HIST2421, American Presidency,  
Summer, 2015, 3 Credits

Instructor: Professor M. Gelfand                    email: gelfand@bc.edu
Office: Stokes Hall, S321
Office Hours: immediately after class
Telephone: 617-552-8451
Schedule (class times and day(s)):  T and Th  8:30 – 11:45
Room: Stokes 101N

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.

Course Description

The United States has weathered a great many storms over the last 225 years and the nation’s chief executives have been at the center for all of them, sometimes for the better, sometimes not. Beginning with an examination of how the Constitution framed the presidential office and continuing down to the present, this course examines how our country’s presidents have reflected the larger trends in American life and steered the US through good times and bad.

Course Objectives

1. The student will gain a better understanding of the intent of the framers of the Constitution in regard to the executive power.
2. The student will appreciate how the power of the presidency waxed and waned over the 19th century.
3. The student will become familiar with how the circumstances of the 20th century expanded executive authority under the Constitution.
4. The student will recognize the continuities and discontinuities between the Bush II and Obama presidencies.
5. The student will demonstrate knowledge across cultural settings and will learn the impact of culture, gender and age in shaping the individual presidencies, such as those of Lincoln, the two Roosevelts, and Truman.
6. The student will demonstrate ethical knowledge pertaining to the presidency as demonstrated by the Nixon and Clinton administrations.
Grading

Students will be graded on the basis of class participation (15 %), the midterm examination (35%) and the final examination (50%)

Summer 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), 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 summer grades. Students must utilize their BC username and password to log on. If your username or password is not known, the HELP Desk located in the Campus Technology Resource Center (CTRC) in O’Neill Library will issue a new one. The CTRC requires a valid picture ID (a BC ID, driver’s license or passport) to obtain your password.

Text(s)/Readings (Required)


Robert Caro, *The Passage of Power* (Vintage 978-0-375-71325-5)


David Remnick articles on President Obama – to be distributed

Text(s)/Readings (Recommended)


Important 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. http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html.

Attendance
Class attendance is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive by the beginning of and remain for the entire class period. When an occasion occurs that prevents a student from attending class, it is the student’s obligation to inform the instructor of the conflict before the class meets. The student is still expected to meet all assignment deadlines. If a student knows that he or she will be absent on a particular day, the student is responsible for seeing the instructor beforehand to obtain the assignments for that day. If a student misses a class, he or she is responsible for making up the work by obtaining a classmate's notes and handouts and turning in any assignments due. Furthermore, many instructors give points for participation in class. If you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. Types of absences that are not typically excused include weddings, showers, vacations, birthday parties, graduations, etc. Additional assignments, penalties and correctives are at the discretion of the instructor. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. In all cases, students are expected to accept the decision of the instructor regarding attendance policies specific to the class.

Consistent with our commitment of creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. It is the responsibility of students to review course syllabi as soon as they are distributed and to consult the faculty member promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. If asked, the student should provide accurate information about the obligations entailed in the observance of that particular holiday. However, it is the responsibility of the student to complete any and all class requirements for days that are missed due to conflicts due to religious holidays.

There may be circumstances that necessitate a departure from this policy. Feel free to contact the Summer Session Office at 617-552-3800 for consultation.

Deadline
Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the specified dates. Late assignments will be graded accordingly.
**Course Assignments**

In conformance with the credit hour policy of the university, it is expected that you will spend an average of 12 hours per week reading, taking notes on, and thoroughly acquainting yourself with the material in the assigned books.

Students are expected to complete the following out of class course assignments:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 23</td>
<td>Establishing the office</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 25</td>
<td>From Washington to Jackson</td>
<td>Remini, all</td>
<td>June 25</td>
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<td>June 30</td>
<td>Lincoln and Johnson</td>
<td>Benedict, all</td>
<td>June 30</td>
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<td>July 2</td>
<td>The First Roosevelt</td>
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<td>July 7</td>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td>Berg, chapters 1, 7-17</td>
<td>July 7</td>
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<td>July 9</td>
<td>FDR-Setting the Standard</td>
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<td>July 14</td>
<td><strong>Midterm Examination/</strong></td>
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<td>Truman and Eisenhower</td>
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<td>July 16</td>
<td>JFK and LBJ</td>
<td>Caro, Intro, Parts I,III-V</td>
<td>July 16</td>
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<td>July 21</td>
<td>Nixon</td>
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<td>July 23</td>
<td>Restoring the Office</td>
<td>Ballmer, all</td>
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<td>July 28</td>
<td>Bushes, Clinton, and Obama</td>
<td>Remnick, all</td>
<td>July 29</td>
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<td>July 30</td>
<td><strong>Final Examination</strong></td>
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