

Government 334
The United States Presidency

Ron Seyb
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Ext. 5248

Office Hours:
M & W, 1:30-3:30 PM
Fall 2011

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 on Friday, December 2**

30% of your final grade will be determined by your performance on an in-class final examination to be administered on **Friday, December 16 at 1:30 PM.**

Attendance

You are allowed to miss four (4) classes. There are no excused absences. I do not grant excused absences for two reasons: (1) I just do not possess the "I am the Walrus" intuition to be able to discriminate between those illnesses, events, life changes, combination skin conditions, etc. that are serious and those that are trivial; and (2) Four absences allow you to miss 1 ½ of the class sessions without incurring any penalty. This is the most generous attendance policy since Tony Soprano stopped giving out construction jobs. **I will treat tardies as absences.** I do often say significant things at the outset of class about readings, assignments, the nuclear launch codes, etc. It is hence important that you be at

least physically present at 12:20 PM. If you are mentally or spiritually absent, then consult your clergyperson.

I will deduct 2% from your final grade for each absence you accrue over the 4 absence limit (e.g., a student who earns a cumulative score of "90" (A-) on the course assignments who compiles 5 absences will receive an "88" (B+ for the course).

If you reach four 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. Facebook is for the weak. My objective is to make you strong so that you can "lift things and then put them down." 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 16)**

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

I recognize that these devices are what allow you to be The One who can see The Matrix. I shall thus not cause you any feelings of separation of anxiety by having you drop them off at daycare before you come to class. But I would be grateful if you turned them off during class. Their eruptions can be more distracting and disorienting than a Franklin Pierce Impersonator performing in the food court of the Paramus Park Mall.

Books

The following books are available at The Skidmore Shop for less than it cost Austin Goolsbee to make his name the first Google hit for those searching for "Ghouls":

Marc Landy and Sidney Milkis, *Presidential Greatness*

Barbara Kellerman, *The Political Presidency*

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 7-9): The Constitutional Presidency

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

Week 2 (September 12-16): Abraham Lincoln and Presidential Prerogative

Readings: Landy and Milkis, Chapter 5
Nelson, Abraham Lincoln's Letter to Albert G. Hodges

Week 3 (September 19-23): The Mute Tribune

Readings: Tulis, Chapters 1 and 2

Week 4 (September 26-30): George Washington as "Enlightened Statesman"

Readings: Landy and Milkis, Chapter 2
Nelson, George Washington's First Inaugural Address
Nelson, The Pacificus-Helvidius Letters

SIMULATION PAPERS DUE FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

Week 5 (October 3-7) Thomas Jefferson and the Emergence of the American Party System

Readings: Landy and Milkis, Chapter 3
Nelson, Thomas Jefferson's First Inaugural Address

Week 6 (October 10-14) Theodore Roosevelt and the Transition to the Rhetorical Presidency

Readings: Tulis, Chapter 4

FIRST SIMULATION EVENT DOMESTIC POLICY DEBATES

Week 7 (October 17-19): The Wilsonian Revolution

Readings: Tulis, Chapter 5

*Woodrow Wilson, "Leaders of Men"

Nelson, "Jimmy Carter's Crisis of Confidence Speech"

Week 8 (October 24-28): FDR and the Making of the Modern Presidency

Readings: Landy and Milkis, Chapter 6

William Leuchtenurg, "Hoover Faces the Crash," *American Heritage*
(Summer 2009)

*Huey Long, "Share Our Wealth Speech," March 12, 1935

Week 9 (October 31-November 4): Presidential Leadership I: Eisenhower's Hidden-Hand

Readings: *R. Gordon Hoxie, "Eisenhower and Presidential Leadership,"
Presidential Studies Quarterly 13(4) (Fall 1983), pp. 589-612

* Fred I. Greenstein, "Ronald Reagan: Another Hidden-Hand Ike?"

PS: *Political science and Politics* 23(1) (March 1990), 7-13

Week 10 (November 7-11): Presidential Leadership II: LBJ and the Brokering of the Great Society

Readings: Kellerman, Chapter 7

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

SECOND SIMULATION EVENT FOREIGN AND NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY DEBATES

Week 11 (November 14-18): 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 21): Catch-Up

Readings: No Reading

PRESENTATION OF POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS

Week 13 (November 28-December 2) Presidential Leadership IV: Ronald Reagan as "The Great Communicator"

Readings: Kellerman, Chapter 11

Nelson, Ronald Reagan's First Inaugural Address

**TERM PAPER DUE
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2**

Week 14 (December 5-9) Future Imperfect

Readings: *The Contemporary Presidency: The Decline and Resurgence and Decline (and Resurgence?) of Congress: Charting a New Imperial Presidency," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36(3) (September 2006), pp. 506-524

*Peter Baker, "Education of a President," *New York Times Magazine* (October 12, 2010)

**THIRD SIMULATION EVENT:
FINAL SPEECHES AND VOTE**

**FINAL EXAMINATION
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1:30-4:30 PM, BOLTON 101**