



NYU

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

The American Presidency UPADM-GP 209 / HIST-UA 93

Fall 2019

Instructor Information

- Professor Timothy Naftali
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- Office Location: Puck 3018
- Office Hours: Wednesdays, Noon to 1:15 p.m. or by appointment

Course Requirements

1. Two 1 ½ page (approx. 350 word) response papers: 30% (2x 15%)
2. One 2 ½ page (approx. 350 word) Policy memo: 25%
3. Final examination: 45%
4. Class Participation: 5% [Yes, 105%!]

Course Policies

1. Response Paper guidelines:

The response paper will be strictly based on the assigned reading. The instructor will provide the prompt in advance.

2. “Official” Memo:

The students are required to write a two and a half page memo for any notional foreign government on the status of ONE of the following issue areas--Environment, Civil Rights, Fiscal Policy, Trade, Immigration or Foreign Policy—that both summarizes the Trump administration’s approach so far in the first term and the role played by the President. Then Compare and Contrast his administration’s policy with that of President Obama’s.

3. Moses Center for Students with Disabilities:

If you are student with a disability who is requesting accommodations, please contact New York University's [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities](#). You must be registered with CSD to receive accommodations. The Moses Center is located at 726 Broadway on the second floor.

4. Religious Holidays:

NYU's policy is to accommodate students' observances of religious holidays. In order to receive accommodation, you must notify the instructor during the first two weeks of the semester of any planned absences related to religious observance. Please be sure to review further details on [NYU's policies](#).

5. Academic Honesty:

Intellectual integrity is the university's most fundamental commitment. Plagiarism of any kind will be penalized to the fullest possible extent, without warning or exception.

The most common causes of plagiarism are not deliberate dishonesty, but stress and uncertainty. You are encouraged to begin assignments well in advance of the deadline, and to check with the instructor if you have any questions. Whenever you draw upon somebody else's words or ideas to make a point, give them credit in a note. If you have questions about documentation requirements, don't guess – just ask.

See further details on [university policy](#), strictly adhered to in this class.

6. Grading

We use the following Grading Scale:

**A = 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86;
B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73;
D+ = 67-69; D = 65-66; F = below 65**

If you have any questions about your grade, please contact your grader for clarification. Should any questions remain, you may contact the instructor. Please keep in mind that should you involve the instructor, it is possible that the instructor, upon reading the work, may disagree with the grader and lower the grade. The instructor's grade will be the grade of record.

Course Materials

All books with an asterisk have been ordered to the NYU Bookstore on Broadway and their purchase is recommended. Materials found on the course website are indicated by an +.

* = NYU Bookstore

+ = Course Website

® = On Bobst Reserve

Week 1: Introduction—Presidential Power and Practice

September 3: Apollo 11 and 44 Men

September 5: The Making of the First President

Required Reading:

Thomas Jefferson, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, “A Stepping to Stone to Monarchy,” “The Conflict with Hamilton,” 985-990; 920-1001+

James McGregor Burns and Susan Dunn, *George Washington*, 63-76, 105-117, 126-132+

Week 2: The Evolution of the Presidency, Part II:

September 10: The Emergence of Parties and the Electoral College and the Suffrage (Acclamation to Contestation): 1789-1828

September 12: The Jeffersonian and Jacksonian Revolutions

Required Reading:

Felix Gilbert, *To The Farewell Address*, Appendix+

Sidney Milkis, *The American Presidency*, (2008), 98-109; 121-133+

Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, *Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson* [1992], “The Maritime Crisis,” pages 173-228+

Week 3: The Evolution of the Presidency, Part III

September 17: Jefferson and Jackson, Cont’d

September 19: Jackson through “His Accidency”

Required Reading:

Michael F. Holt, Franklin Pierce (2010), pp. 66-94 +

Week 4: Presidents, Congress and Slavery

September 24: Class cancelled

September 26: Politics to Lincoln

Required Reading:

Sidney Milkis, The American Presidency (2008), 158-165

Week 5: Lincoln and War Power

October 1: Lincoln and War Power

October 3: Pince-Nez: Two Roosevelts of Two Parties

Required Reading:

David H. Donald, Lincoln (1995), 267-294+

Sidney Milkis, 196-226+

Week 6: The Roosevelts and the Federal Government

October 8: The Great Depression

October 10: Supreme Commander, Part One

Required Reading:

Nigel Hamilton, War and Peace (2019), 98-118; 135-136; 436-457+

William E. Leuchtenburg, The American President [2015], 143-175+

Week 7: Superpower Commander-in-Chief

October 15: Legislative Day [No Class]

October 17: Supreme Commander, Part 2

Required Reading:

Robert Dallek, Harry S. Truman, The American Presidents Series, [2008] 19-34; 84-124+

Week 8: The Imperial Presidency

October 22: Supreme Commander, Part 3; The Chief of Staff

October 24: Abuse of Power, Truman to Nixon

Required Reading:

Kruse & Zelizer, 7-19*

Egil "Bud" Krogh, Integrity, pages 13-77, 81, 101-149*

Chris Whipple, The Gatekeepers: How the White House Chiefs of Staff Define Every Presidency, (2018) 47-75, 104-131*

Timothy Naftali, "[Team Trump, Don't Repeat Nixon's Mistake](#)," November 11, 2016, CNN.com

Richard E. Neustadt, "Historical Problems in Staffing the White House, December 1, 1980, in Preparing to be President: The Memos of Richard E. Neustadt, Charles O. Jones, ed., [2000] 107-119 +

Week 9:

October 29: Covert Government: 1977-2001

October 31: Overt Government: The Rhetorical Presidency, 1933-2017 [The Instructor Will Also Discuss Policy Paper Assignment—see above in syllabus for difference between policy paper and response paper assignments].

