

The Sixties in Stereo: The Johnson Years

HIUS 401-E
3:30-6:00, Wednesdays
Cabell, room 241
And Miller Center [see directions below]

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[This syllabus is subject to change. Please see the course website for the most up-to-date information regarding the class—once it is corrected.]

Course Website: <http://www.faculty.virginia.edu/sixties/>

Course Description:

In the 1960s America faced unprecedented challenges and opportunities. At home, the struggle for civil rights, a minimum wage, and full employment—in short, a greater society—politicized a new generation, bringing many into the streets. Abroad, the Cold War with the Soviet Union reached the brink of a nuclear exchange while the strategy of containing communism led to the deaths of over 50,000 servicemen in Vietnam.

Although each would wield power in his own way, presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson both understood the unusual nature of their time and chose to create an extensive historical record of what they did in the White House. Between them these presidents secretly recorded over 1,000 hours of meetings, monologues, and telephone conversations, a collection of material that provides an unparalleled view into the workings of the American government at the highest levels.

This semester students will be introduced to the Johnson tapes. Students will engage a wide variety of source material ranging from secondary sources, traditional primary sources, to multimedia sources and the tapes themselves to discuss historical methods, the evolution of historical interpretation, and the fragility of primary sources. What are the strengths and weaknesses of these once secret tapes as historical sources? How do they compare to oral histories and other resources? The goal of the course is to give students the tools they need to employ these remarkable sources in a research paper on the Johnson era.

Grading and Evaluation:

- Class Participation: **20%**
 - Including Reaction papers and your “History of Me” papers
- First Draft: **10% (due April 5)**
- Final Research Paper (20-30pp): **70% (due May 4)**

REACTION PAPERS/RESEARCH PROPOSAL:

1—Reaction papers—1-2 page reactions to questions asked. They are not graded for style or grammar or content, but are intended to allow the writer full liberty in responding to the question in whatever form that strikes them. See reading assignments for due dates.

2—The Research Proposal—This is an approximately one page summary of the topic you propose to research. It should include a description of your topic, possible questions for exploration, and possible sources. This proposal must be turned in by March 2.

3—“A History of Me” Paper—Due on February 15. Using at least one oral interview with someone who knows you well, your own memories of your life, and any other pertinent evidence (emails, letters, IM conversations, articles about you, etc.) write an approximately 3-5 page history of yourself. This paper may take a long look at your life or focus on one transformative moment or a

series of events. Another student will read your history and then present it to the class in a five-minute presentation. Then you and the class will decide if you “got it right.”

THE FIRST DRAFT:

4—The First Draft—Due on April 5, in electronic form. This should be a substantially completed version of your paper written in your highest quality prose. I will make comments on this paper and return to you for use on completing your final draft.

See the course website for some possible topics.

5--FINAL PAPER »

Due May 4.

Your final paper should be approximately 20 to 30 pages long. It should be a work of original research on a topic on the 1960s era. Sources should be properly referenced throughout with one of the established referencing systems.

The paper topics available for students depend on the student’s imagination and interest. The only major requirement is that the papers address the 1960s. Topics are likely to deal with President Johnson, but this is not necessarily a requirement. Papers do not have to be about policies. I encourage students to approach their topics from a wide variety of perspectives and consider cultural, social, economic, and political analyses of the era.

CLASS TEXTS:

There are four main required texts, all of which are available at the UVa Bookstore. They will be supplemented by other readings available online.

- Bruce Schulman, *Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism: A Brief Biography with Documents* (New York: Bedford-St. Martin’s Press, 1994).
- Taylor Branch, *At Canaan’s Edge: America in the King Years, 1965-1968* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006).
- Paul Hendrickson, *The Living and the Dead: Robert McNamara and the Five Lives of a Lost War* (New York: Vintage, 1996).
- Fredrik Logevall, *The Origins of the Vietnam War* (Longman, 2001).

