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. Students will demonstrate knowledge across cultural settings and will learn the impact of culture, gender, and age as it applies to recent American politics as demonstrated through election campaigns, presidential actions, and popular movements.
3. 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.
4. 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.
There will be a brief worksheet due each session about how the president under discussion has been assessed in the readings. This will help you begin to think about how we view each of these men.

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 day of classes. This will include studying campaign advertising of the election. During the day we discuss the election, you will give a brief oral presentation on your election topic. There will be a short worksheet/paper that is to be turned in the night we discuss the election you researched. 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)
- Paul Boller, *Presidential Campaigns* (Boller)

**Course Outline**

**June**  
25 Introduction

27 Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal Legacy  
* [selection of topics for election analyses]

**July**  
2 Harry Truman and the Cold War  
Brinkley, pp. 365-380; Gould, pp. 100-113; Boller, chs. 40-41.

9 Eisenhower, McCarthyism, and the Fifties  
Brinkley, pp. 381-396; Gould, pp. 113-124; Boller, chs. 42-43.

11 John F. Kennedy and the Civil Rights Era  
Brinkley, pp. 397-408; Gould, pp. 125-137; Boller, ch. 44.

**16 Midterm Examination**

18 Lyndon Johnson and the Vietnam Experience  
Brinkley, pp. 409-424; Gould, pp. 137-148; Boller, ch. 45-46.
July 23 Richard Nixon and Watergate  
Brinkley, pp. 425-442; Gould, pp. 149-169; Boller, ch. 47.

25 Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and the American Malaise  
Brinkley, pp. 443-466; Gould, pp. 170-190, Boller, ch. 48.

30 Ronald Reagan and the End of the Cold War  
Brinkley, pp. 467-488; Gould, pp. 191-204; Boller, chs. 49-50.

Aug 1 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%. (Graduate student grading will be calculated slightly differently.)

The undergraduate grading system for Summer Session is as follows:
A (4.00), A- (3.67)
B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67)
C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67)
D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67)
F (.00)

The graduate grading system for Summer Session is as follows:
A (4.00), A- (3.67)
B+ (3.33), B (3.00)
B- (2.67), passing but does not count toward degree
C (2.00), passing but not for degree credit
F (.00)

All students can access final grades through Agora after the grading deadline each semester. Transcripts are available through the Office of Student Services.

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. 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

Attendance
Attending class is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all class sessions. When circumstances prevent a student from attending class, the student is responsible for contacting the instructor before the class meets. Students who miss class are still expected to complete all assignments and meet all deadlines. Many instructors grade for participation; if you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. Makeup work may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. [Instructor note: Please outline your specific policy for attendance credit and the implications of missed classes.]

Consistent with BC’s commitment to creating a learning environment that is respectful of 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 their academic status. Students are responsible for reviewing course syllabi as soon as possible, and for communicating with the instructor promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. Students are responsible for completing all class requirements for days missed due to conflicts with religious holidays.

Accommodation and Accessibility
Boston College is committed to providing accommodations to students, faculty, staff and visitors with disabilities. Specific documentation from the appropriate office is required for students seeking accommodation in Summer Session courses. Advanced notice and formal registration with the appropriate office is required to facilitate this process. There are two separate offices at BC that coordinate services for students with disabilities:
• The Connors Family Learning Center (CFLC) coordinates services for students with LD and ADHD.
• The Disabilities Services Office (DSO) coordinates services for all other disabilities.

Find out more about BC’s commitment to accessibility at www.bc.edu/sites/accessibility.

Scholarship and Academic Integrity
Students in Woods College courses must produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to cite references is plagiarism. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on exams or assignments, or submitting the same material or substantially similar material 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. Please see the Boston College policy on academic integrity for more information.