FIRST Response Paper Opportunity: Using Hamilton, compare, contrast and evaluate FDR's conduct at Teheran and Yalta; OR Using White House Ghosts and Gergen, compare and contrast FDR, JFK, Reagan and George W. Bush's use of speechwriters. [Due October 30]

Required Reading:

David Gergen, Eyewitness to Power: The Essence of Leadership, Nixon to Clinton, (2000) pp. 151-172.+

Tim Naftali, "[Ronald Reagan's long-hidden racist conversation with Richard Nixon](#)." The Atlantic, July 30, 2019.

Robert Schlesinger, *White House Ghosts* (2008), 9-26; 41-47; 95-100; 104-111; 293-311; 324-332; 337-340; 353-358; 476-488.+

John F. Kennedy, "Inaugural Address," January 20, 1961,

Ronald Reagan, "Address at Pointe-au-Hoc," Normandy, June 6, 1984

Week 10: Crisis Management and War Powers

November 5: Cold War Leadership [October 1962; November 1989]

November 7: George W. Bush after 9/11

SECOND Response Paper Opportunity [Due November 6]: Using the assigned readings for this week, Compare and Contrast Lincoln's use of war power to George W. Bush's.

Required Reading:

Dick Cheney, *In My Time*, (2011), 143-148; 348-353

David H. Donald, *Lincoln*, 303-308; 369-384; 416-421; 437-444

Jack Goldsmith, *The Terror Presidency* [2007], 177-216+

George W. Bush. *Decision Points* [2010], 168-181+

Timothy Naftali, *George H. W. Bush* (2007) 151-177+

Week 11: Partisanship and the Presidency

November 12: The President and Social Policy

November 14: The President and Economic Policy, Part 1

Required Reading:

Kruse and Zelizer, pp. 44-112; 203-231*

Timothy Naftali, *George H. W. Bush* (2007), Pages 132-139+

Julian E. Zelizer, *The Fierce Urgency of Now*, 11-39; 46-52; 116-130+

Milkis, 340-348; 366-379+

George W. Bush, Decision Points [2010], 452-467*

Hank Paulson, One The Brink [2010], 278-314*

Barney Frank, Frank, 277-301

THIRD Response Paper Opportunity: How did it happen that there was bipartisan support, in an election year, for the George W. Bush administration's approach to the 2008 Financial Crisis? [Due November 19]

Week 12: The President and the Media

November 19: The President and Economic Policy, Part II; the Revolution in Presidential/Press Relations

November 21 Foxworld and the Web

Required Reading:

Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, All the President's Men (1974), 13-200, 307-336.*

Kruse & Zelizer: 3-5, 223-227; 288-319; 357-8*

Week 13:

Nov. 26: Selecting a Supreme Court Justice

Nov. 28: THANKSGIVING

Required Reading:

Sidney Milkis, (2008) The American Presidency, 288-291

Dick Cheney, In My Time, (2011), 87-88; 322-324

Justice John Paul Stevens, The Making of a Justice (2019), Pages 123-134; 358-374.

Carl Hulse, Confirmation Bias (2019), Pages 1-56; 94-113; 138-143

FINAL Response Paper Opportunity: Based on the assigned readings what changes have occurred in how Presidents manage their Supreme Court selections? [Due November 25]

Week 14: The Obama v. Trump

December 3: Obama and the Modern Presidency

December 5: Trump, The Disrupter—Jackson or Reagan or Something New?

Required Reading:

David Axelrod, *Believer: My Forty Years in Politics* [2015] 269-289, 442-459+

Kruse & Zelizer, 320-358

Whipple, 257-316*

Stephen Skowronek, *Presidential Leadership in Political Time*, (2008), pages 1-26; 150-194*

Brian Bennett and Tessa Berenson, "[How Trump is Using the Mueller Report to Reshape Washington's Balance of Power](#)," *Time*, May 13, 2019.

Tim Naftali, "[The Problem with Trump's Madman Theory](#)," *The Atlantic*, October 4, 2017,

Week 15: Legacies

December 10: Categorizing Presidents

December 12: Impeachment and Legacy

Required Reading:

Skowronek, *Presidential Leadership in Political Time*, (2008), pages 27-78+

Thomas B. Edsall, "[The Fight Over How Trump Fits with the Other 44 Presidents](#)," *The New York Times*, May 15, 2019

Jon Meacham, Timothy Naftali, Peter Baker, Jeffrey A. Engel: *Impeachment: An American History*, (2018) 3-46, 83-153

Policy Papers Due December 13

Final Examination:

THUR 12/19 4pm-5:50pm