

History Behind the Headlines

Spring 2011

Syllabus

Instructor: Brent Cebul (rbc5j@virginia.edu)

Council Room / Miller Center of Public Affairs / Fridays, 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM

Course Description:

History Behind the Headlines (HBH) is designed to take advantage of the nationally known academic experts, journalists, and policy-makers who come through UVa's Miller Center of Public Affairs each week. Undergraduates will consider some of our most pressing policy and public affairs issues and will do so with the backing of the considerable resources and scholars of the Miller Center and its guests. From polarization and the challenges of national building abroad to health care reform and competing visions of the proper role of the federal state, the research, writing and expertise of this spring's Miller Center GAGE Colloquium guests will form the core of HBH's readings. These readings will be supplemented by background assignments and the best examples of current journalism. Not for the faint of heart, the reading load will be heavy and will introduce students to some of the finest research in history, political science, international relations, sociology, and the growing field of American Political Development. Assignments will include weekly written questions as well as longer term projects and short op-ed style pieces, all of which will be geared toward articulating scholarship for a wider audience – a central mission of the Miller Center.

This 12-person class will meet every Friday in the Miller Center's Scripps Library to discuss readings centered on that week's speaker. Then, students will attend and participate in the GAGE Colloquium or Forum. Afterward, the students will reconvene in the Scripps Library to reflect on and discuss the speaker's presentation, often with the speaker and other invited scholars.

Assessment:

I place a heavy emphasis on class participation. But, with the prospect of discussing some of our most important scholars' work *with them*, I will do so more than ever in HBH. Students will develop a number of questions each week (described below). In addition,

twice during the term students will be expected to submit an op-ed style piece (no more than 750 words) that connects our readings and analysis to a current event. Students will submit a 3-5 page analytical proposal that links one or two of our readings to a current policy or political issue. We will workshop these pieces throughout the semester. I may encourage students to submit op-eds for publication, especially if they are written with an eye toward local issues.

Students will also develop a longer-term project of their own choosing. The only stipulation (so far) is that it must be geared toward connecting our scholarship with a wider audience – see attached rubric. Fair game would be a frequently updated analytical blog, policy memo, advocacy article, historical project, or political science model, etc. I'm open to hearing your suggestions.

40%	Class participation and questions
30%	Op-eds & op-ed workshop participation
30%	Cumulative project

Books to Purchase:

Tom Sugrue, *Not Even Past: Barack Obama and the Burden of Race*

Stephen Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make*

Theda Skocpol and Paul Pierson, *The Transformation of American Politics*

John Ikenberry et al, *The Crisis of American Foreign Policy: Wilsonianism in the Twenty-First Century*

Recommended to Purchase:

Leffler and Legro, eds., *To Lead the World: American Strategy after the Bush Doctrine*

Weekly Assignments:

In addition to each week's assigned readings and colloquia, I will post recent news articles that relate to the week's topic and speaker. I encourage students to post and share articles they find as well.

Each week, students should post to 2-4 questions the evening before class. While I won't mandate it, I encourage others to wade in to answering these questions in collab's discussion tab. These questions should generally be one of two types:

- *comprehensive*: focuses on nuts and bolts issues in a reading. These are designed to help sort out an argument before a colloquium or meeting a speaker.

- *analytical*: puts a piece's argument in conversation with other readings, challenges an author's assertions, or attempts to connect with broader themes.

Each week, we will meet before the Colloquium or Forum to discuss the week's readings before hearing the talk. My hope is that the speakers will be able to spend some time with us afterward. I will also invite Miller Center and UVa faculty and graduate students to attend the colloquium and join in our discussion after.

Readings & Colloquia:

January 21 **Tom Sugrue** Barack Obama and the Burden of Race

Readings: Sugrue, *Not Even Past: Barack Obama and the Burden of Race* (2010); Sugrue, "Crabgrass-Roots Politics: Race, Rights, and the Reaction against Liberalism in the Urban North, 1940-1964," *Journal of American History* (1995)

January 28 **Open** APD and American Politics: What Forces Drive Political Change?

