

**BOSTON UNIVERSITY – International Programs**  
**Washington Semester Program**

**HI/PO/IR 356E – *Foreign Affairs, Politics, & Presidents in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century***

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Office Hours: By appointment

The course meets Mondays and Wednesdays from 7:00-10:00 p.m.

Course Objectives:

This is a four-credit course that meets twice a week, two-three hours per session. Its primary aim will be to provide an overview of American presidents in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and how they affected American foreign policy. Along the way, the course will cover specific presidential campaigns worth noting, as well as the individuals who helped craft the modern-day American political tradition. How politics relates to foreign policy in America is very important to dissect; therefore, concepts such as isolationism, free security, moralism, the rule of law, national self-interest, and the current topic we are now all too familiar with – terrorism – will be discussed. How has our conduct overseas been shaped over the years and who were the primary players in helping mold this ever-expanding American foreign policy? How has presidential leadership affected our standing in the world? What can we learn from the accomplishments and mistakes of presidents past? In addition, other topics the course will cover are the media's impact on the presidency, the growth of the office, and some of the key figures surrounding the office over the years. **Foreign Affairs, Politics, & Presidents in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century** will aim to address such questions and many more. Time permitting, the course will include a guest speaker, a short local field trip to a presidential museum, and will conclude with a thorough analysis of the current administration's potential legacy in foreign affairs.

Course Requirements:

Regular attendance is required, as is diligent preparation for class meetings. Students will be expected to complete all assigned readings, submit assignments on time, and participate in class discussions as often as possible. The class has one mandatory writing assignment consisting of a (1) short book review (five-six pages) on fairly recent scholarship regarding a presidential administration in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and, a (2) mid-term exam. (3) **Students will have the option of either writing and researching a final paper or taking a final exam.** The optional final research paper (12-15 pages) will focus on one of the larger themes in the course. Grades will be assessed as follows:

Book review and presentation (25%)  
Final Exam or Final Research Paper (25%)

Mid-term Exam (25%)  
Class participation (25%)

Required Readings for the Course:

Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace – Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*  
(Basic Books)  
Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (Oxford)  
John L. Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (Oxford University Press)  
Lewis L. Gould, *The Modern American Presidency* (University Press of Kansas)  
**[One additional book is forthcoming]**

Recommended Reading

Robert Dallek, *Hail to the Chief – The Making and Unmaking of American Presidents*

The remaining readings -- consisting of articles and book excerpts -- will be provided by the instructor. These will likely focus on the foreign policies of presidents Harry S. Truman through George W. Bush. In addition, the instructor will provide a detailed list of books from which you will select one for your assigned book review. Finally, a detailed instruction sheet on your optional final research paper will be provided following the mid-term examination.

Course Outline:

**I. Wednesday, 26 May 2004**

Introduction: The Impact of the Presidency on the American Mindset. How has the Office grown since George Washington's time? Is the office too powerful? Who stands out in American memory today as the unofficial founder of American foreign affairs?

**NO CLASS ON MONDAY, 31 MAY DUE TO MEMORIAL DAY**

**II. Wednesday, 2 June**

What is the American Foreign Policy Tradition? The Origins of American Diplomacy as seen in Jefferson's time. American Moralism and Manifest Destiny. William McKinley's surprising presidency and America's first rise to prominence. The lasting impact of Theodore Roosevelt and his energetic office.  
**Read: Gould (McKinley and Roosevelt)**

**III. Monday, 7 June**

The ever-changing Office of the President – From T.R. to Taft to Wilson. American Imperialism...Making the World Safe for “Democracy”? The legacy of World War I, the League of Nations, and Woodrow Wilson’s 14 Points. The impact of a president in absentia...

**Read: Gould (Taft and Wilson)**

**IV. Wednesday, 9 June**

Back to Isolationism: the 1920s, and the Great Depression in the midst of laissez-faire presidents. Contrasting presidencies: FDR vs. Hoover. FDR’s rise and the subsequent growth of presidential power and the Modern Presidency. **Distribute**

**List of Books for Book Reviews (due on Wednesday, 30 June)**

**Read: Gould (Harding, Coolidge, Hoover); Dallek (first half)**

**V. Monday, 14 June**

Franklin D. Roosevelt and World War II: An Exercise in Craftsmanship and The Art of Persuasion. The Use of Television, Radio, and the Media.

**Read: Gould (FDR); Dallek (second half)**

**VI. Wednesday, 16 June**

Truman’s fateful decision; the Cold War, and Containment. An Iron Curtain draped across a divided world. The Vice Presidency: A Futile Office?

**Read: Gould (Truman and Eisenhower); Gaddis (first half)**

**VII. Monday, 21 June**

**Midterm Exam**

**Distribute Instructions and Topics for Research/Final Paper.**

**VIII. Wednesday, 23 June**

Nuclear Culture, War on the Korean Peninsula, and Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower’s New Look Policy. America’s early involvement in the Middle East; and, the intensifying rivalry with the Soviet Union.

**Read: Gaddis (second half)**

**IX. Monday, 28 June**

Cuba, JFK, & a near-paralyzing Missile Crisis. America’s Banana War Tradition. The Death of a President -- Its Impact on the American Psyche. Lured into Indochina amidst monumental changes in a most radical decade.

**Read: Gould (Kennedy and Johnson); Boot (two Vietnam chapters)**

- X. Wednesday, 30 June**  
The Quagmire of Vietnam. Lyndon Johnson's rise & fall. The 1968 presidential campaign and the Civil Unrest in America. **Read: Boot (selected chapters); previously assigned articles**  
**Book Reviews Due**
- XI. Monday, 5 July**  
Richard Nixon's foreign policy: Vietnam, Cambodia, Chile, China, the Middle East and Détente. **Read: Gould (Nixon); Boot (selected chapter)**
- XII. Wednesday, 7 July**  
The Ford Presidency: A Period of Defeat or Respite?  
The "Malaise" of the '70s: President Carter and the U.S. in declension.  
**Read: Gould (Ford & Carter); Finish Boot; selected articles**
- XIII. Monday, 12 July**  
Ronald Reagan vs. the Soviet Union: Détente's Demise. An Evil Empire or declining world power? Small wars revisited (Grenada, Libya, Lebanon...Panama, Somalia...). Bush I and the First Gulf War.  
**Read: Gould (Reagan & Bush I); previously assigned articles.**
- XIV. Wednesday, 14 July**  
The Clinton deployments, the Middle East, and the approaching terrorism.  
Bush II: A New American Foreign Policy of Preemption? Afghanistan 2001-2002 and Operation Iraqi Freedom 2003-04. Questions and discussion on the future of American foreign policy.  
**Read: Gould (Clinton & Bush II); previously assigned articles.**  
Concluding Statements. Course Evaluations.
- XV. Monday, 19 July**  
**Final Exam**  
**Final Papers (in lieu of the Final Exam due on Sunday, 25 July (by 12 noon))**

