

HIST/HON 2225

HONORS SEMINAR IN HISTORY: THE MODERN AMERICAN PRESIDENCY



COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the intellectual and institutional foundations—and modern innovations and developments—of the American presidency. Students will learn how the presidency has been constructed historically and apply this background to interpreting contemporary politics and institutional controversies regarding domestic and foreign policy and the evolution of party politics.

FACULTY

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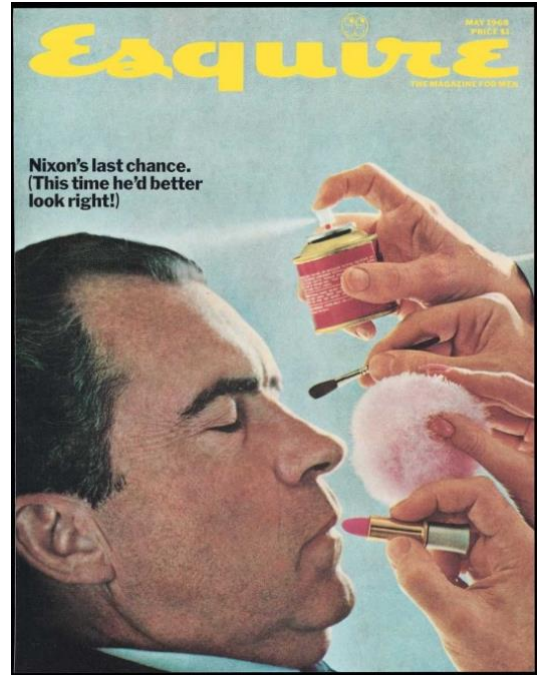
REQUIRED MATERIALS

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

- David Greenberg, *Republic of Spin*
- Forrest MacDonald, *The American President: An Intellectual History*
- Reacting to the Past, *The Constitutional Convention*
- All other readings linked through the syllabus or posted on Perusall

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

- Perusall (create account)
 1. Go to perusall.com, click *Login*, and then either log in using your Facebook, Twitter, or Google account, or create an account using your email address and password.
 2. Select *I am a student* and enter the course code JEWELL-3159.
 3. You will be prompted to purchase the book for this course the first time you try to access the book or a reading assignment from the book. You can purchase access online using a credit card.
- Google Documents (use your student account)



COURSE POLICIES

Email: Please allow at least 24 hours for a response. Use a clear, specific subject line and your student email account. Check your syllabus and Blackboard for answers before emailing. If it is a course-related question and not personal (grades, attendance, etc.), please post to the General Discussion on Perusall FIRST. It is likely someone else has your question.

Course Communication: will take place via Blackboard. Any announcements, syllabus updates, weather-related schedule changes, or other information will be posted there. Please check your student email account regularly as well as the course Blackboard site for relevant updates.

Academic Integrity: Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to Fitchburg State's policies regarding academic integrity. If any questions arise about citation or plagiarism, please ask for clarification.

Technology in class: please use common sense. Occasionally, we will be using technology such as texting, smartphones, or laptops. If you use your device to access readings, please don't distract others by navigating to other unrelated materials. Texting in class is not permitted, and please remove headphones during class. Again, use common sense.

Timeliness and Consideration: Please arrive on time and stay in class for the duration. All appointments should be made to not conflict with class time.

Preparation: Bring all assigned readings to class for the day they are due, along with any notes or questions. This is a discussion-based class, and all students are expected to participate in each class.

ASSIGNMENTS

I reserve the right to alter any course policy, assignment, grading percentages, or schedule of readings and discussions.

WRITING AND RESEARCH (50%)

15% • OP-ED 1

A traditional op-ed of 850 words. Submissions will be scored first by the editorial boards and rewrites allowed before final submission.

15% • OP-ED 2

A traditional op-ed of 850 words. Submissions will be scored first by the editorial boards and rewrites allowed before final submission.

20% • THINK PIECE/PODCAST/INTERVIEW/OP-ED 3

This longer, think-piece style writing or interview can be more creative with format than the traditional op-ed, and be up to 1500 words. No editorial review board, but students may collaborate on a final paper.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES AND PREPARATION (50%)

15% • CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

An in-class activity to take place at the beginning of the semester.

15% • EDITORIAL BOARD PARTICIPATION

There will be three editorial boards that will consider the submissions of other students throughout the semester. At the end of the semester, each participant will evaluate their own performance.

20% • PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

Each class, participation and attendance are expected. Students will come to class with talking points developed from the readings, using the form provided on Blackboard.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

TUESDAY 1/23: INTRODUCTION

THURSDAY 1/25: INTELLECTUAL FOUNDATIONS

Read Part I of MacDonald. Identify three influences on the American presidency.

TUESDAY 1/30: HOUSE OF REPS

See *Constitutional Convention* and role sheet for details.

THURSDAY 2/1: SENATE

TUESDAY 2/6: PRESIDENCY

THURSDAY 2/8: SLAVERY

TUESDAY 2/13: FINAL VOTE AND DEBRIEF

Turn in final reflection.

THURSDAY, 2/15: THE REVOLUTION OF 1800

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Jeffrey L. Pasley, “The Devolution of 1800: Jefferson’s Election and the Birth of American Government,” in *America at the Ballot Box: Elections and Political History*, ed. Gareth Davies and Julian E. Zelizer, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).
- MacDonald, Part II

PRIMARY SOURCES (To be discussed in class)

1. [The Constitution of the United States of America](#)
2. [President George Washington’s Farewell Address, 1796](#)
3. [Federalist No. 70. Alexander Hamilton, “The Executive Department Further Considered,” March 15, 1788.](#)
4. [The Election of 1800 Primary Source Collection by the Library of Congress](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What different visions existed for the functions and responsibilities of the American presidency?
- What do these contrasting visions illuminate about the debate between republicanism and democracy?
- Why does George Washington view factions as dangerous? Does the election of 1800 prove his prediction right or wrong?
- How do these alternative views of the republic’s future permeate the election of 1800? How do Adams and Jefferson use the press to articulate their visions? How does each side attempt to manipulate the presidential selection process?

TUESDAY, 2/20: DEMOCRATIC REFORMS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Secondary Sources

- Wilentz, “The Bombshell of 1844”
- Sources: <http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/message>

Research Questions:

- Who are the presidential candidates?

- What party do the candidates represent?
- What are the important issues to the party?
- How is the image of the president constructed to promote the party's message through music and political cartoons? What characteristics are emphasized? What aspects of the presidential candidate are overlooked?

ELECTIONS TO RESEARCH (In-Class Activity)

1. 1840 Election: Democratic candidate Martin Van Buren vs. Whig candidate William Henry Harrison
2. 1844 Election: Democratic candidate James K. Polk vs. Whig candidate Henry Clay
3. 1848 Election: Democratic candidate Lewis Cass vs. Free Soil candidate Martin Van Buren vs. Whig candidate Zachary Taylor
4. 1852 Election: Democratic candidate Franklin Pierce vs. Free Soil candidate John P. Hale vs. Whig candidate Winfield Scott
5. 1856 Election: Democratic candidate James Buchanan vs. Whig candidate Millard Fillmore vs. Republican candidate John C. Frémont
6. 1860 Election: Northern Democratic candidate Stephen Douglas vs. Southern Democratic candidate John C. Breckinridge vs. Constitutional Union Party candidate John Bell vs. Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln

THURSDAY, 2/22

Flex Day for Potential Snow Days

Read: MacDonald, Part III

OP-ED 1 DUE TO EDITORIAL BOARD

TUESDAY, 2/27: THE PRESIDENCY AND THE STATE IN THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

(Overview and Activities Summary: http://archive.millercenter.org/cpc/education/the-state-and-the-american-presidency-during-the-progressive-era#_ftn6)

SECONDARY SOURCE

- Stephen Skowronek, "The Unsettled State of Presidential History," in *Recapturing the Oval Office: New Historical Approaches to the American Presidency* ed. Brian Balogh and Bruce Schulman, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 13–33.

PRIMARY SOURCES

1. [Theodore Roosevelt, "The Presidency," *Outlook* 105 \(November 22, 1913\).](#)
2. Woodrow Wilson, "The Ideals of America," Address at Trenton, NJ, December 26, 1901, [reprinted in *The Atlantic*.](#)
3. [William H. Taft, Address Accepting the Republican Presidential Nomination, August 1, 1912.](#)
4. [*Theodore Roosevelt, "Why the trusts and bosses oppose the Progressive Party," 1912 \(audio clip\).](#)
5. [*Woodrow Wilson, "On Democratic Principles," 1912 \(audio clip\).](#)
6. [Progressive Party Platform, 1912.](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In his chapter, "The Unsettled State of Presidential History," Stephen Skowronek argues that the progressive intellectual community proved essential in validating the shift of power and authority from the

courts and Congress to the executive branch. “The presidency might never have attained the power and position it now holds in American government,” contends Skowronek, “without a broad and influential cadre of public intellectuals committed to its development and capable of lending legitimacy to its transformation.”

- How did Woodrow Wilson, Theodore Roosevelt, and William Howard Taft contribute to these intellectual debates?
- Do they articulate a “break from traditional practices” to justify alternative values for future progress?
- From where does the pressure for a more active executive come, in the view of Taft, Roosevelt, and Wilson?

THURSDAY 3/1: INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENTS AND THE PROGRESSIVE PRESIDENCY

SECONDARY SOURCE

- Margaret O’Mara, “Part 1: 1912,” in *Pivotal Tuesdays: Four Elections that Shaped the Twentieth Century*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 16–56.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITY

Research a candidate through the [Connecting Presidential Collections database](#) and the Library of Congress Election of 1912 database:

<http://loc.gov/rr/program/bib/elections/election1912.html>

Provide an answer for the following questions:

- How does each candidate propose to deal with the problem of economic concentration?
- How does each candidate propose to fix the problem of political corruption?
- What relationships between the state and the citizen does each candidate advocate?
- How does each candidate position his vision for the presidency in the American economy and society more broadly?
- How does each candidate sell his personality and policies to the electorate?

Legacy of the 1912 Election:

Historian Margaret O’Mara argues that the 1912 election constituted the first political “reckoning with the challenges of industrial capitalism.” This reckoning, she contends “changed the two major parties—but it didn’t destroy them. This was a moment when either the Democrats or the Republicans could have been *the* Progressive party, and the title went to the Democrats while the conservatives consolidated their power in the GOP.” What do you see as the defining legacy of the 1912 election and your candidate’s campaign in particular?

TUESDAY, 3/6: INVENTING THE MEDIA PRESIDENCY

Overview: <http://archive.millercenter.org/cpc/education/inventing-the-media-presidency-public-opinion-and-publicity-in-the-early-tw>

SECONDARY SOURCE

- David Greenberg, “Theodore Roosevelt and the Image of Presidential Activism,” *Social Research*, Vol. 78, No. 4, Winter 2011, pp. 1057-1088.

PRIMARY SOURCES

1. In his *Autobiography*, (1913), Theodore Roosevelt outlines his belief that the president should play an active role in advocating for the people and promoting social change. <http://www.bartleby.com/55/10.html> (see excerpt version on Perusall)
2. [Senator Benjamin Tillman's Testimony](#), *Congressional Record*, January 17, 1906, [especially pages 1179–1181](#).
3. [Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Edgar S. Wilson, October 29, 1903](#).
4. [The Yellow Press \(political cartoon\), October 12, 1910](#).
5. [Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Ben B. Lindsey, May 19, 1911](#).
6. [Letter from Jacob A. Riis to Theodore Roosevelt, 1912](#).



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is the “stewardship theory” that Roosevelt outlines? How does this make publicity central to presidential success?
- In what ways does Roosevelt remake the image of the presidency in the public eye? What tools does he use to do this?
- What does the criticism waged by figures like Benjamin Tillman illuminate about fears of Roosevelt’s press operations? How does this reflect broader cultural concerns about political and cultural changes brought about by urbanization and industrialization, as well as fears about the implications of the “cult of personality”?

THURSDAY, 3/8: ROOSEVELT’S LEGACY AND THE MOVING IMAGE

Review the films for the group activity posted on the Overview site.: <http://archive.millercenter.org/cpc/education/inventing-the-media-presidency-public-opinion-and-publicity-in-the-early-tw>

SPRING BREAK

TUESDAY 3/20: THE PRESIDENT AND THE ECONOMY DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Overview: <http://archive.millercenter.org/cpc/education/the-president-and-the-economy-during-the-great-depression>

SECONDARY SOURCE

- On combating deflation with monetary policy, see Eric Rauchway, “Reflation and Recovery in the 1930s and Their Implications for the 2000s,” in *Making the American Century: Essays on the Political Culture of Modern America*, ed. Bruce Schulman, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 215–27.

PRIMARY SOURCES

1. Franklin Roosevelt’s first Fireside Chat, “On Banking” delivered on March 12, 1933. Text of speech at <http://www.presidentialcollections.org/catalog/nara:197302>

- Individuals across the country responded to Franklin Roosevelt's groundbreaking declaration to take the country off the gold standard, which had been deemed a sacred component of our nation's monetary policy since its founding. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/8126>
- ["Confidence in Your Doctor Is Half the Battle," Kaiser, in *The Houston Post*, Franklin Roosevelt Presidential Library.](#)
- ["Stopping a Run on an Old Financial Institution," S.J. Ray, in *The Kansas City Star*, Franklin Roosevelt Presidential Library.](#)
- ["An Open Letter to President Roosevelt," John Maynard Keynes, *The New York Times*, December 31, 1933.](#)
- [Franklin D. Roosevelt message to Congress, January 4, 1935.](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How is Franklin Roosevelt influenced by the ideas of John Maynard Keynes?
- How does FDR use monetary policies to promote economic solutions that also promote "the strength of a nation's institutions and the soundness of its values"?
- How do economic issues become moral issues that the president has authority over?

THURSDAY 3/22: THE NEW DEAL AND CONSUMER RIGHTS

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Meg Jacobs, "Pocketbook Politics: Democracy and the Market in Twentieth-Century America," in *The Democratic Experiment: New Directions in American Political History*, eds. Meg Jacobs, William J. Novak, and Julian E. Zelizer, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 250-275.

PRIMARY SOURCES

- [Franklin Roosevelt's statement regarding the appointment of the first National Labor Board \(speech file 645\), August 5, 1933. Speech file, Franklin D. Roosevelt Digital Archive. \(PDF\)](#)
- [President Roosevelt addresses the needs of farmers and workers in his eighth Fireside Chat, delivered September 6, 1936. \(VIDEO\) \(Text of the speech\)](#)
- [Speech and correspondences with labor union leaders: Labor Day message \(speech file 1067\), September 5, 1937. Speech File, Franklin D. Roosevelt Digital Archive. \(PDF\)](#)
- [This State of the Union Address, which President Roosevelt delivered as a Fireside Chat on January 11, 1944, outlines a new "Economic Bill of Rights" for all Americans. \(also available as AUDIO recording.\)](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- As Meg Jacobs argues, "Labor unions sold themselves and won public support as agents of recovery and prosperity by boosting the nation's purchasing power through higher wages."⁸
- How do Franklin Roosevelt's rhetoric and policies toward labor and his effort to secure purchasing power and economic rights for all Americans change over the course of the New Deal and WWII?
- How does FDR cultivate relationships with labor union leaders to secure the support of workers in his Labor Day address?
- What do these speeches tell us about the historical trajectory of the "economic rights" promise? How does it change from the Great Depression through World War II?

TUESDAY 3/27: CREATING THE NARRATOR IN CHIEF

OP-ED 1 FINAL DUE

Read: *Republic of Spin* through Franklin Roosevelt

By examining the following speeches (<http://archive.millercenter.org/cpc/education/the-president-and-the-economy-during-the-great-depression>: Narrator in Chief section), evaluate what makes a successful or an unsuccessful “narrator-in-chief.” What narratives did these presidents establish during times of economic crises? How does each president frame the origins of the economic crisis and his solutions?



THURSDAY 3/29: THE PRESIDENCY AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY STATE DURING THE COLD WAR

Read Overview: <http://archive.millercenter.org/cpc/education/president-and-national-security-state-during-cold-war>

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Frank Costigliola, “Personal Dynamics and Presidential Transition: The Case of Roosevelt and Truman,” in Balogh and Schulman, eds., *Recapturing the Oval Office: New Historical Approaches to the American Presidency*, 34–50.
- William I. Hitchcock, “Ike’s World: In Search of Ideology in the Eisenhower Presidency,” in Balogh and Schulman, eds., *Recapturing the Oval Office: New Historical Approaches to the American Presidency*, 108–122.
- Marc Selverstone, [“Epic misadventure: John F. Kennedy’s first year foreign policy stumbles taught hard-earned lessons.”](#) *The First Year: 2017, Where the next president begins*, Miller Center for Public Affairs, University of Virginia.

PRIMARY SOURCES

1. [United States v. Curtiss-Wright Export Corp \(1936\)](#)
2. [President Roosevelt’s Fireside Chat on “National Security,” December 29, 1940.](#)
3. [National Security Act \(1947\)](#)

4. [Electronic Briefing book: The Bay of Pigs](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- By comparing the *United States v. Curtiss-Wright Export Corp* decision, the 1940 Fireside Chat on national security, and the 1947 National Security Act, how does the meaning of the term “national security” change before, during, and after WWII? What new types of authority does the president gain with this growing definition of national security?
- Hitchcock argues that a combination of ideology and pragmatism shaped Eisenhower’s approach to international policy, while Costigliola emphasizes the power of personalities to influence diplomatic relations. After examining Selverstone’s analysis of Kennedy’s “stumbles” and the primary sources surrounding his decision during the Bay of Pigs, at what point do you see ideology shaping policy decisions? At what point do you see the dynamics of individual presidents shaping their choices?
- Both Marc Selverstone and Frank Costigliola examine the difficulties of presidential transitions. While Costigliola examines the personal politics, Selverstone illuminates how existing military commitments of an existing presidential administration can challenge the incoming president. After reading Selverstone’s analysis and examining the primary documents on the Bay of Pigs crisis, how much is Kennedy to blame for the military disaster in Cuba and how much are the institutional expansions of the national security state to blame?
- Based on the Cold War presidency and the analysis of the Bay of Pigs incident, what advice would you offer incoming presidents regarding foreign policy decisions he/she may have to make in the first year?

TUESDAY 4/3: THE TELEVISION PRESIDENCY

- Read Overview: <http://archive.millercenter.org/cpc/education/presidency-in-the-tv-era>

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Kathryn Cramer Brownell, “The Making of the Celebrity Presidency,” in *Recapturing the Oval Office: New Historical Approaches to the American Presidency*, ed. Brian Balogh and Bruce J. Schulman. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 162–174.
- Susan J. Douglas, “Presidents and the Media,” in *Recapturing the Oval Office: New Historical Approaches to the American Presidency*, ed. Brian Balogh and Bruce J. Schulman. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 143-161.

