



NYU

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

**UPADM-GP 209/ HIST-UA 93
The American Presidency
Fall 2021**

Professor Timothy Naftali

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Office Hours: By Appointment, On Zoom.

Course Requirements:

- 1) Three 1 1/2-page (approx. 350 word) response papers: (3x 15%)
45%
- 2) One 2 1/2 page (approx. 550 word) Policy memo: 20%
- 3) Take Home Final Examination: 30%
- 4) Breakout Session Participation: 10% [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. [Information about the Moses Center](http://www.nyu.edu/csd) can be found at www.nyu.edu/csd. 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. [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.

[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.

7. Participation in the Breakout Sessions

Starting the three week of class, we will devote part of one class session every week to discussion/breakout sessions. Part of your grade will reflect active participation in these sessions.

8. ZOOM Reminders

When in the general Q and A format, please keep your videos on but yourselves on mute. Should have a question please use the chat function to send a question. When in the breakout room, please use the video but don't mute yourselves.

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 +.

+ = Course Website

*= NYU Bookstore

Week 1: Introduction—"The Greatest National Mobilization?"

September 3: Presidential Leadership in COVID-19

Required Reading:

Michael C. Bender and Rebecca Ballhaus, "[How Trump Sowed Covid Supply Chaos](#)," The Wall Street Journal, August 31, 2020.

Ben Edelman, Daniel T. Allen, Amelia Kosiulek, Therese McPherson, "[The White House has spent \\$12 billion on its Operation Warp Speed vaccine plan — but experts are worried about how the money's being used](#)" Business Insider, August 24, 2020.

Rick Perlstein, "[Gerald Ford Rushed Out a Vaccine, it was a fiasco](#)," NYT, September 2, 2020.

Eli Stokols, "[Coronavirus Overshadows Trump's Legacy in Office](#)," Los Angeles Times, August 21, 2020.

[White House on Operation Warp Speed - July 27](#)

[White House on Operation Warp Speed - August 11](#)

Week 2: Inventing Washington

September 8: The Origins of the American Presidency

September 10: The First Norm Maker [Discussion: The Farewell Address]

Required Reading:

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

George Washington, [The Farewell Address](#), 1796

Week 3: Inventing Presidential Politics

September 15: Jefferson's Revolution [Discuss "A Stepping Stone to Monarchy" and "The Conflict with Hamilton"]

September 17: The Vote and the Veto

Required Reading:

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

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

Week 4: "Preserve, Protect and Defend"

September 22: The Good, the Bad and The Ugly: 19th Century Presidents and the Collapse of the Union

September 24: Abraham Lincoln, Part 1 [Discussion: President Buchanan's thinking about the Secession Crisis]

Required Reading:

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

James Buchanan, [State of the Union Address](#), December 1960,

David H. Donald, *Lincoln* (1995), 267-294, 303-308; 369-384; 416-421; 437-444+

Week 5: The Lincoln Precedent

September 29: Abraham Lincoln, Part II October 1: Race and the Civil War

Required Reading:

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

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

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

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

First Response Paper Opportunity [Due October 5]: Using the assigned readings for this week, Compare and Contrast Lincoln's use of war power to George W. Bush's.

Week 6: The Roosevelt(s) Precedent

October 6: Pince-Nez: Two Roosevelts of Two Parties

October 8: The Great Depression [Discussion: FDR's First Inaugural Address].

Required Reading:

Sidney Milkis, 196-226+

Robert Schlesinger, *White House Ghosts* (2008), 9-26

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

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, [Inaugural Address](#), March 4, 1933

Week 7: Commander-in-Chief

October 13: Supreme Commander

October 15: The Atomic Age

Required Reading:

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

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

SECOND Response Paper Opportunity: Using Hamilton, compare, contrast and evaluate FDR's conduct at Teheran and Yalta [Due October 19]

Week 8: Superpower Commander-in-Chief

October 20: Kennedy and Bush [41]

October 22: Bill Clinton and George W. Bush

Required Reading:

Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days* (1968), 19-44; 65-84

Robert Gates, *Exercise of Power* (2020), 118-141, 199-227 Timothy

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

Week 9, Race and the Presidency, 20th Century

October 27: The Civil Rights Revolution, 1954-1970

October 29: Nixon, Reagan and Trump [Discussion: my July 2019 Atlantic piece on Reagan, Nixon and Race]

Required Reading:

Kruse/Zelizer, pp. 44-105*

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

["The Conversation: What Daniel Patrick Moynihan Actually Thought About Race,"](#) *The Atlantic*, September 9, 2019.

John D. Ehrlichman, *Witness to Power*, 220-243+

Julian E. Zelizer, *The Fierce Urgency of Now* (2015), 11-39; 46-52; 116-130+

Third Response Paper: According to Kruse and Zelizer what role did Race and the "Crises" of the 1960s and 1970s contribute to the Reagan Revolution of 1980?

Week 10: "Deep State"?

November 3: 1864, 1940, 1980, 2000, 2020

November 5: Cold War Secrecy and Abuse of Power [Discuss: The Haldeman Diaries excerpts].

Required Reading:

Hillary Clinton, *What Happened*, pp. 273-279; 377-389 James Mann, *George W. Bush*, pp. 35-41+

George McGovern, *Abraham Lincoln*, 97-112.+

H. Montgomery Hyde, *The Quiet Canadian*

H. R. Haldeman, *Haldeman Diaries*, June 23, 1971; June 29- July 6, 1971; September 15-16, 1972. +

Kruse & Zelizer, 7-19*+

Supplementary Reading [If President Trump wins Re- election]:

Haldeman, *Diaries*, November 7-November 20, 1972+ Naftali,

“Transitions,” *Foreign Policy*, October 2020 +

Week 11: Modern Leadership Styles

November 10: Kennedy v. Reagan v. Obama

November 12: Nixon v. Trump

Fourth Response Paper: Using *White House Ghosts* and Gergen, compare and contrast FDR, JFK, Reagan and George W. Bush’s use of speechwriters and political rhetoric. [Due November 1]

Required Reading:

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

Milkis, 340-349; 366-379+

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

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

Barber Conable, Diary [Excerpts]+

Week 12: What They Do--Abroad

November 17: Libya v. Syria

November 19: The "Slow-walkers"

Required Reading:

Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 363-377

Ben Rhodes, *The World As it is*, pp. 109-124; 197-200; 223- 240

Samantha Powers, *The Education of an Idealist*, pp. 283- 309; 359-390

Gates, *Exercise of Power*, 297-313

Haldeman, *Diaries*, June 3, 1969.

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

Week 13: What they do—at Home

November 24: The President and Economic Policy

November 26: Thanksgiving

Required Reading:

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

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

Bush, *Decision Points* [2010], 452-467+

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

Frank, Frank, 277-301+

FIFTH 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 30]

Week 14: What They Do—at Home, Part 2

December 1: Immigration Policy

December 3: Selecting a Supreme Court Justice

Required Reading:

George W. Bush, Decision Points [2010], 301-306+

Kruse & Zelizer: 55-57; 132-33; 286-87;323; 352-54*

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

Week 15: The Modern Presidency

December 8: The Regulatory State and Modern Federalism

December 10: Comparing Presidents

Required Reading: [Some TK]

Kruse & Zelizer, 320-358*

Stephen Skowronek, Presidential Leadership in Political Time, (2008), pages 27-116+

Policy Papers Due December 11

Final Examination: Information to Come