

2016 Honors Modern US History Summer Readings

ARTICLE I. The following text from USA.gov at <https://www.usa.gov/election>

Overview of the Presidential Election Process

An election for President of the United States occurs every four years on Election Day, held the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. The 2016 Presidential election will be held on November 8, 2016.

The election process begins with the primary elections and caucuses and moves to nominating conventions, during which political parties each select a nominee to unite behind. The nominee also announces a Vice Presidential running mate at this time. The candidates then campaign across the country to explain their views and plans to voters and participate in debates with candidates from other parties.

During the general election, Americans head to the polls to cast their vote for President. But the tally of those votes—the popular vote—does not determine the winner. Instead, Presidential elections use the Electoral College. To win the election, a candidate must receive a majority of electoral votes. In the event no candidate receives the majority, the House of Representatives chooses the President and the Senate chooses the Vice President.

The Presidential election process follows a typical cycle:

- Spring of the year before an election – Candidates announce their intentions to run.
- Summer of the year before an election through spring of the election year – Primary and caucus debates take place.
- January to June of election year – States and parties hold primaries and caucuses.
- July to early September – Parties hold nominating conventions to choose their candidates.
- September and October – Candidates participate in Presidential debates.
- Early November – Election Day
- December – Electors cast their votes in the Electoral College.
- Early January of the next calendar year – Congress counts the electoral votes.
- January 20 – Inauguration Day

U.S. Constitutional Requirements for Presidential Candidates

The President must:

- Be a natural-born citizen of the United States
- Be at least 35 years old
- Have been a resident of the United States for 14 years

Any person who meets these requirements can declare his or her candidacy for President at any time. Candidates must register with the Federal Election Commission (FEC) once they receive contributions or make expenditures in excess of \$5,000. Within 15 days of reaching that \$5,000 threshold, candidates must file a Statement of Candidacy with the FEC authorizing a principal campaign committee to raise and spend funds on their behalf.

Presidential Primaries and Caucuses

Before the general election, most candidates for President go through a series of state primaries and caucuses. Though primaries and caucuses are run differently, they both serve the same purpose—to allow the states to help choose the political parties' nominees for the general election.

- State primaries are run by state and local governments. Voting occurs through secret ballot.
- Caucuses are private meetings run by political parties. In most, participants divide themselves into groups according to the candidate they support, with undecided voters forming into a group of their own. Each group then gives speeches supporting its candidate and tries to persuade others to join its group. At the end of the caucus, party organizers count the voters in each candidate's group and calculate how many delegates each candidate has won.
- Both primaries and caucuses can be conducted as “open,” “closed,” or some hybrid of the two.
 - During an open primary or caucus, people can vote for a candidate of any political party.
 - During a closed primary or caucus, participants must be registered with a political party to vote for one of its candidates.
 - “Semi-open” and “semi-closed” primaries and caucuses are variations of the two main types.

Awarding Delegates

At stake in each primary or caucus is a certain number of delegates, or individuals who represent their states at national party conventions. The candidate who receives a majority of his or her party’s delegates wins the nomination.

The parties have different numbers of total delegates due to the complex rules involved in awarding them. The requirements combine national and state political party rules and practices with aspects of federal and state election laws.

- In 2016, a Democratic candidate must receive 2,383 of the estimated 4,765 delegates to become the party’s nominee. Democratic candidates must win at least 15 percent of the votes earned in a primary or caucus to receive any “pledged” delegates. Candidates generally receive pledged delegates on a proportional basis.
- The 2016 Republican candidate must receive 1,237 of the estimated 2,472 delegates to win the party’s nomination. Depending on the state, delegates may be awarded proportionally, on a winner-take-all basis, or using a hybrid system. The percentage of primary or caucus votes a candidate must win to receive delegates varies from state to state.

Each party also has some unpledged delegates, or superdelegates. These delegates are not bound to a specific candidate heading into the national convention. When the primaries and caucuses are over, most political parties hold a national convention during which the winning candidate receives a nomination. For information about your state's Presidential primary or caucuses, contact your state election office or the political party of your choice.

National Conventions

After the primaries and caucuses, most political parties hold national conventions to finalize their choice for their Presidential and Vice Presidential nominees.