PRIMARY SOURCES

- [Thoughts and Ideas Re: Citizens TV, August 28, 1956, Folder, Talent, Box 7, Young & Rubicam, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.](#)
- [Media Strategy Outline, Folder, Media Campaign: Wisconsin Primary, 1/21/60–4/5/60, Box 38, Political, Pre-Administration, Robert F. Kennedy Papers, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library.](#)
- [Memorandum for Mr. Garment, {n.d. likely 1967} Re: 1968 Election, Folder, Misc #2, Box 69, Name File Box 3 of 29, 1968 Political Campaign File, Len Garment, Richard M. Nixon Presidential Library.](#)
- [Memorandum for Leonard Garment from Bill Gavin, re: 1968 Campaign. Folder, Gavin Bill, Box 69, Name File Box 3 of 29, 1968 Political Campaign File, Len Garment, Richard M. Nixon Presidential Library.](#)
- Students should also watch the evolution of different campaign advertisements through the Living Room Candidate digital database, <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org>.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did “new media” shape communication strategies from Eisenhower to Nixon? How do these political advertisements evolve over time?
- What lessons about media successes and failures do the members of Nixon’s media team learn from studying Eisenhower and Kennedy’s campaigns?
- Kathryn Cramer Brownell argues that Kennedy, and then Nixon, each used a “slick, high-octane machine” to transform himself into a celebrity to win the White House. How, specifically, does this “Hollywood dream machine” function in their campaigns?
- How does the “age of showbiz politics” that Brownell describes during the 1960s compare to McKinley’s experience with mass circulated newspapers, which Susan Douglas discusses, or Theodore Roosevelt’s publicity strategies, which David Greenberg discusses at the turn of the twentieth century?

THURSDAY 4/5: THE TELEVISED DEBATES IN 1960

To examine this question, have students research how journalists and participants crafted the narrative of the debate and how it has changed over time. (Linked at Miller Center:

<http://archive.millercenter.org/cpc/education/presidency-in-the-tv-era>)

- Watch the debates. As a student of American history, how does Richard Nixon’s performance compare to John Kennedy’s?

TUESDAY 4/10: THE PRESIDENCY AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

SECONDARY SOURCES:

- Alan Brinkley, “Legacies of World War II,” in *Liberalism and Its Discontents*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), 94–110. Available online through ACLS Humanities E-Book Program.
- N. D. B. Connolly, “Black Appointees, Political Legitimacy, and the American Presidency,” in *Recapturing the Oval Office: New Historical Approaches to the American Presidency*. Ed. Brian Balogh and Bruce Schulman, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 123-142.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Promoting a Liberal Agenda

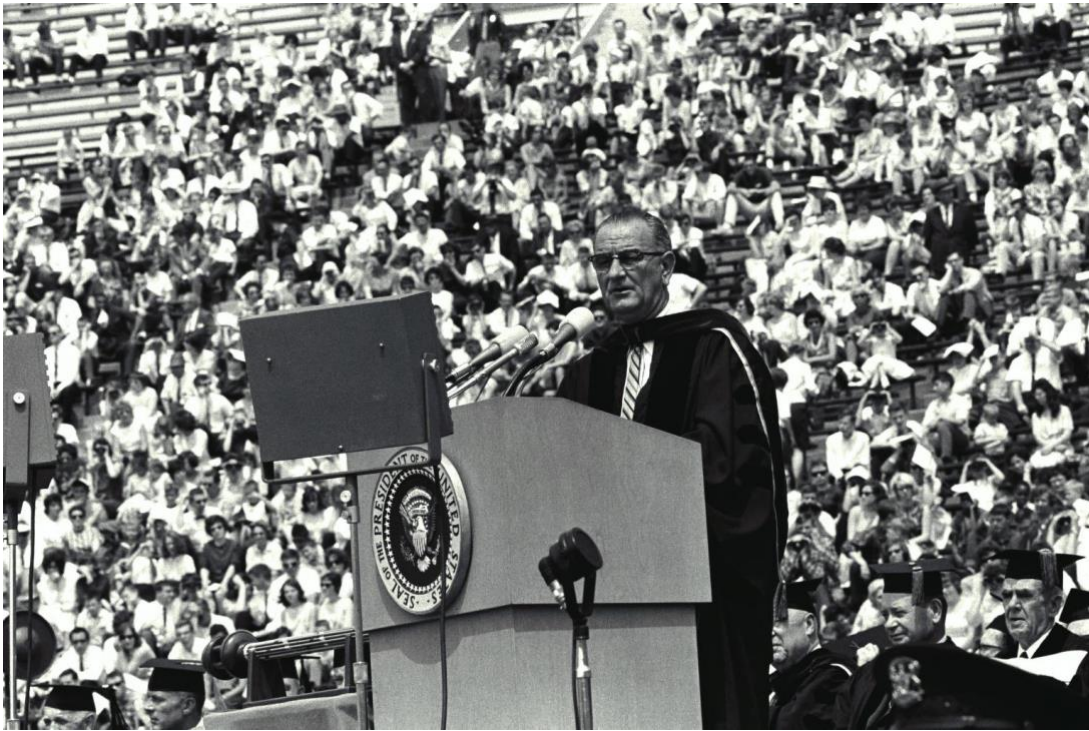
1. President Harry Truman’s [Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union](#), January 5, 1949.
2. Senator John F. Kennedy, [“The New Frontier” Acceptance Speech at the Democratic National Convention](#), July 15, 1960.
3. President Lyndon Johnson’s [“Remarks at the University of Michigan,”](#) May 22, 1964.
4. President Lyndon Johnson’s Commencement Address at Howard University: [“To Fulfill These Rights,”](#) June 4, 1965.

