

Government 334
The United States Presidency

Ron Seyb
Ladd 310
Ext. 5248

Office Hours:
M & W, 12:30-2:30 PM
Fall 2010

Course Description

This course focuses on the development and properties of the "modern" or post-FDR presidency. The first 2/ 3 of the course will trace the evolution of the modern presidency, paying particular attention to the roles Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Delano Roosevelt played in creating a presidency responsible for managing a large administrative state, initiating domestic legislation, setting foreign and national security policy, and communicating with the public. The last 1/ 3 of the course will take-up a series of case studies of presidential leadership, focusing on how five different presidents (Eisenhower, Johnson, Nixon, Reagan, and Bush) sought to use the resources of the modern presidency to place their stamp on public policy.

Course Requirements

40% of your final grade will be determined by your performance in a presidential campaign simulation.

30% of your final grade will be determined by your performance on a 10-15 page term paper. **This paper will be due at the beginning of class on Friday, November 12.**

30% of your final grade will be determined by your performance on an in-class final examination scheduled by those heartless holiday hijackers in the Registrar's Office (as Lieutenant Kaffee said about Jo Galloway, "nobody likes her very much") for **Monday, December 20 at 6:00 PM.**

Attendance

You are allowed to miss five (5) classes. There are no excused absences. I do not grant excused absences for two reasons: (1) I just do not possess the Jedi mind to be able to discriminate between those illnesses, events, life changes, scalp conditions, etc. that are serious and those that are trivial; and (2) Five absences allows you to miss 1 ½ of the class sessions without incurring any penalty. Even the LQ nightclub is not this generous, and they comped all of Plaxico Burrese's drinks after he shot himself in the leg. **I will treat tardies as**

absences. I do often say significant things at the outset of class about readings, assignments, my Top 5 film character tirades (Gust Avrakatos is #1), etc. It is hence important that you be at least physically present at 11:05 AM. Your mind belongs to you (while I can access your dreams, I respect your privacy... though I do worry about all those unicorns and rainbows that seem to dance around your unconscious), but I do need at least to feel your presence if I am to summon the strength to love myself (As Darryl Philbin once said to Michael Scott, "Mike, it takes great courage to be you. I could not do it.")

I will deduct 2% from your final grade for each absence you accrue over the 5 absence limit (e.g., a student who earns a cumulative score of "90" (A-) on the course assignments who compiles 6 absences will receive an "88" (B+) for the course).

If you reach five absences, I will send you an email alerting you that your next absence will cause me to deduct 2% from your course grade.

You should also keep in mind that according to the *Academic Information Guide* "any students who miss more than a third of the (class) sessions may expect to be barred from (the final examination). In such cases, the course grade will be recorded as F."

Laptops

Laptops are not allowed in class. I know how addictive is that dog driving a tractor. Students who have a disability that precludes them from taking notes with any instrument other than a laptop must provide me with documentation testifying to their "laptop needs" **by the end of the second week of classes (i.e., Friday, September 17)**

Cell Phones, Blackberries, PDAs, and Other Gadgets for Touching Lives and Spreading Your Love

I recognize that these devices (which always prompt from me the exclamation, "Ohhh, shiny") are as much a part of you as obscene fingernail polish messages are to Lindsay Lohan. I shall thus not cause you any feelings of separation or anxiety by having Big Coco confiscate them at the door. But I would be grateful if you turned them off during class. I am quite sensitive to sound. It is the principal reason why I sleep in a hyperbaric chamber. That, and doing so, of course, can make me immortal.

Books

The following books are available at The Skidmore Shop for less than it cost Rahm Emanuel to purchase his UFC license:

Marc Landy and Sidney Milkis, *Presidential Greatness*

Michael Nelson, *The Evolving Presidency*

Jeffrey Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency*

Important Note Pertaining to The Hodges Harbrace Handbook

All Government majors are now required to **own** a copy of the 17th edition of *The Hodges Harbrace Handbook*. Copies of the HHH can be found on the bottom shelf of the "Government" section at The Skidmore Shop. **If you do not yet own a copy, then you must purchase one for this course.** If you already own a copy, then "You're my boy (or girl), Blue!"

Weekly Topics and Reading Assignments

(**Note:** an asterisk (*) denotes a photocopied reading that will be handed-out in class)

Week 1 (September 8-10): The Constitutional Presidency

Readings: *Forrest McDonald, "The Convention," from *The American Presidency: An Intellectual History*

Nelson, Chapter 1: The Constitution

Week 2 (September 13-17): Abraham Lincoln and Presidential Prerogative

Readings: Landy and Milkis, Chapter 5

Nelson, Chapter 14: Abraham Lincoln's Letter to Albert G. Hodges

Week 3 (September 20-24): The Mute Tribune

Readings: Tulis, Chapters 1 and 2

Week 4 (September 27-October 1): George Washington as "Enlightened Statesman"

Readings: Landy and Milkis, Chapter 2

Nelson, Chapter 4: George Washington's First Inaugural Address

Nelson, Chapter 6: The Pacificus-Helvidius Letters

Week 5 (October 4-9) Thomas Jefferson and the Emergence of the American Party System

Readings: Landy and Milkis, Chapter 3

Nelson, Chapter 8: Thomas Jefferson's First Inaugural Address

**FIRST SIMULATION EVENT:
STATEMENT OF CANDIDACY PRESS CONFERENCE**

Week 6 (October 11-15) Theodore Roosevelt and the Transition to the Rhetorical Presidency

Readings Tulis, Chapter 4

Week 7 (October 18-22): The Wilsonian Revolution

Readings: Tulis, Chapter 5

*Woodrow Wilson, "Leaders of Men"

Nelson, Chapter 42: "Jimmy Carter's Crisis of Confidence Speech"

**SECOND SIMULATION EVENT:
DOMESTIC POLICY DEBATES**

Week 8 (October 25-29): FDR and the Making of the Modern Presidency

Readings: Landy and Milkis, Chapter 6

Nelson, Chapter 27: Franklin D. Roosevelt's Court-Packing Address

Week 9 (November 1-5): Presidential Leadership I: Eisenhower's Hidden-Hand

Readings: *Fred Greenstein, "The Unexpected Eisenhower," from *The Presidential Difference*

Week 10 (November 8-12): Presidential Leadership II: LBJ and the Brokering of the Great Society

Readings: Kellerman, Chapter 7

Nelson, Chapter 34: Lyndon B. Johnson's "Great Society" Speech

**TERM PAPER DUE
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12**

Week 11 (November 15-19): Presidential Leadership III: Richard Nixon's Corporate Presidency

Readings: Kellerman, Chapter 8

*David Greenberg, "The Historians: Nixon as Liberal," from *Nixon's Shadow*

Week 12 (November 22): Catch-Up

Readings: No Reading

Week 13 (November 29-December 3) Presidential Leadership IV: Ronald Reagan as "The Great Communicator"

Readings: Kellerman, Chapter 11

Nelson, Chapter 43: Ronald Reagan's First Inaugural Address

**THIRD SIMULATION EVENT:
FOREIGN AND NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY DEBATES**

Week 14 (December 6-10) George W. Bush and the Unitary Executive

Readings: *Jonathan Mahler, "After the Imperial Presidency," *The New York Times Magazine* (November 9, 2008).

**FOURTH SIMULATION EVENT:
SARATOGA SPECIAL ELECTION**

**FINAL EXAMINATION
MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, 6:00 PM, Ladd 207**