2016 National Convention Dates and Locations

- The Constitution Party Convention will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah, beginning April 13.
- The Libertarian National Convention will be held in Orlando, Florida, beginning May 26.
- The Republican National Convention will be held in Cleveland starting on July 18.
- The Democratic National Convention will be held in Philadelphia beginning July 25.
- The Green Party Convention will be held in Houston, Texas beginning August 6.

The national conventions typically confirm the candidate who has already won the required number of delegates through the primaries and caucuses. However, if no candidate has received the majority of a party's delegates, the convention becomes the stage for choosing that party's Presidential nominee.

Delegates: Types and Numbers Required

Some parties require a specific number of delegates a candidate needs to win his or her party's nomination in 2016. These include:

- 2,383 of 4,765 delegates for the Democratic party
- 1,237 of 2,472 delegates for the Republican party

There are two main types of delegates:

- Pledged, or bound, delegates, who are required to support the candidate to whom they were awarded through the primary or caucus process
- Unpledged, or unbound delegates, or superdelegates, who are free to support any Presidential candidate of their choosing

Brokered and Contested Conventions

If no nominee has a party's majority of delegates going into its convention, then the delegates pick their Presidential candidate in a brokered or contested convention. Pledged delegates usually have to vote for the candidate they were awarded to in the first round of voting, while unpledged delegates don't. Pledged delegates may be allowed to choose any candidate in subsequent rounds of voting. Balloting continues until one nominee receives the required majority to win.

General Election Campaigning

General election campaigning begins after a single nominee is chosen from each political party, via primaries, caucuses, and national conventions. These candidates travel the country, explaining their views and plans to the general population and trying to win the support of potential voters. Rallies, debates, and advertising are a big part of general election campaigning.

Electoral College

When you cast your vote for President, you are actually voting for a group of people known as electors. They are part of the Electoral College, the process used to elect the U.S. President and Vice President. The Electoral College serves as a compromise between election of the President by a vote in Congress and election of the President by a popular vote of qualified citizens. The process begins when political parties select the people who will serve as electors. The electors meet to vote for President and Vice President, and then Congress counts the electoral votes.

Number of Electors

There are a total of 538 electors. A candidate needs the vote of more than half (270) to win the Presidential election.

- Each state's number of electors is equal to the number of its U.S. Senators plus the number of its U.S. Representatives. Washington D.C. is given a number of electors equal to the number held by the smallest state. View the division of electors on a map of the U.S.

- In 48 states, when a candidate receives the majority of votes, he or she receives all of the state's electoral votes.
- Maine and Nebraska are the only two states that use the congressional district method.
 - For example: Nebraska has five electoral votes (one for each of the three congressional districts plus two for the state's senate seats). The winner of each district is awarded one electoral vote, and the winner of the statewide vote is then awarded the state's remaining two electoral votes.
- U.S. territories are not represented in the Electoral College.

It is possible for a candidate to receive the majority of the popular vote, but not of the electoral vote, and lose the Presidential election.

- For example: If the United States had only three states each with a population of 100, each state would have three electoral votes (2 Senators plus one House of Representatives member) so a candidate would need 5 electoral votes to win the election.
 - Candidate 1 wins the first two states by receiving 51 votes per state and loses the third state by receiving just one vote. This gives them a total of 103 popular votes from all three states (51 + 51 + 1). And this translates into a total of six electoral votes--three each from the states the candidate won and none from the state the candidate lost.
 - Candidate 2 loses the first two states by receiving 49 votes per state and wins the third state by receiving 99 votes. This gives them a total of 197 popular votes from all three states (49 + 49 + 99). And this translates into a total of three electoral votes--none from the two states the candidate lost and three from the state the candidate won. Because electoral votes are what count in the end, even though Candidate 2 won the popular vote, they lost the electoral vote and therefore lose the election.

How to Change the Electoral College

Because the Electoral College process is part of the U.S. Constitution, it would be necessary to pass a Constitutional amendment to change this system. For more information, contact your U.S. Senator or your U.S. Representative.