Critiquing the Liberal Agenda

1. [Port Huron Statement of the Students for a Democratic Society, 1962.](#)
2. [Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party Platform, 1964.](#)
3. [“To Determine the Destiny of Our Black Community”: The Black Panther Party’s 10-Point Platform and Program, October, 1966.](#)
4. [“Love Me, I’m a Liberal,” satirical protest song by Phil Ochs, 1966. \(YouTube\)](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How have presidential definitions of liberalism transformed since Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal era? How does the liberal agenda evolve during WWII and the Cold War?
- Are changing definitions of liberalism coming from the presidents themselves, appointees within their administrations, or activists at the grassroots level?
- How do Kennedy and Johnson articulate their role in bringing economic and social change? What role do they ascribe to the federal government and its place in individual lives and the economy?
- What criticism emerges about the limits or failures of liberalism? How has the president failed, in the eyes of critics? What solutions do these critics propose?



THURSDAY 4/12: THE PRESIDENCY AND CIVIL RIGHTS

SECONDARY SOURCE

- Sidney M. Milkis, “Lyndon Johnson, the Great Society, and the ‘Twilight’ of the Modern Presidency,” in *The Great Society and the High Tide of Liberalism*, ed. Sidney M. Milkis and Jerome M. Mileur, (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), 1–49.

PRIMARY SOURCE: THE TAPES

These must be viewed through your web browser using the links:

1. [Martin Luther King Jr. pushes President Kennedy to take action following the death of four girls who were killed in a bombing at Birmingham’s 16th Street Baptist Church, September 15, 1963.](#)
2. [On September 23, 1963, President Kennedy reprimands white leaders in Birmingham following the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist church.](#)
3. [President Kennedy meets with civil rights leaders following the March on Washington on August 28, 1963.](#)
4. [Martin Luther King Jr., Lyndon Johnson, and civil rights legislation](#)
5. [Lyndon Johnson and Martin Luther King Jr. on August 20, 1965 following the Watts riots.](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What tactics did civil rights movement leaders use to pressure presidential action?
- How did Kennedy and Johnson foster relationships with movement leaders? What tactics did they use when being pressured to take action?
- How influential were the different presidential administrations in ushering in change?
- How did John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson respond to the grassroots pressures for civil rights legislation? How did they foster relationships with movement leaders?
- What does this illuminate about the president and the policymaking process more broadly?

TUESDAY 4/17: THE PRESIDENCY IN CRISIS

Read Overview: <http://archive.millercenter.org/cpc/education/presidency-in-crisis>

SECONDARY SOURCE

- Bruce Schulman, "'That Bitch of a War': LBJ and Vietnam," in *Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2006), 133-178.

PRIMARY SOURCES

The Kennedy and Eisenhower Legacy:

1. *[John F. Kennedy's last interview on the situation in Vietnam with NBC news anchors Chet Huntley and David Brinkley](#), September 9, 1963.
2. *[Lyndon Johnson asks former President Eisenhower for advice on the Vietnam War](#), August 18, 1965.

Public Promises, Private Doubts:

1. *[Lyndon Johnson discusses Vietnam privately during a telephone conversation with Senator Richard Russell on May 27, 1964.](#)
2. [Gulf of Tonkin Resolution \(1964\).](#)
3. *Lyndon Johnson, "[Speech to the American Bar Association.](#)" concerning the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, August 1964. <http://presidentialcollections.org/catalog/nara:2803385>
4. *[Lyndon Johnson discusses the problems with the war in Vietnam privately with Senator Richard Russell on March 6, 1965.](#)
5. Lyndon Johnson, "[Pattern for Peace in Southeast Asia.](#)" address delivered on April 7, 1965 at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland.
6. *[President Lyndon Johnson press conference on Vietnam, July 28, 1965.](#)
7. *[Conversation between Lyndon Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara on the situation in Vietnam on November 2, 1965.](#)

"Hey, Hey LBJ, how many boys did you kill today?": Criticism of Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam:

1. *["Lyndon Johnson Told the Nation" \(1965\) song by Tom Paxton.](#)
2. [Paul Potter, president of Students for a Democratic Society \(SDS\), condemned Lyndon Johnson's actions in escalating the Vietnam War during an antiwar rally in Washington D.C. on April 17, 1965.](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did the Cold War commitment of Dwight Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy influence Lyndon Johnson's decisions about Vietnam? How does Vietnam fit into the Cold War consensus and view of foreign policy that came out of WWII?
- What concerns does Lyndon Johnson express about Vietnam behind closed doors?
- How does Johnson sell the war to the American people? What is the difference between his private views of the war and his public statements?

- Why does Vietnam become known as “Johnson’s War”? Why do protesters focus their criticism on Johnson as an individual?
- What does the term “credibility gap” mean? What pressures does it place upon Johnson’s successor, Richard Nixon?

THURSDAY 4/19: NO CLASS - UNDERGRADUATE CONFERENCE

OP-ED 2 DUE TO EDITORIAL BOARD

TUESDAY 4/24: THE IMPERIAL PRESIDENCY AND WATERGATE

General Reading:

- [Thomas Cronin, “The Swelling of the Presidency,” *Saturday Evening Review*, January 20, 1973.](#)

GROUP ASSIGNMENTS

Group 1: Congress

Reading Assignment: Bruce J. Schulman, “Restraining the Imperial Presidency: Congress and Watergate,” in *The American Congress: The Building of Democracy*, ed. Julian Zelizer. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 638–649.

