Course Description
An examination of the political history of the last eighty years, focusing on the Presidents from Roosevelt to Obama, on the electoral process by which they gained and lost office, and on the impact of significant domestic and international events on their presidencies and their legacies.

This is a course in recent American political history—the events that defined the eras, the individuals who shaped and were shaped by their times, who people voted for and why, and what history has made of these eras and individuals. As this is an upper-division course, some basic knowledge of American political history since 1929 is expected. This will not be a survey of the period but an investigation into some basic questions about the political history of the last seventy years.

Course Objectives
1. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the Presidents of the United States in the 20th century, the elections that brought them to office, and the changing nature of American politics over the century.
2. The student will demonstrate how to analyze and critically evaluate documents and texts, understand how historical analysis is constructed, and discuss important ideas and concepts that emerged in the period.
3. The student will demonstrate skill in written expression and oral presentations, as well as come to understand the variety of sources employed by modern historians.

Your responsibility in this course will be several-fold.

1. **Reading.** There is reading to be done for every class. The reading should be completed before you come to class and you should be ready to discuss the central issues of the reading and the period. General discussion will account for a significant part of each evening.

You cannot discuss material if you are not here. Attendance will be taken. You should make every effort to come to each class. You will receive a combined attendance-discussion grade
2. **Elections.** You will do research into one or two presidential elections, depending on the course enrollment. We will choose the election(s) you are to study the second week of classes. You will also give a brief oral presentation on your election. There will be a short worksheet/paper that is to be turned in the night we discuss the election(s) you research. We will discuss how to do this assignment in class.

3. **Examinations.** There will be a midterm and a final examination.

**Reading**

Three books have been ordered for this course:
- Alan Brinkley & Davis Dyer, eds., *The American Presidency* (Brinkley)
- Robert Wilson, ed., *Power and the Presidency* (Wilson)

**Course Outline**

**Aug 31** Introduction

**Sept 14** Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal Legacy
- Brinkley, pp. 344-364; Gould, pp. 79-99; Wilson, pp. 19-44.
  *selection of topics for election analyses*

**21** Harry Truman and the Cold War
- Brinkley, pp. 365-380; Gould, pp. 100-113.

**28** Eisenhower, McCarthyism, and the Fifties
- Brinkley, pp. 381-396; Gould, pp. 113-124; Wilson, pp. 45-59.

**Oct 5** John F. Kennedy and the Civil Rights Era
- Brinkley, pp. 397-408; Gould, pp.125-137; Wilson, pp. 60-67.

**13** Inside a Campaign: “The War Room”
  *assignment discussed in class*

**19** Lyndon Johnson and the Vietnam Experience

**26** Midterm Examination

**Nov 2** Richard Nixon and Watergate
- Brinkley, pp. 425-442; Gould, pp. 149-169; Wilson, pp. 93-110.

**9** Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and the American Malaise
- Brinkley, pp. 443-466; Gould, pp. 170-190.

**18** Ronald Reagan and the Politics of Illusion
- Brinkley, pp. 467-488; Gould, pp. 191-204; Wilson, pp. 111-134.

**23** George H.W. Bush and the End of the Cold War
- Brinkley, pp. 487-498; Gould, pp. 204-212.
Nov 30  Bill Clinton and the Post-Modern Presidency  
Brinkley, pp. 499-529; Gould, pp. 213-234; Wilson, pp. 135-156.

Dec 7  George W. Bush and Barak Obama: The American Presidency in the 21st Century  
Brinkley, pp 530-543; Gould, pp. 235-252

14  Final Examination

Grading

Your grade will be computed on the basis of the following. The midterm will count for 30% of your final grade, the final 40%. The combined discussion/attendance grade will count for 10%, your worksheet/papers and oral presentation for the elections and other assignments will count 20% each. (Graduate student grading will be calculated slightly differently.)

WCAS Grading System:
The undergraduate grading system consists of twelve categories:  A (4.00), A- (3.67), excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67), good;  C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67), satisfactory; D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67), passing but unsatisfactory;  F (.00), failure;  I (.00), incomplete;   F (.00), course dropped without notifying office; W (.00), official withdrawal from course. The graduate grading system is A (4.00), A- (3.67), Excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), good;  B- (2.67) and C (2.00), passing but not for degree credit; F (.00), failure.

Grade Reports. All students are required to log into the web through Agora to access their semester grades. Students must utilize their BC username and password to log on. If your username or password is not known, the Student Learning and Support Center in the O’Neill Library Computer Center will issue a new one. The SLSC requires a valid picture ID (a BC ID, driver’s license or passport) to obtain your password.

Classroom Laptop Use

Students may use a laptop computer in regular classes provided it is used only for class-related work and not used to check e-mail, surf the web, or engage in other out-of-class activities during class time. The same holds true for smart phones, notebooks, and other devices, including sending text messages during class. Students violating this rule will be barred from bringing a laptop or other electronic device to class. If violations of this occur more than twice in this class, all laptops and electronic devices will be barred from the class entirely. Students may use laptop computers during examinations only with the permission of the instructor.
Boston College Mission Statement

Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation’s finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

Important WCAS Policies
http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/advstudies/guide/academicinteg.html

Written Work
Graduate and undergraduate students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough, yet concise style. Cite literature appropriately, using APA, MLA, CLA format per instructors decision. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. You are encouraged to make use of campus resources for refining writing skills as needed [http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring.html].

Scholarship and Academic Integrity
It is expected that students will produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to reference properly is plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on examinations or assignments, and submitting the same paper or substantially similar papers to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student’s work.

Request for Accommodations
If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Dr. Kathy Duggan (dugganka@bc.edu), Associate Director, Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities or AHD) or Dean Paulette Durrett, (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for students with disabilities, (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations. For further information, you can locate the disability resources on the web at: http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html