

## The Watergate Crisis

AMH 3931  
William A. Link  
Fall 2020

Tuesdays, Period 5 - 6 (11:45 AM - 1:40 PM)  
Thursdays, Period 6 (12:50 PM - 1:40 PM)

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Fall 2020

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appointment

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On June 17, 1972, five men were arrested in a bungled burglary at the Watergate, a Washington, D.C., complex housing the Democratic National Committee. Although the extent of involvement by the Richard Nixon reelection campaign remained unclear for months, eventually the break-in, and the attempt to cover it up, brought down the Nixon presidency.

This seminar examines the crisis through general reading and by exposing students to the rich primary sources that document it.

### Required Readings

Keith W. Olson, *Watergate* (purchase required)

Selected readings that are available on Canvas and listed below.

### Podcasts

You are also required to listen to two podcasts--

- *Slow Burn: Watergate* (<https://slate.com/podcasts/slow-burn/s1/watergate>)
- *Bagman* (<https://www.msnbc.com/bagman>)

These are also available on itunes podcasts.

## Videos

Under the description of each week (listed below), I have included videos that must be viewed prior to the Thursday class.

I have either listed links to the videos, or have them included in the link to course reserves in Canvas.

***I'm currently uncertain whether the library will be able to obtain two videos that I'd like you to watch:***

- *Dick* (1999, with Kirsten Dunst and Michelle Williams)
- *Watergate* (2018), directed by Charles Ferguson

***Should the library not obtain these in time, I'd like you to purchase or rent them on itunes.***

## Course Objectives

After completing this course, students should be able to:

1. read and analyze works of history, with particular attention to argument, methodology, and use of evidence;
2. improve their ability to communicate clearly and concisely, verbally and in writing;
3. understand how to locate and use primary sources in a library;
4. understand how to organize and assemble primary sources into a coherent research paper.

## Grading/evaluation

Online discussion, 15 percent; participation during live discussions, 15 percent; syllabus quiz, 1 percent; short papers, 30 percent; midterm, 19 percent; final paper, 20 percent.

## Grading Scale

94-100% = A	73.3-76.6% = C
90-93.9% = A-	70-73.2% = C-
86.7-89.9% = B+	66.7-69.9% = D+
83.3-86.6% = B	63.3-66.6% = D
80-83.2% = B-	60-63.2% = D-
76.7-79.9% = C+	Below 60 = E

### Course Assignments

**For all papers, I require that students submit their writing assignments to me via elearning (<https://elearning.ufl.edu>).**

***Papers must be submitted to Canvas by noon prior to the Thursday class.***

1. **Syllabus quiz** (due September 8 at noon) (1 percent).
2. **Online discussion grade** (total of 15 percent): This grade includes: 1) general participation in online discussion and 2) performance as a discussion leaders. (I will make team assignments early in the semester).

The online discussion grade includes two parts:

- a. **Participation leading online discussions (5 percent):** Each of you will serve on a discussion team or teams. Each team should be active participants by reading posts and responding.
  - b. **Online discussions, as participant (10 percent):** Students must contribute at least three posts each week of no fewer than 100 words each. I would especially like to see engagement between students. As usual, I expect civility and rationality to prevail!
3. **Participation during live discussions on zoom** (15 points). I will also require discussion teams to help lead the live discussion.

4. **Three (3) short papers (30 percent; each worth 10 percent)**—500 words each. These should be submitted to Canvas by the start of Thursday's class in Microsoft Word (I only accept submissions in this format): due September 22, October 13, and November 3.
  
5. **Midterm exam (19 percent)**. This take-home exam will cover the first seven weeks of the semester. Exams will be available on Friday, October 16 at 5 pm and will be due on Canvas on Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5 pm.
  
6. **Final paper of 2,000 words (20 percent)** – this will concern a topic of your choosing, a choice made in consultation with me. Each student should:
  - a. 1) propose a topic by October 1, and
  - b. 2) send me a proposal (no more than 200 words) by October 1,
  - c. 3) submit a bibliography by November 1, and 4) provide me an outline by November 15.

I will also provide extra credit opportunities during the semester that will be announced later in the semester.



### **Class format**

This class is 100 percent online, so the format obviously differs from face-to-face.

- For our Tuesday double-period class, I will provide online lectures, with links on the Canvas page. I also expect you all to complete the online discussion on Canvas.
- For Thursday's single-period class, we will discuss the reading and video materials for that week. All readings and audio-visual materials must be completed by the time of class.

- The syllabus details weekly readings that you must keep up with. Most of these will all be available online. I am also including some of the vast video materials that are available.
- I am available on request on Zoom.

### **Other Matters...**

**Attendance:** I take attendance, and your presence at the Thursday class discussion is mandatory. You also must complete all reading and viewing assignments by the Thursday class.

**Deadlines:** You must submit your work on time. Any unexcused late work will be penalized by one letter grade a day.

**Plagiarism:** I will enforce a policy of **zero tolerance** toward plagiarism of any kind, and I will be especially severe with anyone guilty of it. That means that anyone discovered cheating in any fashion will be given a failing course grade. It is your responsibility to be familiar with what cheating and especially plagiarism are. The University's rules on Academic Honesty and the statement on Academic Honesty are in the Undergraduate Catalog and at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx#honesty>.

The Department of History's statement on Academic Honesty, contained in the Department's Manual on Policies and Procedures, covers plagiarism, attribution, citation, multiple submission of papers, etc. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult the University and Departmental guidelines, or ask me for clarification.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. For more information, consult the following website: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc>.