Group 2: The Courts

Reading Assignment: [Anthony J. Gaughan, “Watergate, Judge Sirica, and the Rule of Law,” *McGeorge Law Review*, Spring 2011, Vol. 42 \(3\), 343–395.](#)

Group 3: The Press

Reading Assignment: Michael Schudson, “Watergate and the Press,” in *The Power of News*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995), 142–165.

Group 4: The Federal Bureau of Investigation

Reading Assignment: [Beverly Gage, “Deep Throat, Watergate, and the Bureaucratic Politics of the FBI,” *Journal of Policy History*, Vol. 24, Number 2, 2012, 157–183.](#)

Discussion Questions:

- How did the presidency, as an institution, become so powerful? How did other government institutions respond to the growth of the presidency?
- Did these changing attitudes in the media, parties, Congress, and courts combat the institutional power of the executive, or did it just amass evidence to show Nixon’s misconduct?
- While many argued that Watergate exposed the corruption of the political system, others pointed out that it demonstrated how the system of checks and balances worked. What is the legacy of Watergate for your particular institution?

THURSDAY 4/26: THE PRESIDENCY AND GRASSROOTS CONSERVATISM

Read Overview: <http://archive.millercenter.org/cpc/education/presidency-and-grassroots-conservatism>

SECONDARY SOURCES:

- Meg Jacobs and Julian Zelizer. *Conservatives in Power: The Reagan Years 1981–1989*. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010). (excerpt)
- Darren Dochuck, "There Will Be Oil: Presidents, Wildcat Religion, and the Culture Wars of Pipeline Politics," in *Recapturing the Oval Office: New Historical Approaches to the American Presidency*, eds. Brian Balogh and Bruce J. Schulman (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 93–107.
- Nicole Hemmer, "[The Conservative War on Media has a Long History.](#)" *The Atlantic*, January 17, 2014.

PRIMARY SOURCES:

1. William F. Buckley Jr., "[Our Mission Statement.](#)" *National Review*, November 19, 1955.
2. Young Americans for Freedom, "[The Sharon Statement.](#)" September, 1960.
3. Ronald Reagan, "[A Time for Choosing](#)" speech endorsing the Republican presidential candidate [Barry Goldwater](#), October 27, 1964.
4. *Merle Haggard, "[Okie from Muskogee.](#)" (1969).
5. * [Phyllis Schlafly's speech in Houston, Texas, condemning the National Women's Conference](#), November 18, 1977. (NYT coverage: <http://www.nytimes.com/1977/11/20/archives/equal-rights-plan-and-abortion-are-opposed-by-15000-at-rally-like-a.html>)
6. Jerry Falwell, "[Listen America.](#)" (1980).
7. [Ronald Reagan's Inaugural Address](#), January 20, 1981.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How do conservative political, cultural, and economic beliefs become entwined in the debates about oil that Darren Dochuck examines, or media, as Nicole Hemmer explores?
- What criticisms do conservatives offer of the political, cultural, and economic establishment? How do organizations like *National Review*, The Heritage Foundation, and the Conservative Political Action Committee channel these frustrations into an organized political movement?
- How does Reagan integrate conservative ideology into his inaugural address?

TUESDAY 5/1: CONSERVATIVES IN POWER

- Robert O. Self, "The Reagan Devolution: Movement Conservatives and the Right's Days of Rage, 1988–1994," in *Recapturing the Oval Office: New Historical Approaches to the American Presidency*, eds. Brian Balogh and Bruce J. Schulman (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 75–92.
- Primary sources in Meg Jacobs and Julian Zelizer. *Conservatives in Power: The Reagan Years 1981–1989*. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010).

Group 1: The Legislative Battle for Tax Cuts

On August 13, 1981, Ronald Reagan signed the 1981 Economic Recovery Tax Act at his California ranch. This legislation was the product of compromises and negotiations with Democratic leaders who controlled Congress. Using the following documents, identify the strategies that Reagan used to push this legislation through Congress.

1. [Ronald Reagan's "Address to the Nation on the Economy."](#) February 5, 1981.
2. Document 10 in *Conservatives in Power*: Robert Michel, "Letter to Republican Colleagues," May 29, 1981.
3. * [C-SPAN program on Reagan's Tax Cuts](#), November 30, 1982.

Group 2: Social Issues and the Judicial Battle

Reagan relied on social conservatives to win the 1980 election, but as president, he frustrated these conservatives with his lukewarm action in support of the Human Rights Amendments introduced in

Congress. Reagan, however, did attempt to influence the judiciary with his appointment of socially conservative judges who ascribed to a conservative political ideology. These appointees significantly impacted judicial approaches toward abortion and criminal sentences for drug crimes. Using the following sources, identify the strategies Reagan used to influence the federal judiciary and the implications of this strategy.

