An Imperial, Energetic, or Impossible Presidency?: Interpreting the Evolution of the Executive Branch

For the first major assessment of the year, you will be responsible for writing an out of class research essay interpreting the evolution of the American Presidency. There are several essay questions that you can choose to answer (see below). Each has a distinctive focus that you must make sure to answer if you are to write an effective and persuasive essay. Remember, this is an ESSAY, not simply a report on the subject. You will be given an analytical question about your topic that you will need to answer. You need to make sure that you are making an argument about your topic. Since this is a research essay, you will need to use a variety of sources to help make your argument persuasive. You should make sure that you use both books and internet sources for your paper.

Assignment:
- 5 paragraph essay that answers your assigned question.
- Intro paragraph (with thesis), 2 body paragraphs, opposing paragraph, conclusion
- Essay requires BOTH Chicago style citations (footnotes) and a bibliography.
- 12 sized font, double-spaced, page numbers, title, 1” margins
- Your research should include at least 4 different sources. 1 must be a primary source, 2 must be books. Remember that you should provide both theoretical and concrete historical examples to support your argument
- You may also use web resources, but remember you must evaluate the reliability of any resources that you find, especially if you found them through the free web (ie, Google). Wikipedia does not count as a source. If you have questions about the reliability of your sources, please ask your instructor or a librarian.
- Grading: This is a major assessment. It is 25% of Term I grade.

Essays due:
Red Section: Thursday, October 18, by 3 PM
Blue Section: Friday, October 19, by 3 PM

Questions:

1. “Cato” feared that the presidency would evolve into a corrupt, monarchical institution with few checks or accountability. Hamilton urged that the Executive needed “energy” and “competent powers” to fulfill his constitutional role. Examine the evolution of presidential power in American history. Who had a more realistic understanding of how the Presidency would function in the American government: The Federalists or the Anti-Federalists?

2. It is clear that the office of the presidency has expanded greatly since its original inception under the Founders. What is debatable, though, is why it accumulated its vast powers over the course of its history. Examine the evolution of presidential power from the origins of the office to the modern day presidency: Were the powers accumulated by the presidency seized by the Executive or ceded to the Executive by Congress?