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Political Science 3622
American Political Leadership
Spring 2015
T/TH 11:00-12:15
Oak Hall, Room 117

Course Description

Students of political leadership approach the subject from a variety of perspectives. This course is designed to familiarize students with several of the most prominent perspectives through the use of extensive case studies of political leaders in the United States. Students will also be asked to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of existing approaches to the study of political leadership. The course will emphasize two themes. The first relates to the ways in which the structure of American political institutions, American political culture, and American democratic principles define opportunities and constraints for political leaders. The second relates to the age-old question of leadership studies: do great leaders make history or does history make great leaders?

This course will operate as a seminar; our class meetings will be organized around the assigned readings. If you're not prepared to complete all of the readings on the syllabus and discuss them in class, please choose another course. Failure to prepare for class and to contribute to in-class discussions will result in a sharp reduction in your grade.

Readings: The following book is required and available for purchase at the Co-op.

- Miroff, Bruce. 2000. *Icons of Democracy*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press. (ISBN: 0-7006-1018-9) (paper)
- Additional required readings are available on HuskyCT. You can always access the most recent version of the syllabus there.

Examinations: There will be several in-class quizzes and assignments, a midterm examination and a final examination. Makeup exams require prior approval. I will be happy to provide accommodations for students with proper documentation from the University's Center for Students with Disabilities (<http://www.csd.uconn.edu>).

Writing Requirement: All students will write at least two (2) short papers (due 9/13 and 11/1). Details on these assignments appear in the course outline. Additional details available on HuskyCT.

Class Participation: I expect students to come to class prepared to participate in a meaningful way. To do so, students must complete the assigned readings. I also recommend that students do their best to follow news coverage of American politics in serious news outlets (e.g., *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, etc.).

Grading: Participation (including in-class assignments) 20%; midterm 25%; essays 25%; final examination 30%.

Course Outline

I. Introduction

A. Organizational Meeting (T9/1)

- Review of course syllabus
- Complete in-class reading and writing assignment
- Homework assignment: Visit the HuskyCT (<http://huskyct.uconn.edu>). Complete student biography assignment on HuskyCT asap (but no later than Sunday, 9/6, at 11:59pm).

B. Thinking About Leaders and Leadership: Concepts, Theory, and Method (TH9/3)

- Readings:
 - Wills, *Certain Trumpets* ("Introduction") (HuskyCT)
 - Tucker, "Nonconstituted Leaders" (HuskyCT)
 - Deresiewicz, "Solitude and Leadership" (HuskyCT)
- Discussion Questions: What is *political* leadership? What is a political "leader"? Do leaders make history or does history make leaders? Is all leadership political? Can political leadership be studied systematically? Scientifically?

C. Week 2: Thinking About Leaders and Leadership: A Case Study (T9/8, TH9/10)

- Readings (note – complete all readings before class on Tuesday, 9/8):
 - Burns, "The Difference Between Power Wielders and Leaders" (HuskyCT)
 - Weber, "Types of Authority" (HuskyCT)
 - Willner, "Charismatic Leadership" (HuskyCT)
- In Class Assignment: Watch Ken Burns' documentary *Huey Long* (88 min.)

Writing Assignment (due by 11:59pm on Sunday, 9/13)

Write a 2-3 page essay (750-1,000 words, typed, double-spaced, 1"-1.25" margins, 11-12 point font) assessing whether or not Huey Long exercised charismatic political leadership, as defined by Willner. In what ways does Willner's theory of charismatic leadership inform our understanding of Long? In what ways does it fall short? Submit via HuskyCT (as an attachment) before midnight on Sunday, 9/13.

II. Leadership, Democratic Principles, and the American Constitutional System

A. Week 3: American Political Leadership: The Constitutional, Social, and Political Contexts (T9/15, TH9/17)

- Readings (note – read Publius and Schumpeter for T9/15; remainder for TH9/17):
 - Publius, *Federalist* Nos. 10, 51, and 70 (HuskyCT)
 - Schumpeter, "Democracy as Competition for Leadership" (HuskyCT)
 - Hayes, "The New Presence of Women Leaders" (HuskyCT)
 - Binder and Mann, "Constraints on Leadership in Washington" (HuskyCT)
- Discussion Questions: What specific characteristics of the American political system encourage or hinder the exercise of strong leadership? What socio-political forces may have contributed to the dearth of female political leaders in previous generations?

