

Graduate School of American Studies
Doshisha University
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THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 2004 (2 units)

The importance of the office of President of the United States is beyond dispute. At the present moment in history, the U.S.A. is evidently the most powerful nation in the world, whether that power is measured in economic, political, cultural, or military terms. At the head of that nation is the President, who is both head of state (similar to Japan's Emperor) and head of government (like Japan's Prime Minister). The presidency of George W. Bush has amply demonstrated that it matters who wins in presidential elections. In both domestic and foreign affairs, few doubt that a President Al Gore would have charted a significantly different course than has actually been pursued. Should President Bush be reelected in 2004, he will consolidate his changes in policy, and persist in his efforts to dismantle the policies adopted during the Clinton years. Conversely, should Bush be defeated by a Democrat, U.S. policy in both the foreign and domestic realms may change markedly.

Thus, in this course we undertake a close examination of the key features of the presidential election of 2004. We will examine how the parties choose their presidential nominees, how those nominees plan and organize their campaigns, and the factors that determine the final outcome in the November general election. We will also seek to place these issues in a larger historical context, examining how the process of presidential selection has changed over the course of American history. Students can expect to gain a much better understanding of the dynamics of U.S. presidential elections in general, and of the 2004 election in particular.

Course Requirements: All students must keep up with the assigned readings, attend all class meetings, and complete two paper assignments (each of which will be between 7 and 10 pages in length). Instructions on how to complete these assignments will be provided as the course proceeds, and may be altered depending on student interest and performance. Participation in class discussion will also have a positive impact on the final evaluation. The final grade will be calculated in the following way: 40% for each paper, and 20% for classroom participation.

The core reading will be selections from the textbook by Stephen Wayne, but in addition we will read selected classic essays and articles written by professors for a scholarly audience. These selections will be distributed in class or made available for you to copy. Students will be required on a regular basis to write brief outlines and make verbal presentations to the class on parts of the assigned readings.

Textbook: Stephen J. Wayne, The Road to the White House 2004: The Politics of Presidential Elections (Wadhouse 2004).

Although a copy of the book will be on reserve in the GSAS library, students are encouraged to purchase the textbook via <http://www.bookfinder.com> if they have sufficient financial resources. If you purchase a used copy, be sure to get the right edition.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction

Course content, procedures and requirements; discussion of presidential politics.

Weeks 2, 3, and 4: A Historical Overview of Presidential Selection

Read: Chapter 1

Week 5: The Campaign Finance Mess

Read: Chapter 2

Week 6: Voting in Presidential Elections

Read: Chapter 3

Weeks 7 and 8: Selecting Delegates to the National Conventions

Read: Chapter 4

Week 9: Heading Toward the Convention

Read: Chapter 5

Week 10: Campaign Organization, Strategy and Tactics

Read: Chapter 6

Week 11: Playing the Media Game

Read: Chapter 7

Week 12: Can We Predict Presidential Elections?

Read: Chapter 8

Week 13: Reforming the Electoral System

Read: Chapter 9