Meeting Schedule:

[See Readings Schedule (below) for Reading and Writing Assignments]

Part 1: Overview

January 18 Introduction: Situating the Sixties in Cultural, Social, and Political History
January 25 Personal Politics: Who Is Worth Studying? [At Miller Center Forum Room]

Part 2: Situating LBJ and the 1960s

February 1 Civil Rights: Local People and LBJ [At Miller Center Forum Room]
February 8. Introduction to Research Tools.
February 15 “A History of Me” papers due (on the 14th), presentations in class.
February 22 Vietnam.
March 1 The Great Society and the War on Poverty. Research proposals due by the end of week, in electronic form.
March 8 No meeting. Spring Break.
March 15 No class meetings. Individual meetings are required. Research should be well underway.
March 22 and 29 Individual meetings as necessary.

Part 3: The Paper

April 5 First drafts due, in electronic form.
April 12 Class Discussion of first drafts.
April 19 Class Discussion of first drafts.
April 26 No class meetings. Individual meetings as necessary.
May 4 Final papers due. Students may turn in papers before this date.

READINGS SCHEDULE

[subject to change, please see updates on website]

to locate the .pdf readings and to see other suggested readings, go to the course website.

Part 1: Overview

January 29»

Personal Politics: Who Is Worth Studying? [At Miller Center]

Reaction paper due. Read the following works on LBJ and conduct an oral interview with someone who knows you (preferably recorded on tape, but not necessary) to compile a history of yourself. Then, answer this question, "Is my life worth studying?" The interview will be part of the research for a short writing assignment due on February 15.

- Bruce Schulman, *Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism: A Brief Biography with Documents*. 1-56.
- Tom Wicker, "Hey, Hey, LBJ . . .": The Presidency Demystified," *Esquire* (December 1983): 146-160. [.pdf]
- Lady Bird Johnson, *A White House Diary*. 1970. p. 3-16. [.pdf]
- Doris Kearns, *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*, 1976, "Preface" and "Prologue," xi-xiv and 1-19. [.pdf]

February 1»

Civil Rights and the Politics of Race

--a REACTION PAPER is not due, but be prepared to discuss in depth: What contributions did local people make compared to national leaders such as LBJ or Martin Luther King, Jr.? What power did local people have? What national political power developed out of the Selma movement?

- Bruce Schulman, *Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism: A Brief Biography with Documents*. 57-124.
- Taylor Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965-1968*, 1-205

Primary Documents:

- Lady Bird, *A White House Diary*, Civil Rights Act 173-175 and Voting Rights Act, 246-255. [.pdf]
 - Lyndon Johnson, "Remarks of Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, Memorial Day, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania," 30 May 1963. <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/630530.asp>
 - Lyndon Johnson, "Special Message to Congress: The American Promise," 15 March 1965. <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/650315.asp>
 - Lyndon Johnson, "To Fulfill These Rights," at Howard University, 4 June 1965. <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/650604.asp>
- For audio: <http://www.hpol.org/record.asp?id=54>

February 8»

Introduction to Research Tools

Reaction Paper Due: Read the following and answer the question, "What makes a good history paper, how important is storytelling to historical writing, and how important is analytical interpretation to historical writing?"

- Sam Merrill, **Basic Rules for Writing Narrative History;**
- and William B. Hesseltine's **The Historian's Ten Commandments.**

I strongly recommend that you take a look at these two readings. One can make some arguments against some of the advice that these two historians have given on the subject of historical writing, but I think they provide a good place to start.

Students are required begin formulating ideas about their topics. During our session on the 13th, we will explore ways to facilitate your review of the pertinent literature on your topic, your exploration of available primary resources, and your use of Johnson's White House tapes to augment your research. You should go to the other resources page on this website and review some of the elements listed there. You should also begin exploring the LBJ Library's telephone conversation search engine.

There are several stages in the development of a research paper. In consultation with the instructor, students should select a topic, build a bibliography and resource list, familiarize one's self with the prevailing historical debates concerning the topic, conduct extensive research (largely primary) on the topic, and write a paper that sets out your analysis of the topic based on your reading, research, and your own thoughts.

A crucial part of the research process involves the compiling of a list of issues and questions about the topic that have been identified by those who have written on the subject before. Those should be combined with your own thinking about the topic. Many of the readings for this course have been selected for that purpose. As one researches the topic, one should keep those issues and

questions in mind, while constantly adjusting their own list of things that one finds important about the topic. For compiling a bibliography, you can use a number of sources. You should consult the "suggested readings" sections for the seminar reading assignments. You should also consult the footnotes, endnotes, or bibliographies in the readings assigned to you or in the readings you explore. Do not be afraid to . Some of the easiest to use include the the Infotrac database, the Lexis-Nexis database, Dissertations Abstracts, History and Life--all accessible through Virgo's Journal Articles, Newspapers, & Indexes page. Of course, Virgo is a resource you must rely on to do your work. Also, do not dismiss use of the Google search engine to explore parts of your topics. You might be surprised what may turn up from some carefully crafted key-word searches,

As you conduct your research, you should always keep in mind what you want to get out of the project. Why do you care about the topic? If you don't care about it, it will be hard to get a reader interested in what you have to say about that topic. If you don't want the reader interested, why write it at all.

Some questions to ask about your topic and your take on it: What does it tell us about the period? About our current understanding of history? About our current understanding of ourselves? Of the policies that the U.S. has used to govern its citizens? Of the construction and distribution of power? Of the proper and ethical use of power, whether domestically, internationally, or personally? Who or what was important? Why were they? How were they? What forces were people required to deal with in their choices? Is academic inquiry into the subject relevant? Is it worth your time? Is it worth anyone's time? Can I finish my paper on it on time?

February 15»

A History of Me

3-5 page papers due in electronic form to me and to an assigned partner the night before. Your partner will present your "History of Me" to the class.

February 22»

Vietnam

Reaction Paper due: This paper requires no prose, but you may add as much prose as you wish. Instead, provide a list.

What are the ten most important reasons that the US was at war in Vietnam? AND What have been the ten most important outcomes of that involvement?

-Frederik Logevall, *Origins of the Vietnam War*. All.

-Paul Hendrickson, *The Living and the Dead: Robert McNamara and Five Lives of a Lost War*, 7-380.

March 1»

The Great Society and the War on Poverty

- Nicholas Lemann, "The Unfinished War," *The Atlantic* (December 1988): 37-56. The link below does not go directly to the article. You can get to the article by cutting and pasting the address into your browser's address box. Or type "unfinished war" into the Atlantic's search engine that pops up when you go to the link below.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/poverty/lemunf1.htm>

- Nicholas Lemann, "The Unfinished War," *The Atlantic* (January 1989): 53-68. The link below does not go directly to the article. You can get to the article by cutting and pasting the address into your browser's address box. Or type "unfinished war" into the Atlantic's search engine that pops up when you go to the link below.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/poverty/lemunf2.htm>

- Gareth Davies, "War on Dependency: Liberal Individualism and the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964." *Journal of American Studies* 26 (August, 1992): 205-231. [.pdf on website]

Primary Documents:

- Michael Harrington, *The Other America: Poverty in America*, [.pdf]

- "The Invisible Land," 1-19; and "The Two Nations," 167-168.

- "Poverty in the Eighties," 202-221.

- Schulman, 177-191.

- *The Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisers, 1964*, "The Problem of Poverty in America," 55-84.

- Lyndon Johnson, "Special Message to Congress Proposing a Nationwide War on the Sources of Poverty," 16 March 1964. [.pdf on website]

- Lyndon Johnson, "Remarks at the University of Michigan," 22 May 1964.

<http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/640522.asp>

Miller Center Forum Room



Directions to the Miller Center:

<http://www.millercenter.virginia.edu/about/directions.html>

From Grounds by Car: (1/2 mile)

The University of Virginia provides an [interactive map](#) to help you navigate the Grounds. Or, you may prefer to see our [static map](#) below pointing to our facilities.

Take Ivy Road (Route 250) west. At the light just after the light at Alderman Road, bear right onto Old Ivy Road and go under the railroad bridge. The Miller Center is the first drive on the right.

By University Bus:

Take the blue bus to North Grounds. Get off at the Faulkner Residence stop near Klockner Stadium on Massie Ave. Walk up Faulkner Way just past the second house on the left. Turn left and walk up past the modular office building about 100 feet. The front of the Miller Center building is on the left.