A Diversion: Tuesday, 9/22

Class Will Meet in Konover Auditorium (Dodd Center)

- Pulitzer Prize winning author/reporter David Maraniss will visit to talk about the art of political biography. Maraniss is known for his style of humanizing "larger than life" figures like Bill Clinton, Vince Lombardi, and Barack Obama. More information on Mr. Maraniss is available at <http://davidmaraniss.com/>.
- Readings: Read Joshua Meyrowitz, "Lowering the Political Hero to Our Level" (HuskyCT) and the brief interview with Maraniss found at <http://www.vanderbiltpoliticalreview.com/vpr-exclusive-interview-with-pulitzer-prize-winner-and-political-biographer-david-maraniss/>

B. Week 4: American Political Leadership: The Constitutional and Political Contexts (cont.) (TH9/24)

- Readings (note – these are very long, dense articles; you need to block out extra time to read them)
 - Skowronek, "Power and Authority" (HuskyCT)
 - Skowronek, "Presidential Leadership in Political Time" (HuskyCT)
- Discussion Questions: What is the difference between "power" and "authority"? Identify major constraints on the exercise of "transformative" leadership in contemporary American politics.

C. Week 5: Demagogues vs. Democrats: The Paradox of Democratic Leadership (T9/29, TH10/1)

- Readings (note – read Miroff pp. 1-82 for T9/29; read Miroff ch. 2 for TH10/1):
 - Miroff, pps. 1-82 ["Introduction" and chs. 1-2 (Alexander Hamilton and John Adams)]
- Discussion Questions: Is the notion of elite power inconsistent with American democratic principles? What aspects of modern culture and society contribute to skepticism about leaders' abilities and motivations? What is "aristocratic leadership"?

III. Democratic Leadership on the Inside

A. Week 6: *The American Political Leader: The democratic Presidency* (T10/6, TH10/8)

- Readings:
 - Miroff, chs. 3 (Abraham Lincoln) & 7 (Franklin D. Roosevelt)
- Discussion Questions: On what criteria do Americans evaluate presidential leadership? Are citizens' expectations about the nature of presidential leadership consistent with the institutional powers of the presidency? What is "democratic leadership"? How does it differ from "aristocratic leadership"?

B. Week 7: *The Heroic Presidency* (T10/13, TH10/15)

- Readings:
 - Carlyle, "The Leader as Hero" (HuskyCT)
 - Miroff, chs. 5 (Theodore Roosevelt) & 8 (John F. Kennedy)
- Discussion Questions: What is "heroic" leadership? Is heroic leadership a viable leadership posture in the 21st century? Do Miroff's "heroic" leaders have *any* redeeming qualities? Compare and contrast the competing approaches Miroff and Skowronek bring to the study of presidential leadership.

Week 8: Midterm Examination – Tuesday, 10/20 (in-class)
No Class Meeting Thursday, 10/22.

IV. Democratic Leadership from the Outside

A. Week 9: *Social Movements, Part I: Charismatic Leadership on the Front Lines* (T10/27, TH10/29, T11/3)

- Readings (note – read Heifetz chapters by 10/27; read remainder by 10/29)
 - Heifetz, ch. 1 ("Values in Leadership"); ch. 6 ("On a Razor's Edge") and ch. 9 ("Modulating the Provocation") (HuskyCT)
 - Miroff, ch. 9 (Martin Luther King, Jr.); Carson ("Charismatic Leadership in a Mass Struggle")
- In Class Assignment, T10/27: Watch *Bridge to Freedom* (60 min).
- Out-of-Class Assignment: Watch *Selma* (128 min) before class meets on TH10/29. I will screen the movie somewhere on campus during this week, but please note that several streaming services (Amazon, iTunes, etc.) have it available at a very low cost.
- Discussion Questions: Can social movements be "led" from the top? What is leadership without authority? Under what conditions can choosing *not* to act constitute leadership? What is "Adaptive Leadership"? How can it be distinguished from "Heroic Leadership"?

