

Psychological Assessments of Presidents and Presidential Candidates

This course will focus on approaches to the psychological assessment of presidents and presidential candidates. We will discuss the work of Fred Greenstein, Stanley Renshon, Steven Rubenczer & Thomas Faschingbauer, and others who propose analyzing traits such as emotional intelligence, cognitive style, integrity, character, and relatedness. Using the various assessment frameworks, we will examine the presidencies of Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump, as well as some presidential candidates of our choosing. Classes will largely center on short presentations of the various political psychologists' work followed by discussion; some small group work and presentations will also be included. Participants will read Fred Greenstein's book as the course proceeds. All understandings, opinions, and questions are welcomed, with an emphasis on respect, civility, and inclusion.

Participants are asked to purchase Fred Greenstein's 2009 book, listed below and available from Amazon. For the first class, please try to read Chapter 12, "The Undisciplined Bill Clinton." Dr. Greenstein, professor of politics emeritus at Princeton University, will visit one of our classes to discuss his work and answer questions. Two additional readings are included here, and others will be shared as we proceed.

My interest in the field of political psychology stems from my formal training and long career as a clinical psychologist combined with my lifelong interest in history and politics. I agree with Rubenczer & Faschingbauer, who declare in their introduction that each of us needs "information to intelligently and responsibly make one of the most important decisions required of people in a free society: choosing who will govern" and that this should be done "not just on political issues, but also on the personal qualities of each candidate" (p. xii). I look forward to our discussions.

Greenstein, Fred I. 2009. *The Presidential Difference: Leadership Style from FDR to Barack Obama*. 3rd ed. Princeton & Oxford: Princeton Univ. Press.

Renshon, Stanley A. 1998. *The Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates*. New York: Routledge.

Rubenczer, S. J. & T. R. Faschingbauer. 2004. *Personality, Character, and Leadership in the White House: Psychologists Assess the Presidents*. Washington, DC: Potomac Books.

Leader: David Brown is a retired licensed clinical psychologist in New Jersey who practiced for forty-five years and has long been interested in the intersection of personality and politics.

Wednesdays: 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., 8 weeks: September 27 through November 15.

Location: Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville.