

Fall 2024

OLLI Proposal-Course Content

The Life & Times of Lyndon Baines Johnson

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This will be an 11-week course broken down chronologically.

Week 1- Johnson's birth through his college years. We will discuss the times and places into which Johnson was born and how his childhood years helped shape the adult.

Week 2- Johnson's brief career as a teacher and school Principal had a major impact on his views about American society and government. We will look at the system of segregated schooling in Texas and America during Johnson's brief teaching career.

Week 3- Even before his election to public office, Johnson worked with the New Deal's National Youth Administration. This experience paved the way for his election to Congress and his early career as a New Deal Democrat from a Conservative State. Johnson's views did not always align with his Texas colleagues or his constituency.

Week 4- Johnson served six terms as a congressman. This week we will continue looking at his role in the passage of New Deal legislation.

Week 5- Elected to the Senate in 1940 Johnson became the youngest Senate Minority Leader to that point. He quickly developed a personal style and connections with key players. He served briefly in World War II and returned home to help organize necessary legislation to further the war effort.

Week 6- Johnson developed important political friendships with several wealthy benefactors during his Senate career. Perhaps most significant among these friendships was his connection to George and Herman Brown of Texas. Understanding this friendship is vital to understanding Johnson's political success.

Week 7- Johnson and Eisenhower. During the Eisenhower administration Johnson played a key role in supporting the President's agenda. Despite being a Democrat serving under a Republican President, the two had an important working partnership especially in the area of Civil Rights. On a personal level, the President and the Senator could not have been more different.

Week 8- From its creation Lyndon Johnson was a vital political supporter of NASA and the U.S. space program. We will look at Johnson's role in the growth and development of NASA.

Week 9- Chosen as the Vice-Presidential running mate of John F. Kennedy Johnson had a love/hate relationship with both John and Robert Kennedy.

Weeks 10/11- As President Johnson tried to push two increasingly problematic agendas, Civil Rights and Cold War Anti-Communism. His detractors claim that he failed at both. And his defenders see a man working against impossible odds to serve his nation.