Brokered Conventions

A **brokered convention** occurs when a party's nominee is not selected by a majority in the first round of delegate voting at the party's nominating convention.^[1] Most delegates are then permitted to vote for whichever candidate they choose, allowing for input from party leadership and political maneuvering. Additional votes are taken until a majority is reached. For this reason, brokered conventions are also known as **multiple ballot** or **multi-ballot conventions**.

The term brokered convention is sometimes used interchangeably with **contested convention**. The latter refers to a nominating convention that opens without one candidate having captured a majority of delegates. A contested convention may be resolved on the first ballot once uncommitted delegates are factored in.

History of multi-ballot and contested conventions

When delegates were selected by local party leadership, rather than by the outcome of state primaries and caucuses, brokered conventions were a regular feature of the political process. For example, the Republican Party went through 36 ballots before it selected James A. Garfield as its nominee in 1880. The longest brokered convention occurred in 1924, when Democrats took 16 days and 103 ballots to nominate diplomat John W. Davis.

As technology enabled easier communication between politicians and party insiders and the rules of delegate allocation changed (in the 1960s), the importance of the brokered convention dwindled. The last brokered convention occurred in 1952 when Democrats nominated Adlai Stevenson after three ballots. Four years earlier, the Republican Party nominated Thomas Dewey in its final brokered convention.

National conventions became, primarily, a ceremonial event since it was possible for a candidate to secure a majority of delegates through primaries and pledged superdelegates prior to the event. Nevertheless, the possibility of a brokered convention is still regularly invoked in close primary contests.

The 1976 Republican National Convention came close when it opened as a contested convention. President Gerald Ford was able to secure enough support from uncommitted delegates, however, to earn the nomination over Ronald Reagan on the first ballot.

When there was only a 10 percent difference in the delegate count between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton in 2008 after 22 primaries and caucuses, rumors of a potential brokered convention grew. Clinton ultimately did not concede the race until June 7, 2008, after the final primaries had occurred and Obama had secured a majority of delegates.

ARTICLE II. <http://www.authentichistory.com/1865-1897/4-1896election/>

The Election of 1896: William McKinley (R) v. William Jennings Bryan (D)

The election of 1896 is seen as the beginning of a new era in American politics, or a "realignment" election. Ever since the election of 1800, American presidential contests had, on some level, been a referendum on whether the country should be governed by agrarian interests (rural indebted farmers--the countryside--"main street") or industrial interests (business--the city--"wall street"). This was the last election in which a candidate tried to win the White House with mostly agrarian votes.

Although there were several important issues in the 1896 election, the nominating process was dominated by the fallout of the country's monetary policy, an issue that had been at the forefront of American politics for decades, but had come to a head during Grover Cleveland's second administration. The economic depression of 1893 and the Democratic Party's response to the crisis had resulted in major Republican gains in the House in the 1894 midterms, as well as heightened prospects for 1896. Cleveland had achieved his goals, but in doing so had also split the Democratic Party over fiscal policy. Some Democrats agreed with Cleveland's support of the gold standard. These conservative Democrats became known as "gold bugs". More rural, populist Democrats believed that inflation was the key to raising prices and easing the debt of the farmers. They advocated "free silver"--the unlimited coinage of silver at a ratio of 16 to 1 against gold coins. These populist "silverites" had made significant gains within the Democratic Party in the 1894 midterm elections, despite overall party losses. 1894 would turn out to be the peak of the populist influence, though that would only become clear in retrospect. In the presidential election year of 1896, the split set up a fascinating political election season.

The Democratic Campaign

Throughout the history of the United States, it had been tradition that presidential candidates did not actively campaign for their election. Some had made brief speaking engagements, but it was considered undignified for a candidate to actively campaign on his own behalf. Instead, party loyalists made the pilgrimage to the candidate's house, where they camped out on the front lawn, hoping for a glimpse of the candidate. Usually the candidate would give a mid-afternoon speech from his front porch, giving name to the "front porch campaign." This tradition had begun to erode prior to 1896. James Blaine had spent six weeks campaigning. William Jennings Bryan became the first presidential candidate to spend nearly the

entire campaign season on the campaign trail. He did so largely out of necessity, being outspent and out-organized by the Republicans. But Bryan was an impressive and effective speaker. By taking his message directly to the people in an age that still considered political speeches high entertainment, Bryan was able to personify the free silver cause with enormous energy, and keep the campaign focused on the monetary issue, rather than on the tariff, which Mark Hanna had assumed would be the main issue. Bryan traveled to twenty-seven states, but focused largely on the midwest, where he believed the deciding battleground to be. He traveled, by his own account, 17,909 miles and made nearly 600 speeches. Bryan even traveled through Michigan's Upper Peninsula in his four-day swing through the state from October 14-17. On the 15th, Bryan gave speeches to his largest crowds in Traverse City, Big Rapids, and Grand Rapids (3 speeches), but that was nothing compared to what he accomplished the next day. In his book *The First Battle* (1896), Bryan writes: Friday was one of the long days. In order

that the reader may know how much work can be crowded into one campaign day, I will mention the places at which speeches were made between breakfast and bedtime: Muskegon, Holland, Fennville, Bangor, Hartford, Watervliet, Benton Harbor, Niles, Dowagiac, Decatur, Lawrence, Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, Marshall, Albion, Jackson (two speeches), Leslie, Mason, and Lansing (six speeches); total for the day, 25. It was near midnight when the last one was finished.

Bryan did touch on other planks from the Democratic platform, but it was the free coinage of silver that he pushed most. Bryan argued that agriculture was the backbone of society, that it was absolutely essential for it to be healthy in order for the industrial centers of the country to also prosper. The Democrats wanted the inflation that would result from the silver standard. They believed higher inflation would make it easier for farmers and other debtors to pay off their debts by increasing their revenue dollars. It would also reverse the deflation which the U.S. experienced from 1873-1896, a period historians now refer to as the Long Depression (it was called The Great Depression until 1929). Bryan also argued that free silver would provide more money for industrial expansion and job creation. At its core, the free silver agenda was an argument to redistribute wealth and power from the few to the many. Along the way, Bryan also sought the votes of the average working man. He condemned court-ordered injunctions against strikers, like the one employed by President Cleveland against the Pullman strikers, and he endorsed a progressive federal income tax. Unfortunately for Bryan, however, both of these positions were at odds with Supreme Court decisions handed down the previous session.

By October, newspapers that supported Bryan began to change tactics. They began to focus on the man they saw as holding McKinley's puppet strings--Mark Hanna. For weeks, editorial cartoons savaged Hanna as a bloated plutocrat who had McKinley completely under his thumb.

The Republican Campaign

By contrast, William McKinley conducted a traditional "front porch campaign," receiving visitors at his home in Canton, Ohio. Behind the scenes, however, the Mark Hanna machine went into high gear. By charging the Democratic Party as supporting both Populist and Socialist agendas, such as government ownership of communication and transportation businesses, Hanna effectively frightened American businessmen into donating \$3.5 million dollars to the campaign, five times more than Bryan raised. Hanna pumped the money into an effective propaganda machine. Evoking the attitudes of the time toward gimmicky quack medicine, Theodore Roosevelt said of Hanna's efforts, "He has advertised McKinley as if he were a patent medicine!" Hanna also engineered a masterful response to Bryan's Cross of Gold Speech. The Republicans combined the bimetallism issue with the tariff question and promised a return to prosperity, social order, and morality. They argued that inflation caused by free coinage of silver would create a "53-cent dollar" that would rob the workingman of his buying power. They also argued that uncontrollable inflation would put a burden on creditors, such as banks, whose loans' interest rates would then fall lower than the inflation rate and garner a loss for the creditor. Hanna also sent nearly 1500 speakers on the campaign trail to attack Bryan, most notably Theodore Roosevelt, who denounced Bryan as a dangerous radical. Hanna flooded the country with an estimated 250 million pieces of campaign literature (published in various languages) so that at times each American home was receiving pro-McKinley material on a weekly basis. The culmination of the campaign was a decree, issued by Hanna, that November 2 would be designated Flag Day for Republicans, who were expected to "assemble in the cities, villages, and hamlets nearest their homes and show their patriotism, devotion to country and the flag, and their intention to support the party which stands for protection, sound money, and good government." [New York Times, October 27, 1896, page 2]. The suggestion was that McKinley was only true choice for patriotic Americans.

