

Hilary Term Special Subject Options for Senior Fresh



HIU220324 **The American Presidency**

Co-ordinator **Patrick Geoghegan**

Credits **10 ECTS**

Semester **Hilary Term**

Assessment A coursework portfolio (40%), and a 2,000-2,500 word end-of-term essay (60%).

Module Description The history of the American presidency in the 20th century is one that changed significantly as power was tested, remade, and sometimes broken under the weight of the office and major political challenges. Between 1900 and 2000 the American president represented different things to different people on the global stage, sometimes a symbol of freedom and ambition, sometimes one of fear and concern, and the office itself grew and evolved with the development of the Imperial Presidency.

Taking a thematic approach, this module explores how the American presidency changed from the final months of William McKinley's life until the end of Bill Clinton's administration. Through a combination of short lectures, seminars, debates and discussions, it will cover some of the most significant and controversial events in modern U.S. history and explore the evolution of presidential power and its impact on domestic and international politics. Themes covered will include presidential elections, the impact of war and conflict, communications and changing media, crisis management, scandals and accountability, foreign policy, leadership styles and the myth of 'the great man', as well as changes to the office itself.

Students will engage with primary documents and major debates between historians as we critically assess the careers and legacies of 20th-century presidents. By the end of the module, students will have developed crucial research, analytical and presentation skills through this examination of the complexities of presidential leadership and its profound influence on American and global history for good and for ill.