

His. 104: The American Presidency, 1901-2000
Campion 235, MW 6.15-9.15
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This course will examine the history of American presidents in the twentieth century. Among the aspects of the executive office that we will be examining will be the use of media and communication, political philosophies of leadership and political agendas, the role of the president in handling domestic and international crises, and the changing role of the presidency. We will also analyze personal biographies of the presidents, and their relationships with the legislative and judicial branches of government.

There will be short weekly quizzes during the session on Wednesdays. There will also be a short paper due, and a brief, in-class final.

Schedule:

Mon. June 29: Teddy Roosevelt and the Modern Presidency

Discussion: *Blum, Ch. 1*

Wed. July 1: Woodrow Wilson and Moral Leadership

Discussion: *Blum, Ch. 2; Wilson, Ch. 1*

Mon. July 6: The Limited Presidents – Harding, Coolidge, Hoover

Discussion: *Schlesinger, Ch. 4*

Wed. July 8: FDR: The Active President

Discussion: *Blum, Ch. 3; Wilson, Ch. 2; Badger, Chs. 1-3*

Mon. July 13: Commanders in Chief

Discussion: *Badger, Chs. 4-6; Neustadt, Ch. 2*

Wed. July 15: Harry and Ike: Cold War Presidents

Discussion: *Neustadt, Chs. 3-6; Wilson, Ch. 3*

Mon. July 20: Vietnam vs. the Great Society

Discussion: *Blum, Ch. 4; Wilson Ch. 3; Neustadt, Ch. 9; Schlesinger, Chs. 6-7*

Wed. July 22: Nixon and the Imperial Presidency

Discussion: *Wilson, Ch. 5; Neustadt, Ch. 10; Schlesinger, Ch. 8*

Mon. July 27: Ford and Carter: The Weakened Presidents

Discussion: *Neustadt, Ch. 11; Schlesinger, Chs. 9-11*

Wed. July 29: Reagan: The Great Communicator

Discussion: *Wilson, Ch. 6; Neustadt, Ch. 12; Schlesinger, Ch. 12*

Mon. August 3: George H. W. Bush: The Post-Cold War President

(Paper due at the beginning of class)

Wed. August 5: The Baby Boomer President: Clinton

Discussion: *Wilson, Ch. 7; Schlesinger, Epilogue*

The final exam will be administered in the last class meeting.

Books:

The required books from this course should be available at the Boston College bookstore.

J. M. Blum, *The Progressive Presidents*

A. Schlesinger, *The Imperial Presidency*

R. Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents*

A. Badger, *FDR and The 100 Days*

R. Wilson, ed. *Power and the Presidency*

Grading:

Four weekly in-class quizzes (10% each): 40%

Attendance and participation: 20%

3-4 page essay: 15%

Final exam: 25%

Class meetings:

The structure of our meetings will be roughly as follows: each class will consist of approximately 90 minutes of lecture, followed by discussions based on readings and material covered in lecture. On Wednesdays, there will be a short writing/essay assignment in class, designed to draw together readings and lecture materials from that week. Attendance and thoughtful participation are very important, since we have relatively few meetings in a short span of time. Please keep me apprised if you will be missing meetings during the session.

Paper:

On Monday August 3, each student will turn in a 3-4 page paper addressing a topic (again, drawn from readings and material from lecture) that I will assign. This is *not* a “research” paper – i.e. no additional reading or material will be required – but is instead an assignment to allow students to focus in greater depth on a larger theme of the course.