View: Skowronek, [The Conservative Insurgency and Presidential Power](#), MC Colloquium, February 2009

Readings:

- Selections from Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make*, 1-58 and 287-406

- Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol, eds., *The Transformation of American Politics*, 3-16

- James Morone, *Hellfire Nation: The Politics of Sin in American History*, "Introduction: A Nation with the Soul of a Church," 1-28
- Peter Baker, "For Obama, Tide Turns, Starkly," *New York Times*, November 2, 2010
- View: Miller Center Skowronek Colloquium, November 13, 2009

February 4 **Marc Hetherington** Authoritarianism and Political Polarization

Reading: Hetherington Colloquium Paper and Keith Whittington and Daniel Carpenter, "Executive Power in American Institutional Development," *Perspectives on Politics* (2003); Hetherington Colloquium Paper available on MC Website
View: John Yoo, [Miller Center Forum](#), March, 2010

February 11 **Open** America's Evolving Party System: What Role for the Parties?

Reading:
Chs 1-4, Pierson and Skocpol, *The Transformation of American Politics*
View: Laura Kalman MC Colloquium, "Right Star Rising"

February 18 **James Morone** Progressivism, Obama, and Health Care

Readings: Morone colloquium paper; Morone interview, [Battle in the Bureaucracy, Parts 1 & II](#); Morone op-ed, ["Obama found his voice on health care"](#); Hacker, *The Divided Welfare State* Part I; View: Frontline Documentary on American Health Care System; Atul Gawande, "The Cost Conundrum," *The New Yorker*, June 2009.

February 25 **Theda Skocpol** Obama and the Dynamics of American Politics

Readings: Skocpol, Colloquium Paper; Skocpol, "Social Provision and Civic Community: Beyond Fragmentation" from *Fractious Nation*; Julian Zelizer, "Seizing Power: Conservatives and Congress since the 1970s" in *Transformation of American Politics*; View: MC Panel, "Party Animals: Is Political Partisanship Obama's Problem or Solution?" October 2, 2009.

- March 4 **Open** Gender and Social Issues in American Politics
- Readings: Mettler, *Dividing Citizens* (Selections); Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism* (Selections); Draper, "The Palin Network," *New York Times Magazine*, November 17, 2010.
- March 18 **Open** Race in American Politics
- Readings: Frymer, Strolovitch, & Warren, "New Orleans is not the Exception." *Du Bois Review* 3 (1): 37-57 (2006); Lassiter, "The Suburban Origins of 'Color Blind' Conservatism," *Journal of Urban History* (2004); and, Vesla Weaver, "Frontlash: Race and the Development of Punitive Crime Policy" (2007); "Interpreting Some Overlooked Stories from the South," *NYTimes*, May 1, 2007.
- March 25 **Dara Strolovitch** Representing Marginalized Groups in Hard Times
- Readings: Strolovitch, "Do Interest Groups Represent the Disadvantaged? Advocacy at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender." *Journal of Politics* 68 (4): 893-908. Paul Frymer, selections from *Uneasy Alliances* (updated edition).
- April 1 **Monica Prasad** The Credit / Welfare State Trade Off
- Readings: Prasad, "The Credit / Welfare State Trade Off: A Demand-Side Theory of Comparative Political Economy" and selections from David M.P. Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America* (2007)
- April 8 **John Ikenberry** The Future of Liberal Internationalism (**3PM**)
- Reading: Ikenberry, Knock, Slaughter, and Smith, *The Crisis of American Foreign Policy: Wilsonianism in the Twenty-first Century* (2008)

April 15 **Open** The Cold War, American Politics, and Individual Agency v. Structure in Foreign Policy

Reading: James Wilson, Introduction and Chapter One, “Bolts From the Blue,” selections from John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History*, and Steven Erlanger, “The Legacy of the Cold War is Still Up for Debate,” *New York Times*.

April 22 **Open** Foreign Policy in the Future

Readings: Selections from Leffler & Legro, *To Lead the World: American Strategy After the Bush Doctrine* (2009)

April 29 **FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

May 4 **WRITTEN FINAL PROJECTS DUE**