

THE RHETORICAL PRESIDENCY

This course is a research seminar that is specifically designed to help you cultivate the research skills you will need in a senior thesis. The specific topic we will examine is the idea of "the rhetorical presidency," as that concept has been developed by Jeffrey Tulis. In The Rhetorical Presidency, Tulis contrasts the 19th century constitutional presidency with a new, modern 20th century rhetorical presidency that has its origins in the presidencies of Theodore Roosevelt and especially Woodrow Wilson. We will reassess Tulis's thesis through a close examination of nineteenth century and early twentieth century presidencies.

The major written requirement for this class is a 25-30 page research paper. The first half of the course will be devoted to reading Tulis's book and various critical commentaries on the book. There will be an in-class midterm based on this material. The second half of the course will be devoted to your own research. Oral presentations will take place in the middle of November. Final papers will be due at the final class period on December 12. The grade will be based on a 5 page prospectus (10%), a first draft (20%), and final draft of the research paper (20%); an oral presentation (10%); class participation (20%); and a 10-12 page paper on presidential acceptance speeches, due October 19 (20%).

If you miss a class, whether excused or unexcused, you are expected to write a short paper (2-3 pages) analyzing the reading that was assigned for the day you miss. Your participation grade will be lowered by 1/3 for every paper that you do not turn in within a week of returning to class.

Because it is necessary that you have a general sense of 19th century political/presidential history, I have assigned Michael McGerr's The Decline of Popular Politics as summer reading. You should have completed the book by the first day of class. That book, as well as Tulis's Rhetorical Presidency (Princeton, 1987), are available for purchase at Willamette Bookstore. A xeroxed package of readings will also be available for purchase.

1.1 Introduction. (September 3)

Michael McGerr, The Decline of Popular Politics

1.2 The Old Way: The Founders (Sept. 5)

Tulis, Rhetorical Presidency, 3-60

2.1 The Old and New Ways Compared (Sept. 10)

Tulis, Rhetorical Presidency, 61-172

2.2 Does Rhetoric Matter? (Sept. 12)

George Edwards, "Presidential Rhetoric: What Difference Does it Make?" in Medhurst, Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency, 198-216

3.1 Visit Library--Presidential Papers on CD-ROM (Sept. 17)

3.2 The Rhetorical Presidency Today and Tomorrow (Sept. 19)

Tulis, Rhetorical Presidency, 173-204

Tulis, "Revising the Rhetorical Presidency"

Thomas Benson, "Desktop Demos: New Communication Technologies and the Future of the Rhetorical Presidency,"

4.1 Revisiting the Founders (Sept. 24)

Mel Laracey, "Popular Rhetoric in George Washington's Time: Proscription or Prescription"

David Nichols, "A Marriage Made in Philadelphia: Institutional Restraint and Popular Leadership in the Constitutional Presidency"

Glen E. Thurow, "Dimensions of Presidential Character"

4.2 Testing Tulis (Sept. 26)

Gerald Gamm and Renee Smith, "Presidents, Parties, and the Public: Evolving Patterns of Interaction"

5.1 The Old Way Revisited I (October 3)

Richard Ellis and Stephen Kirk, "Presidential Mandates in the Nineteenth Century: Conceptual Change and Institutional Development"

Mel Laracey, "The Presidential Newspaper: The Forgotten Way of Going Public"

5.2 Acceptance Speeches (October 5)

6.1 The Old Way Revisited II (October 10)

Mel Laracey, "Presidents and Public Communication in the Late Nineteenth Century"
Andrew Robertson, "The Rhetorical Prime Ministry: A Transatlantic Perspective on Rhetorical Innovation"

6.2 Acceptance Speeches (October 12)

7.1 Woodrow Wilson Revisited (October 17)

Terri Bimes and Stephen Skowronek, "Woodrow Wilson's Critique of Popular Leadership: Reassessing the Modern-Traditional Divide in Presidential History"

Daniel Stid, "Woodrow Wilson and the Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency Reconsidered."

Sidney Milkis, "The Presidential Rhetoric of Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt"

7.2 10-12 page paper due on Acceptance Speeches (October 19)

8.1 Sample Student Papers (October 24)

Stacey Hereau, "The State of the Governorship, 1875-1911: Reflections on Tulis's The Rhetorical Presidency"

Shelly Strong, "The Rhetorical Presidency: Rethinking Democrats in the Late Nineteenth Century"

8.2 Individual Meetings (October 26)

9-15 (October 31-December 12): Research Project

5 page Prospectus Due: October 31

Oral Presentations: November 12, 14

First Draft: November 26

Final Paper: December 12