, ch 3 and 4

May 23: Presidential Policy Making - Economic and Domestic Policies
   Edwards and Wayne ch. 12-13
   Rudalvege, ch 5

May 30: The President and Foreign Policy
   Edwards and Wayne ch. 14 and 15
   Rudalvege, ch 6 and 7
   Woodward: the entire book

June 6: Final