In this course we will examine the American presidential election process in historical perspective. Is there a pattern to how American political elections and American politics more generally develops over time? How do recent contests compare to past elections? Are we in the midst of the inevitable decline of the New Right political regime that began with Ronald Reagan? If so, what can the past election teach us and what can we predict about what is coming next? Through readings and discussions we will examine both the past and current state of affairs of the American presidential election process and American politics more generally and ask whether our form of government, including the presidential election process, is in need of reform.

We will Cover These Topics in This Order

Module 01 – Politics Presidents Make, Ch.1-2.
Module 02 – Politics Presidents Make, Ch.3.
Module 03 – Politics Presidents Make, Ch.4 – Parts One & Two.
Module 04 – Politics Presidents Make, Ch.4 – Part Three & Ch.5 – Part One.
Module 05 – Politics Presidents Make, Ch.5 – Part Two & Part Three.
Module 06 – Politics Presidents Make, Ch.6 – Part One.
Module 07 – Politics Presidents Make, Ch.6 – Part Two & Part Three.
Module 08 – Politics Presidents Make, Ch.7 – Part One & Part Two.
Module 09 – Politics Presidents Make, Ch.7 – Part Three & Ch.8

The Midterm Exam will cover Modules 01-09.
Module 10 – Politics Presidents Make, Afterword; Presidential Leadership in Political Time, Ch.3
Module 11 – Presidential Leadership in Political Time, Ch.4-5
Module 12 – Presidential Leadership in Political Time, Ch.6
Module 13 – Presidential Leadership in Political Time, Ch.1
Module 14 – Presidential Leadership in Political Time, Ch.2 (p. 27-61)
Module 15 – Presidential Leadership in Political Time, Ch.2 (p. 61-78)

The Final Exam will cover Modules 10-16.

Required Books


"When the old order loses political purchase, the attractions of the loner-as-leader shine brightly. But such presidents have never been able to reorder national affairs. Once in office, they appear incompetent and in over their heads. Their disruptions characteristically drive the implosion. Reconstruction follows, but under other auspices.”
- Stephen Skowronek, 2017
On-Line Participation
You are required to go to the discussion board on Blackboard and for each module post one (and not more than two) messages (roughly 3-4 sentences) about the relevant course material or anything that relates to the course. You can either start your own thread or respond to a post that has already been made either by the instructor or another student. You should also read the posts that the other students in the class make.

Your participation grade will be posted at the end of the course and is based on making at least one quality post in each of the different modules. Thus, making one quality post in each forum will earn you a perfect score for participation. You must complete all of your posts by the end of the semester by the date and time posted on the syllabus.

Mid-Term & Final Exams
The exams are on-line, objective tests consisting of both true-false and multiple choice questions. Once you begin an exam, you will have 30 minutes to answer 25 questions. Each question is worth 4 points each for a total of 100 points. The mid-term will cover all of the material listed on the syllabus up until the mid-term exam point listed on the syllabus. The final exam is the same format as the midterm but will only include the course material covered AFTER the midterm exam. The exams will be available on Blackboard throughout the semester. You may take them at any time but you must complete them before the end of the course on the date specified on the syllabus. The exams cannot be made up under any circumstances. If you wait until the last day or so of the course to take them, you are taking an awful gamble that something will go wrong (you get sick, have a personal or technical issue, etc.). Thus, I strongly recommend that you complete the exam and all of the coursework in advance of the due dates.

Paper
You are required to write a term paper which is due at the end of the course on the date specified on the syllabus. Choose one presidential campaign of an American president and explain why they won or lost. For example, you might choose to discuss Ronald Reagan’s failed presidential campaign of 1976 or his successful 1984 campaign.

Your paper should be structured in the following way:

- Introduction – In 1-2 paragraphs explain why the candidate won or lost. State your argument and briefly explain your reasons/evidence. Tell the reader what your paper will show.
- Relationship to the Political Regime – This will comprise the body of your paper. Explain how the candidate’s presidential run fits into the typology of presidential leadership: reconstructive, articulative, disjunctive, or preemptive. For example, Reagan’s 1976 campaign was preemptive but his 1984 campaign was reconstructive. Give examples from the candidacy or campaign (nomination and/or general election phase) that illustrate your argument. Consider such factors, where appropriate, as opponents, fundraising, staff, advertising, issues, debates, primaries won/lost, delegate counts at the convention, and convention speech, among other things. Include electoral and popular vote totals.
- Conclusion – What have we learned from this candidate’s campaign? What could the candidate have done differently in order to win or what was key to their victory? How important was timing (when they ran) for their success or failure?
- Bibliography – Be sure to include a list of all material cited in your paper, with proper citation format as discussed below.

Your paper must be uploaded to SafeAssign and adhere to the following requirements:

The paper must be 5-6pp., typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font with one-inch margins all around and contain at least four different scholarly/academic sources such as books or articles that relate to your topic. They must be discussed and cited in your paper and also listed in your bibliography at the end. You may use either within-text cites or endnotes (but not footnotes). Your paper must include a works cited/references/bibliography at the end of your essay. You must use an accepted bibliographic style that includes the following for books: author(s), title, publisher, year; for journals: author(s), title of article, title of journal, volume, year, pages; for newspapers/magazines/internet articles: author(s), title of article, title of source, date, web address.

While you may use any source, in order to earn an “A” on the paper at least four sources must be scholarly books from university presses or lengthy articles (roughly a dozen pages or more) in academic journals that contain original data and/or arguments. Note: JSTOR is NOT a source – it is a database that helps you locate potential sources. Papers that rely only on popular sources such as newspaper articles, magazines, Wikipedia, or other websites and contain no scholarly sources can only earn a “D” at best and will likely earn you an “F.” Any of these sources may be used in addition to the required scholarly sources. Also, required course material such as lectures and readings do NOT count as a source toward this requirement, but you may and should use them where appropriate.

Due Dates! No Late Work Allowed.
- All discussion board posts must be completed by Wed Dec 5th Noon.
- Term paper must be uploaded to SafeAssign on Blackboard by Wed Dec 5th Noon.
- Both exams must be completed by Wed Dec 5th Noon.

The Cheating & Plagiarism - PLAGIARISM, SIMPLY DEFINED, IS TAKING SOMEONE ELSE'S WORDS OR IDEAS AND REPRESENTING THEM AS BEING YOUR OWN. It is specifically prohibited by University regulations, which state: “Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Students are considered to have cheated if they copy the work of another during an examination or turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Students are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them. Students guilty of, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university” (Undergraduate Catalog).

Furthermore, pleading carelessness or ignorance is no excuse.

Statement Concerning Students with Disabilities - Northern Illinois University is committed to providing an accessible educational environment in collaboration with the Disability Resource Center. Any student requiring an academic accommodation due to a disability should let his or her faculty member know as soon as possible. Students who need academic accommodations based on the impact of a disability will be encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center if they have not done so already. The Disability Resource Center is located in the 4th floor of the Health Services Building, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 [v], 815-753-3000 [TTY] or email at drc@niu.edu.