The Decision

On November 3, 1896, 14 million Americans voted. McKinley won with 276 electoral votes to Bryan's 176, and by a popular vote margin of 51% to Bryan's 47%. Bryan did well in the South and the West, but lacked appeal with unmortgaged farmers and especially the eastern urban laborer, who saw no personal interest in higher inflation. Hanna's "McKinley and the Full Dinner Pail" slogan had been more convincing. McKinley won in part by successfully forging a new coalition with business, professionals, skilled factory workers and prosperous (unmortgaged) farmers. By repudiating the pro-business wing of their party, the Democrats had set the stage for 16 consecutive years of Republican control of the White House, interrupted only in 1912 when a split in the Republican Party aided the election of Woodrow

Wilson.

Once in office, McKinley followed through on his proposed economic policy, carefully moving the country toward the gold standard while establishing a protective trade policy. By 1898, renewed economic prosperity would be threatened by the greatest foreign policy crisis since the War of 1812, a war with Spain.

ARTICLE III. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/why-the-2016-election-is-different-1451412444>

Why the 2016 Election Is Different

By **GERALD F. SEIB**

Dec. 29, 2015 1:07 p.m. ET

The much anticipated start of election year 2016 is at hand, and here is the best way to think about the wild ride ahead: Forget just about everything you thought you knew about presidential elections, because this one is different.

That certainly is a lesson political pros, prognosticators and journalists have already absorbed.

This election was always bound to be more wild and woolly than normal, for it is unusual to have neither an incumbent president nor an incumbent vice president running.

But that only begins to explain the unpredictability of 2016 politics. For starters, the presidential campaign is being conducted against an unprecedented backdrop of disdain for the political establishment and the status quo in Washington. In a December Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll, for example, just 16% expressed either a great deal or quite a bit of confidence in the federal government.

Confidence in large corporations, the news media and the financial industry is even lower. So faith in institutions is down, anger at the establishment is up and openness to unconventional alternatives is high.

Republican Presidential Primary Polls in Historical Perspective

Into that vortex have stepped Donald Trump, Ben Carson and Sen. Bernie Sanders, presidential candidates who almost certainly would have been marginal figures in past cycles, but who have become big players in this one. Experience in government isn't a big asset; it may even be a liability, a prospect that will test Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton and already has severely tested former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush.

The political landscape has changed in other ways as well. Here are some of them:

- The two parties are different. The Republican Party is less dominated by big-business interests and more populated by middle-class and blue-collar white voters drawn to the GOP by cultural conservatism on issues such as gay marriage, and anger at programs such as the Affordable Care Act, all of which is pushing the party to the right. They make Republicans as a whole less in favor of, for example, such traditional GOP staples as free trade or more-open immigration.

Democrats, meantime, are increasingly diverse, as younger voters of different racial backgrounds fill a growing share of the party's ranks. Their views are pushing the party to the left on issues such as global warming.

In both parties, candidate attitudes on such fronts matter more than specific policy proposals, at least in the early stages of the campaign.

- Money may matter less than we thought. The accepted wisdom headed into the 2016 cycle was that the combination of wide-open races and looser campaign-finance laws would make the race more expensive than ever—and that, by extension, whoever had the most money would have a big advantage.

Not so. The most well-heeled Republican candidate, Mr. Bush, has slowly but surely faded. Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, backed by a well-stocked super PAC—one of the unregulated campaign organizations sucking up big donations—was gone before the first frost. Money is nice, but it isn't nearly enough.

- A new set of states will be important. The primary calendar is different this year, and the difference matters. A handful of Southern states have moved up in the primary calendar to March 1, giving the early race a Dixieland feel, and states such as Texas have grown in importance. That will set up a giant big-state quartet in Florida, Illinois, Missouri and Ohio on March 15.

One thing that hasn't changed: By the time the general election rolls around, the actual battlefield will shrink to just a dozen states or so. But in them, the battle will be epic, because many of those swing states—Ohio, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Colorado, Nevada, Wisconsin—also are home to highly competitive Senate races that will help determine control of Congress.

By the fall those states will be, as Mr. Trump would say, huge.

The Wall Street Journal <http://www.wsj.com/articles/why-the-2016-election-is-different-1451412444>