A synopsis of each of the lectures to be presented October 15, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. in Brookens Auditorium at the University of Illinois at Springfield for the 2008 Lincoln Legacy Lecture Series.

"Lincoln and the Constitution in Civil War Era Presidential Campaigns"
by Dr. Silvana R. Siddali, St. Louis University

The presidential campaigns of the Civil War era brought crucial issues before American voters, including the perpetuity of Union and the right to extend (or prohibit) slavery in the western territories. Both parties represented the contest as a vote on the Constitution, and both predicted the destruction of the republic, should the other side win. Yet neither side was able to predict the sweeping constitutional changes that resulted from civil warfare in America. Because the ordinary processes of political change and compromise failed after the election of 1860, the Civil War forced Americans to consent to the amendment of their founding document. Professor Siddali examines the impact of wartime presidential elections on the U.S. Constitution, and argues that these elections were, in themselves, a referendum on constitutional interpretations.

"How Lincoln Handled the Antiwar Movement"
by Dr. Jennifer L. Weber, University of Kansas

Abraham Lincoln suffered harsh criticism from opponents of the Civil War from its outset. Among other things, antiwar Democrats objected to encroachments on civil liberties and to Lincoln's claims to expanded presidential powers. Lincoln's strategy for dealing with his Democratic critics was, for the most part, to ignore them. Lincoln's approach very nearly failed, leaving him perilously close to having a failed presidency. Professor Weber will discuss how what we now regard as Lincoln's leadership attributes could be considered otherwise had the 1864 election been held three months earlier , before the Northern armies started winning .