

Government 334
The United States Presidency

Ron Seyb
Ladd 310
Ext. 5248

Office Hours:
M & W, 3:00-5:00 PM
Fall 2008

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 7.**

30% of your final grade will be determined by your performance on an in-class final examination to be scheduled by "The Ones" in the Registrar's Office..

Attendance

You must attend both class sessions and simulation events to succeed in the course. I will allow you **three excused absences from class** (tardies will be counted as absences). If you know ahead of time that you will need to miss a class (e.g., Bill Clinton asks you to "make an example of your power" by taking care of his deli bill at the Chappaqua "Whole Foods," your mother tells you Si, tu puede attend your cousin's bat mitzvah, you need to help open the first offshore oil drilling rig off of the coast of Catalina, etc.), then alert me to this as early as possible in the semester. **If you wake up one morning and discover that you**

have become a bubble boy or girl (I know that I have given up everything for my little bubble boy), then you must call or email me prior to class to be granted an excused absence. Every additional absence after you have exhausted your three excused absences and any unexcused absences will result in a 2% reduction in your final grade (e.g., a "90" or "A-" will become an "88" or "B+").

You are not allowed to miss any of the simulation events. Failure to attend and participate in a simulation event will result in a **10% reduction in your grade for the simulation (in addition to the reduction in the "performance" component of your simulation 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

I have checked the Dodgers' score, looked at clips from *Chelsea Lately*, and scrolled through Chef Colicchio's Blog too often when I should have been attending to a lecture on Nigerian beet farming not to recognize that laptops are often the near temptation of sin. I have hence established a policy of **no laptops in class**. Those who have a **documented learning disability that specifies that they require a laptop to take notes in class** are exempted from this policy.

Books

The following books are available at The Skidmore Shop for less than a month's supply of Prescott Pharmaceuticals new product, "Barack Obama's Touch of Grey" (side effects may include toe goiters, opossum tail growth, and permanent nostril flaring):

Sidney Milkis and Michael Nelson, *The American Presidency: Origins and Development*

Michael Nelson, *The Evolving Presidency*

Jeffrey Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency*

Stephen Wayne, *The Road to the White House, 2008*

Weekly Topics and Reading Assignments

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

Week 1 (September 3-5): The Constitutional Presidency

Readings: Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 2
Nelson, Chapters 1 and 3

Week 2 (September 8-12): Abraham Lincoln and Presidential Prerogative

Readings: Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 6
Nelson, Chapters 14 and 17

Week 3 (September 15-19): The Mute Tribune

Readings: Tulis, Chapters 1 and 2

Week 4 (September 22-26): George Washington as "Enlightened Statesman"

Readings: Milkis and Nelson, pp. 68-87
Nelson, Chapters 4, 6, and 7

**QUIZ ON THE ROAD TO THE WHITE HOUSE, 2008
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22**

Week 5 (September 29-October 3): Thomas Jefferson and the Emergence of the
American Party System

Readings: Milkis and Nelson, pp. 87-93 and Chapter 4
Nelson, Chapter 8

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

Week 6 (October 6-10): Theodore Roosevelt and the Transition to the Rhetorical
Presidency

Readings: Milkis and Nelson, pp. 208-226
Tulis, Chapter 4

Week 7 (October 13-17): The Wilsonian Revolution

Readings: Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 9
Tulis, Chapter 5
Nelson, Chapter 42

**SECOND SIMULATION EVENT:
DOMESTIC POLICY DEBATES**

Week 8 (October 20-22): FDR and the Making of the Modern Presidency

Readings: Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 10 and pp. 280-298
Nelson, Chapters 24 and 27

Week 9 (October 27-31): Presidential Leadership I: Eisenhower's Hidden-Hand

Readings: Milkis and Nelson, pp. 311-317

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

Week 10 (November 3-7): Presidential Leadership II: LBJ and the Brokering of the Great Society

Readings: Milkis and Nelson, pp. 310-323
Nelson, Chapters 34 and 35

**TERM PAPER DUE
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7**

Week 11 (November 10-14): Presidential Leadership III: Richard Nixon's Corporate Presidency

Readings: Milkis and Nelson, pp. 326-337

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

Week 12 (November 17-21) Presidential Leadership IV: Ronald Reagan as "The Great Communicator"

Readings: Milkis and Nelson, pp. 350-369
Nelson, Chapter 43

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

Week 13 (November 24): Catch-Up

Readings: No Reading

Week 14 (December 1-5): George W. Bush and the Unitary Executive

Reading: Milkis and Nelson, Chapter 15

Nelson, Chapters 26 and 51

Week 15 (December 8-10): Review for the Final Examination

Readings: No Reading

**FOURTH SIMULATION EVENT:
SARATOGA SPECIAL ELECTION**

**FINAL EXAMINATION
TBA**