1. Document 17 in *Conservatives in Power*, Ronald Reagan, "Letter to Barry Goldwater," September 7, 1982.
2. [Ronald Reagan, address to the nation on the Campaign Against Drug Abuse](#), September 14, 1986.
3. Excerpts from Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, prepared by "Teaching Tolerance."
4. * ["Robert Bork's America."](#) Edward Kennedy articulates his opposition to Judge Robert Bork's nomination, July 1, 1987. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?45973-1/robert-borks-america>
5. * [Judge Bork responds to the political debate surrounding his candidacy](#), October 9, 1987.

Group 3: Foreign Policy and Executive Authority

Reagan campaigned on the slogan, "peace through strength" during the 1980 election. His concern about cutting budgets and reducing the role of government did not apply to foreign policy, however. As president, Reagan focused time and money on building up the military and expanding the national security state at home and abroad. Using the following sources, examine how President Reagan waged the Cold War in public and behind the scenes with his advisors and the debate about nuclear freeze that shapes public demonstrations about his foreign policy.

1. Ronald Reagan, ["A Strategy for Peace in the 80s."](#) October 19, 1980.
2. Document 29 in *Conservatives in Power*, Alexander M. Haig Jr., "Letter to Brezhnev," September 18, 1981.
3. Ronald Reagan, ["Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida."](#) (Evil Empire Speech), March 8, 1983.
4. * ["Nuclear Freeze in the News."](#) March 8, 1983.

Group 4: Remaking the Federal Bureaucracy

As Meg Jacobs and Julian Zelizer note, Congressional stalemate made White House conservatives rethink how to achieve their legislative agenda, and, as a result, they pushed for the "buildup of executive power." By staffing the federal bureaucracy with conservatives, Reagan's administration hoped to "exert greater influence in how government functioned and push policy to the right."6 In policy decisions formulated by the Federal Communications Commission, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Federal Trade Commission, this strategy worked to rescind the regulatory power of these agencies and promote a "free market" approach to governance. Using the following sources, have students examine how White House appointees promoted deregulatory policies.

1. "Report of the Working Group of the Task Force on Telecommunications Policy." Folder- Telecommunications Policy- Working Group, Box 9, Wendell W. Gunn Files, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library
2. * [Discussion of Telecommunications with Federal Communications Commission Chairman](#), Mark Fowler. February 26, 1982.
3. Document 22 in *Conservatives in Power*, Secretary of Education William J. Bennett, "Completing the Reagan Revolution," July 8, 1986.

THURSDAY 5/3: THE 24/7 PRESIDENCY

SECONDARY SOURCES:

- Kathryn Cramer Brownell, "'Ideological Plugola,' 'Elitist Gossip,' and the Need for Cable Television" in *Media Nation: The Political History of News in Modern America*. Eds. Bruce Schulman and Julian Zelizer. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 160–175.
- "Brian's Song." A history of C-SPAN. <http://www.pophistorydig.com/topics/brian16-lamb-c-span>.

- Nicole Hemmer, “From ‘Faith in Facts’ to ‘Fair and Balanced’: Conservative Media, Liberal Bias, and the Origins of Balance” in *Media Nation: The Political History of News in Modern America*. Eds. Bruce Schulman and Julian Zelizer. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 126-143.

PRIMARY SOURCES:

1. Bruce Owen, December 1972, Project B.U.N. (Break Up Networks), Richard Nixon’s Office of Telecommunications Policy. Clay T. Whitehead Papers, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. <http://claytwhitehead.com/ctwlibrary/Box%20036/008 Project%20BUN.pdf>.
2. Report by Roger Ailes; “A Plan for Putting the GOP on TV News”; no date; folder Alpha Name Files (1969–1973) Ailes, Roger 1971 [4 of 5]; new box 99; White House Special Files: Staff Member and Office Files: H.R. Haldeman; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA. <http://web1.millercenter.org/cpc/brownell/mod10-doc1.pdf>
3. * Examining the “C-SPAN Revolution”: Tip O’Neill discusses the potential of C-SPAN and cable television to promote democratic knowledge and civic engagement, May 23, 1979. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?124052-1/cable-television-issues>
4. * Newt Gingrich deploys a new media strategy on C-SPAN, January 30, 1986. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4569441/gingrich-camera-span>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How does Nixon’s Office of Telecommunications influence technological developments with its regulatory policy? What does this illuminate about the role of public policy in shaping the media landscape?
- How do Nixon and conservatives construct the idea of “liberal media bias”? How does this concept gain political power?
- What promise did C-SPAN and cable television hold for making congressional activities more transparent? What is the impact on political discourse and partisanship?

TUESDAY 5/8: SPIN IN THE 21ST CENTURY

OP-ED 2 FINAL DUE

FINISH READING REPUBLIC OF SPIN.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How do figures like Lee Atwater and James Carville deploy the “spin” machine during campaigns?
- How does the 24/7 news cycle influence electoral strategies? How does it change expectations for the presidency?
- What changes in the media environment that leads to the “politics of anything goes” that Greenberg examines? What accounts for these changes?

FINAL EXAM DATE

FINAL OP-ED DUE