

**BOSTON UNIVERSITY – International Programs**  
**Washington Semester Program – Spring 2007**

**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 Tuesday evenings from 7:00-10:00 p.m.

**Course Objectives:**

This is a four-credit course that meets once a week, two-three hours per session. It aims to provide an overview of American presidents in the 20-21<sup>st</sup> centuries and how they crafted American foreign policy. The course will cover specific presidential campaigns worth noting, as well as the individuals who helped construct the modern-day American political tradition. How politics relates to foreign policy is very important to understand; therefore, concepts such as isolationism, manifest destiny, American moralism, national self-interest, and the topic we are currently all too familiar with, terrorism, will be covered. The current war in Iraq will be discussed in great detail throughout the semester, hopefully making most of the course material more relevant. We will also try to come to terms with *how our conduct overseas has shaped U.S. foreign policy* in addition to the *primary players throughout history who have molded U.S. international relations*. We will also explore *how an ever-growing presidency has affected our standing in the world* and *how much power a president possesses*. Lastly, students will come to understand *what can be learned from the accomplishments and mistakes of presidents past*. Other topics the course will cover are the media's impact on the presidency, presidential elections and some of the key biographical figures surrounding the office over the years. **Foreign Affairs, Politics, & Presidents in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century** will aim to address many such questions in addition to an array of controversial subjects in U.S. foreign policy over the years. Time permitting, the course will include a guest speaker, a short local field trip or two, and, 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 sessions. Students will be expected to attend all class sessions (unless you have cleared it first with the instructor), participate in class discussions, complete all assigned readings, and submit assignments on time. The class has one mandatory writing assignment consisting of a short book review (five-seven pages) on fairly recent scholarship regarding a presidential administration in the 20<sup>th</sup> (or 21<sup>st</sup>) century. Students will present their reviews to the class in a ten-fifteen-minute presentation. Along with a mandatory take-home mid-term examination, students are responsible for either writing 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. Final grades will be assessed as follows:

Book review and presentation (25%)  
Class participation (25%)

Mid-term Exam (25%)  
Final Exam or Final Research Paper (25%)

### **Required Readings for the Course:**

Louis Fisher, *Presidential War Power* (University Press of Kansas - 2004)  
John L. Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment* (Oxford University Press – 1981/2005)  
Lewis L. Gould, *The Modern American Presidency* (University Press of Kansas - 2003)

### **Recommended Reading**

Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (Oxford - 1995)  
Jeffrey Record, *Making War, Thinking History – Munich, Vietnam, and Presidential Uses of Force From Korea to Kosovo* (Naval Institute Press – 2002)

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.

### **Course Outline:**

#### **I. Tuesday, 23 January 2007**

Introduction. How the course works, what we hope to accomplish these next few months. **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? The Origins of American Diplomacy as seen in Jefferson's time.

#### **II. Tuesday, 30 January**

**What is the American Foreign Policy Tradition?** American Moralism the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny. William McKinley's surprising presidency and the U.S.'s rise to prominence. *The lasting impact of Theodore Roosevelt and his energetic office.*  
**Read: Gould (McKinley, Roosevelt)**

#### **III. Tuesday, 6 February**

**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)**

**Distribute List of Books for Book Reviews (due on Tuesday, 20 March)**

**(\*) Note: There will be a FIELD TRIP to the Woodrow Wilson House (In Washington's Dupont Circle – 2340 S Street, N.W.) on a given day early in the semester, likely on a Saturday morning. We will decide on a specific day during the first two weeks of the course.**

**IV. Tuesday, 13 February**

**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 arrival of the Modern Presidency.* **Read: Gould (Harding, Coolidge, Hoover); other articles**

**V. Tuesday, 20 February**

**Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Great Depression, and World War II:** An Exercise in Craftsmanship and the Art of Persuasion. The use of Television, Radio, and the Media. *Truman's fateful decision and the subsequent Cold War and Containment strategy*  
**Read: Gould (FDR, Truman); previously assigned articles**  
**Distribute Take-Home Midterm (due in one week!)**

**VI. Tuesday, 27 February**

**An Iron Curtain draped across a divided world.** Nuclear Culture, War on the Korean Peninsula. The Vice Presidency: A Futile Office? *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: Gould (Truman, Eisenhower); Gaddis (chapters 1-3); previously assigned articles.**  
**Midterms due.**

**VII. Tuesday, 6 March**

The 1960 Election and its Impact. **Cuba, JFK, & a near-paralyzing Missile Crisis.** America's Banana War Tradition. *The Death of a President -- Its Impact on the American Psyche.* **Read: Gould (Kennedy); Gaddis (chapters 4-8)**  
**Instructions and Topics for Research/Final Paper distributed.**

**\*\* SPRING BREAK! No class on Tuesday, 13 March!! \*\***

**VIII. Tuesday, 20 March**

The 1964 Election. Lured into Indochina amidst monumental changes in a most radical decade. **The Quagmire of Vietnam. Lyndon Johnson's rise & fall.** The 1968 presidential campaign and the *civil unrest in America.*  
**Read: Gould (LBJ); Gaddis (9); select articles**  
**Book Reviews Due – Presentations begin (10-15 minutes per student)**

- IX. Tuesday, 27 March**  
**Richard Nixon's foreign policy:** Vietnam, Cambodia, Chile, China, the Middle East and Détente. *Vietnamization and the Nixon Doctrine*.  
**Read: Gould (Nixon); Gaddis (10)**  
**Book Review Presentations, continued**
- X. Tuesday, 3 April**  
**The Declining Presidency.....** Ford: A Healer or Divider?  
*President Carter's 'maligned' administration*. The Carter Doctrine and Camp David Accords. **Read: Gould (Ford & Carter)**
- XI. Tuesday, 10 April**  
**Reagan vs. the Soviet Union:** Détente's Demise. An Evil Empire or Declining Power? The Reagan Doctrine and Reaganomics. Small wars revisited (Grenada, Libya, Lebanon...Panama, Somalia...). *Post-Cold War America: Bush I, the New World Order, and the First Gulf War*. Clinton vs. Bush vs. Perot in the 1992 Election.  
**Read: Gould (Reagan, Bush I); Gaddis (11-epilogue); assigned articles**
- XII. Tuesday, 17 April**  
*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 2003-06.  
**Read: Gould (Clinton, Bush II); assigned articles**
- XIII. Tuesday, 24 April**  
Questions and discussion on the future of American foreign policy. Concluding statements. Course evaluations  
**Final Papers (in lieu of the Final Exam) due on Sunday, 17 December (specific time to be announced)**  
**Read: Gould (Bush II); assigned article(s)**

\* NOTE: *Some specifics in the above are subject to change based on availability of guest speakers, amount of material we cover, course presentations, date and time of field trip(s), etc.*