I would like to have the Disabilities Resources Center (DRC) paperwork early in the semester.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

**WEEK 1 August 31-September 1: Course introduction**

Review syllabus and course requirements. **All students should complete a syllabus quiz by September 8.**

Video: *20/20 Mystery: Watergate*, on course reserves

Introductory lecture about class details.

**WEEK 2 September 8-10: The Imperial Presidency**

Schlesinger, *Imperial Presidency*, pp. 100-209

([https://archive.org/details/imperialpresiden00schl\\_0](https://archive.org/details/imperialpresiden00schl_0))

*Dick*, Andrew Fleming, on course reserves or purchase/rental on itunes

*Bagman*, podcast, Rachel Maddow, episode 1

**WEEK 3 September 15-17: The Rise of Richard Nixon**

Evan Thomas, *Being Nixon*, chapters 3-7

Richard Nixon, "The Checkers Speech"

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpWwgwytdzk>)

*Nixon*, American Experience, Part One," course reserves

(<https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/8f83a4fc185e4933ab571bc3e1db4a2b1d>)

*Bagman*, podcast, Rachel Maddow, episode 2

**WEEK 4 September 22-24: The Pentagon Papers**

Olson, *Watergate*, chapters 1-2

Steve Sheinkin, *The Most Dangerous Man in America*, pp. 217-73

(<https://archive.org/details/mostdangerousdan0000shei>)

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*The Most Dangerous Man in America*,

(<https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/01b7e5251bba413da244ce62c95e01111d>)

*Bagman*, podcast, Rachel Maddow, episode 3

**Short paper # 1 due by September 22<sup>nd</sup>, at the time of class**

Using a national newspaper such as the *Washington Post* or the *New York Times*, analyze media coverage of the Pentagon Papers.

**WEEK 5      September 29-October 1: The Campaign of 1972**

Thompson, *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail '72*, pp. 316-69

(<https://archive.org/details/fearloathingonth00thom>)

*Nixon*, American Experience, Part 2, on course reserves

(<https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/8f83a4fc185e4933ab571bc3e1db4a2b1d>)

*Bagman*, podcast, Rachel Maddow, episodes 4-5

**WEEK 6      October 6-8: The Agnew Problem**

Holden et al, *Republican Populist*, pp. 135-191

*Bagman*, Rachel Maddow, episodes 6-7

**WEEK 7      October 13-15: The Break-In**

*Slow Burn: Watergate*, episodes 1-2

*Watergate*, mini-series by Charles Ferguson, episode 1: "The Burglary." Available either on course reserves or purchase/rental on itunes.

James Rosen, *The Strong Man*, pp. 271-96

(<https://archive.org/stream/strongmanjohnmit00rose>)

"The Cuban Spy and Watergate Burglar," *Washington Post*, Dec. 3, 2018

*All the President's Men*, film version

(<https://archive.org/details/AllThePresidentsMen>)

**Short paper # 2 by October 13, at the time of class**

Read the coverage of the break-in in national newspapers. How was the break-in covered?

**WEEK 8      October 20-22: Coverup**

*Watergate*, episode 2: "The Coverup"

Woodward, *The Secret Man*, pp. 53-114

(<https://archive.org/stream/secretmanstoryof00wood>)

Olson, *Watergate*, chapter 3

*Slow Burn*, episodes 3-4

*Watergate Plus 30: Shadow of History*, PBS, 2<sup>nd</sup> half

(<https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/262972f4e5a74de598af580aeb1771241d>)

**MIDTERM EXAM DUE BY FRIDAY OCTOBER 23<sup>RD</sup>**

**WEEK 9      October 27-29: Investigations, Ervin Committee, Archibald Cox**

*Watergate*, Charles Ferguson, episode 3: "Things Fall Apart"

Kutler, *Abuse of Power*, Introduction and pp. 564-615

(<https://archive.org/details/abuseofpowernew00kutl>)

Olson, *Watergate*, chapters 4-5

*Slow Burn: Watergate*, episode 5



**WEEK 10      November 3-5: The Tapes**

*Watergate*, Charles Ferguson, episode 4: "U.S. v. Nixon"

*U.S. v Nixon*: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/403/713>

Olson, *Watergate*, chapter 6

*Slow Burn*, Slate, episode 6

**Short paper # 3 due by November 3<sup>rd</sup>, the time of class.**

Using both the oral arguments and the court's decision, explain Nixon's case and the petitioners' case in *New York Times Co. v. United States*.

**WEEK 11      November 10-12: Saturday Night Massacre**

*Watergate*, Charles Ferguson, episode 5: "Blowback"

Robert Bork, *Saving Justice*, chapter 5

Olson, *Watergate*, chapter 7

*Slow Burn: Watergate*, episode 7

**WEEK 12      November 17-19: Nixon in Crisis**

Woodward and Bernstein, *The Final Days*, pp. 21-105  
(<https://archive.org/details/finaldays00bobw>)

**WEEK 13      November 24: Toward Impeachment**

**Thanksgiving**

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*Impeachment of Richard M. Nixon, President of the United States : report of the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives*  
(<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39076005996074>)

**WEEK 14    December 1-3: Resignation and pardon**

Watergate, episode 6: Endgame

Gerald Ford, *Time to Heal*, pp. 154-77, 191-203

(<https://archive.org/details/timetohealautobi00ford>)

Olson, *Watergate*, chapter 8

**WEEK 15:    December 8-10:    Aftermath**

Frost - Nixon Interview

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhdewyMSeII>)

Olson, *Watergate*, chapter 9 and Afterword

**Final papers are due no later than the beginning of class on December 8<sup>th</sup>**