Course Title: Constitutional Crises from the Founding to the Trump Administration  
Course Code: LAW 106  
Instructor: William H. Simon

Tentative Weekly Outline:

1. The Adoption of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights (with some attention to the Election of 1800 [Adams-Jefferson]).  
   Benedict, 64-88, 101-02  
   Constitution, Art. VII, Am XII.  

2. The Civil War  
   Benedict, 155-56, 172-78, 183-95 [156-72 is also recommended but some may find it excessively dense]  
   Abraham Lincoln, “House Divided” Speech (June 16, 1858)  
   Constitution, Art. I, sec. 8, cl. 10-16; sec. 9, cl. 2; Art. II, sec. 2-3; Art. IV, sec. 2, cl. 3, sec. 3

3. Reconstruction  
   Benedict, 198-212  
   Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address (Nov. 19, 1863)  
   Constitution, Amendments 13-15

4. The Election of 1876 [Hayes-Tilden] (with some attention to the Election of 2000 [Bush-Gore])  
   Benedict, 212-220, 418-22  
   Constitution, Art. II, sec. 1, cl. 3; Amendment 12

5. The New Deal  
   Benedict, 285-300  
   Constitution, Art. III, sec.s 1-2

6. The Civil Rights Movement  
   Benedict, 327-46  
   Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail (April 16, 1963)  
   PBS Video, Eyes on the Prize – Episode 6: Bridge to Freedom

7. Watergate (with some attention to the Clinton impeachment)  
   Benedict, 351-59, 415-18  
   Constitution, Art II, sec. 1, cl. 8, sec. 3-4; Art. I, sec. 1, cl. 5; sec.3, cl. 6-7  
   BBC Video, Watergate [or any of the many videos about Watergate with excerpts from the White House tapes, Congressional hearings, and retrospective interviews]

8. Executive Unilateralism Under Presidents Bush (43) and Obama  
   Benedict, 449-66, 469-88  
   Constitution, Art II

9. Trump-Era Issues

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions  
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Grade Options and Requirements:

- No Grade Requested (NGR)
  - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit will be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
  - Students must attend at least 80% of class sessions.

*Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose the Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.*

Required Books/Materials:


There is no need to bring the book to class, but it would be a good idea to bring a copy of the Constitution. A printable pdf of the constitutional text is on the course website. Lincoln’s addresses can be easily found on-line. The two videos were available on YouTube as of the time of the preparation of this syllabus. Many public libraries have DVDs of them or can enable you to stream them.