Writing Assignment (due before 11:59pm on Sunday, 11/1)

Write a 4-5 page essay (1,250-1,500 words, typed, double-spaced, 1"-1.25" margins, 11-12 point font) assessing the extent to which Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., operated according to Heifetz's principles of "adaptive leadership" during the days surrounding the march from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. In making and supporting your argument, be sure to draw heavily on the assigned readings, the documentary, *and* the movie. Submit via HuskyCT (as an attachment) before the midnight on Sunday, 11/1.

B. Week 10: Social Movements, Part II: Leadership Without Charisma (TH11/5)

- Readings:
 - Miroff, ch. 6 (Eugene V. Debs)
- Discussion Questions: What is dissenting leadership, and what is its relationship to democratic leadership? What obstacles do "grassroots" political leaders face? What factors contribute most powerfully to the success of social movements? What are the dangers in ascribing the "charismatic" label to political leaders?

V. Evaluating Leaders

A. Week 11: Image and Rhetoric (T11/10, TH11/12)

- Readings (and viewings). We'll focus on the Wills essay and the Lincoln speeches on Tuesday, 11/10, and the remaining speeches on Thursday, 11/12.
 - Wills, "Lincoln's Greatest Speech?" (HuskyCT)
 - Lincoln, "Lyceum," "Gettysburg," "First Inaugural" and "Second Inaugural" Addresses (HuskyCT)
 - Ronald Reagan, "City Upon a Hill" (HuskyCT)
 - Barack Obama, "Keynote Address at 2004 Democratic Convention" (HuskyCT)
 - Bill Clinton, "Nomination Address at 2012 Democratic Convention" (HuskyCT)
- Discussion Questions: Which of Lincoln's four major addresses do you like the most and why? What, if any, common threads – conceptually or stylistically – run through all of them? What are the common themes in the two speeches by Clinton and Obama? With whom do you agree – Reagan or Obama/Clinton? Identify the order shattering/order-affirming elements of the Lincoln, Reagan, and Obama speeches.

B. Week 12: Gender and Leadership (T11/17, TH11/19)

- Readings (note – read Miroff ch. 4 and Slaughter for T11/17; read remainder for TH11/19):
 - Miroff, ch. 4 (Elizabeth Cady Stanton)
 - Slaughter, “Why Women Still Can’t Have it All” (HuskyCT)
 - Barth and Ferguson, “Gender and Gubernatorial Personality” (HuskyCT)
 - Brooks, “Combat and Composure” (HuskyCT)
 - Hayes, “The New Presence of Women Leaders (HuskyCT – review)
- Discussion Questions: Are men and women judged differently as leaders? Do women and men employ distinct leadership styles in the political realm? Will Hillary Clinton be elected president in 2016?

Thanksgiving Break: November 23-27. No Class Meetings.

C. Week 13: Race and Leadership (T12/1, TH12/3)

- Readings (note – read Washington, DuBois, and Kilson for T12/1; read Obama for TH12/3):
 - Washington, “Speech Before the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition” (HuskyCT)
 - DuBois, “Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others” (from *The Souls of Black Folk*) (HuskyCT)
 - Kilson, “Washington and Du Bois Leadership Paradigms Reconsidered” (HuskyCT)
 - Barack Obama, “A More Perfect Union” (HuskyCT)
- Discussion Questions: How does race factor into the “leadership” equation? How did the unique elements of the African-American historical experience affect the cultivation of black leaders in this country? Is Barack Obama more W.E.B. Du Bois or more Booker T. Washington?

VI. **Week 14: Wrap-Up: Do Leaders Matter?** (T12/8, TH12/10)

- Readings:
 - Miroff, ch. 10 (“Democracy and Leadership in America”)
- Discussion Questions: What’s “wrong” with American political leadership? Are great leaders “born” or “made”? What is a “great” leader? Can the concepts of democracy and leadership be reconciled?

Final Examination: Visit the Registrar’s website to access the official Final Examination Schedule. The preliminary schedule is available at <http://registrar.uconn.edu/preliminary-final-exam-schedule/>. Early exams or make up exams *must* be approved by the Office of Student Services and Advocacy. I do not have discretion in this matter.
