

POLITICAL SCIENCE 197C

Seminar on the Presidency and Presidential Leadership Winter Quarter, 2003

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar uses the mediums of political biography and presidential history to explore the development of the presidential office, the institution of the presidency, and the changing politics of presidential leadership since the Great Depression. The *office* of the presidency refers to the roles, duties, and responsibilities assigned to presidents by authority of the Constitution. How have the obligations of the office been interpreted and elaborated over time? In response to what pressures? With what consequences for the character of American politics and culture? The *institution* of the presidency refers to the organizational apparatus that has grown up around the presidency to help presidents exercise political leadership. The Constitution does not mandate the sprawling presidential establishment that empowers modern presidents. Rather, most scholars date its origin to the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt. What forces have been responsible for its emergence and development? With what consequences for other political institutions (e.g., political parties, Congress, organized groups)? Finally, presidential *leadership* refers to the actions undertaken by presidents to set the national agenda, organize political support on behalf of that agenda (through mass opinion, organized groups, and legislative parties), and implement policy (both statutory and non-statutory) through the federal bureaucracy and the institutions of state and local government.

This course presumes a level of prior familiarity with the basic workings of the modern presidency and the contemporary political system. The seminar will be devoted to exploring the details of American presidential history, to collecting information and points of comparison for our evaluations of contemporary presidential politics and contemporary theories of the presidency, in particular Steven Skowronek's landmark study, *The Politics Presidents Make*. We will range widely over the last 70 years—the era of the modern presidency—covering the period from the New Deal to Bill Clinton's reelection in 1996. In all, I hope this course will provide students with an opportunity to think deeply about the role of presidential leadership as an instrument of political change and the impact of the presidency as an institution upon the broader American political system.

REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to come to seminar having read and digested the materials for the week. Fifty percent of your final grade will be based on the quality of class participation you sustain over the course of the quarter. The remaining 50 percent will be based on a research paper of 20-25 pages, on a topic of your choice, touching on some analytic or developmental question pertaining to the presidential office, the institution of the presidency, or the politics of presidential leadership. Essays must critically engage some aspect of Steven Skowronek's

theory of political time. All students are expected to develop their paper topic in conjunction with the professor.

REQUIRED BOOKS

Stephen Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to Bill Clinton*.

James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox*

Fred Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower*

Joseph Califano, *The Triumph and Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson*

Joan Hoff, *Nixon Reconsidered*

Burton I. Kaufman, *The Presidency of James Earl Carter*

Cannon, *President Reagan: A Role of a Lifetime*

Broder and Johnson, *The System: American Way of Politics at the Breaking Point*

Dick Morris, *Behind the Oval Office: Winning the Presidency in the Nineties*.

SYLLABUS

Week 1: Introduction and Course Overview

Week 2: Theory: Political Time and Secular Time

Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make*, chs. 1-3, 7-8, and afterward.

Week 3: FDR's Reconstruction and the New Deal Regime

Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox*, chs. 6-12, 14-18.

Week 4: Ike's Preemption: Third Way Politics as Nonpartisan Leadership

Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, all.

Week 5: LBJ's Articulation: The Faithful Son as Heretic

Califano, *The Triumph and Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson*, all.

Week 6: Richard Nixon's Preemption: Triangulation

Hoff: *Nixon Reconsidered*, Introduction, chs 1-4, 7, 9-10, and Conclusion

Week 7: Jimmy Carter's Disjunction: The Collapse of New Deal Liberalism

Kaufman, *The Presidency of James Earl Carter*, chs. 2-3, 5-6, 8, 10-14.

Week 8: Reconstruction and the "Reagan Revolution"

Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime*, chs. 1-12, 17, 22.

Week 9: Did Bill Clinton Get the Moment Wrong? The Preemptive President as Articulative Leader

Johnson and Broder, *The System*, chs. 5-7, 9-20

Week 10: Getting the Moment Right? Triangulation and the Politics of Preemption

Morris, *Behind the Oval Office*, chs. 1-11, 14-20