

Course Information

Course Number: INTA 689
Course Title: Oil and Geopolitics
Section: 65X
Time: Wednesday 6:30-9:10 PM Eastern
Location: Bush School DC, 7th Floor
Credit Hours: 3

Instructor Details

Instructor: Gregory Gause
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Office Hours: 3-6 PM, Wednesday or by appointment

Course Description

Oil has been described as the most important commodity in the world. It might also be the most political. This course will examine three important issues in the political economy of global oil: 1) the changing balance of power within the global oil market, tracing the change from a market dominated by consumer countries and Western-based multinational oil companies, through the period of producer country dominance and tight oil supplies, to the present period of extreme price fluctuation, unconventional oil and market confusion; 2) the geopolitics of energy in current global politics, with an emphasis on oil and energy in great power foreign policy, the international politics of climate change, and the relationship between oil and international war; and 3) the effect of great oil wealth on the domestic politics of oil producing countries, examining the question of whether a “resource curse” exists and what it is.

This course is offered as both a face-to-face course to students in College Station and through electronic to group delivery to students at the Bush School’s Washington, D.C. teaching site synchronously via Zoom. Students participating online may utilize the chat box only with the express approval of the professor, and verbal participation during class sessions is required. The course requirements for students in both locations are the same.

Course Prerequisites

Graduate classification

Special Course Designation

This course is designated for Non-Traditional Format delivery. It could be taught simultaneously at two locations – the Bush School teaching site in Washington, D.C. and the Allen Building on the Texas A&M University campus in College Station. Most classes the instructor will be in Washington. The instructor will teach at least two of the classes from the Allen Building on main campus in College Station during the semester, dates to be announced. Students at the other site will be connected to the instructor and the other students via Zoom technology during the class. Class discussions will include students in both locations.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- understand the chronology of events in the development of the world oil market;
- identify the causes for the shift in power from the international oil companies to the producer countries in the 1970's;
- explain the causes for the fluctuations in oil prices since the 1970's;
- understand the circumstances under which producer country efforts to manage oil prices succeed and fail;
- understand the drivers behind American, Russian and Chinese foreign policy as it relates to energy issues and how those drivers have changed over time;
- explain the debate about the relationship between oil and international conflict
- explain the “resource curse” argument and the criticisms of that argument; and
- apply the “resource curse” framework in a critical way to the politics of a major oil producer.

Textbook and/or Resource Materials

- Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power*, (Free Press, 2008)
- Michael L. Ross, *The Oil Curse: How Petroleum Wealth Shapes the Development of Nations*, (Princeton University Press, 2012; paperback 2013)
- Daniel Yergin, *The New Map: Energy, Climate and the Clash of Nations*, (Penguin Press, paperback 2021)
- Robert Vitalis, *Oilcraft: The Myths of Scarcity and Security That Haunt U.S. Energy Policy*, (Stanford University Press, 2020)
- Jeff Colgan, *Partial Hegemony: Oil Politics and International Order*, (Oxford University Press, 2021)

Other assigned readings will be available on the TAMU Libraries' E-Reserves site (<http://library-reserves.tamu.edu/areslocal/index.htm>) and/or on the Internet.

Grading Policy

The final grade in this class will be calculated as follows: 1) two in-semester essays (approximately 2,500 words each) each worth 20% of the final grade; 2) an oral presentation on how the “resource curse”

explains or does not explain the politics of a major oil producer, in the last two weeks of the course, worth 20% of the final grade; 3) a final essay (approximately 4,000 words), worth 30% of the final grade, due during the final exam period, in which the student applies arguments about the “resource curse” to a particular oil-producing country (it is assumed that the oral presentation and the final essay will be about the same country). This essay will require outside research on the particular country being examined; and 4) classroom participation, worth 10% of the final grade. The essays will be graded with letter grades: A, A/B, B, B/C, C, D, F. Those letter grades will be converted into numerical equivalents for calculation of the final grade on the following 100 point scale: A=95, A/B=90, B=85, B/C= 80, C=75, D=65, F=0. Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale: A=90-100, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=60-69, F=below 60).

Graded Attendance – Attendance will be a part of the classroom participation grade.

Late Work Policy

Late work policies in this class are defined by [Student Rule 7](#). Students should consult with the instructor if they are unable to submit required written work by the deadline defined in the syllabus.

Course Schedule

August 23: Introduction to the Course/World Oil before World War II

-Yergin, *The Prize*, Chapters 9-15

August 30: Oil as a Strategic Commodity: World War II to 1970

-Yergin, *The Prize*, Chapters 19-27

September 6: The Great Reversal: OPEC on Top, 1970-1981

-Yergin, *The Prize*, Chapters 28-34

September 13: Oil Booms and Oil Busts, 1982-present

-Yergin, *The Prize*, Chapters 35-36

-Meghan L. O’Sullivan, *Windfall: How the New Energy Abundance Upends Global Politics and Strengthens America’s Power*, (Simon and Schuster, 2017), Chapters 1-4

September 20: The Current Geopolitics of Energy: The United States and Russia

-Yergin, *The New Map*, Chapters 1-16

-something up to date on the energy impacts of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, to be added closer to beginning of course

September 27: The Current Geopolitics of Energy: China and the Middle East

-Yergin, *The New Map*, Chapters 17-36

October 4: First Essay Due

October 4: The Current Geopolitics of Energy: Climate Change as a Geopolitical Issue

- Yergin, *The New Map*, Chapters 37-Conclusion
- Colgan, *Partial Hegemony*, Chapter 7
- National Intelligence Council, “National Intelligence Estimate: Climate Change and International Responses – Increasing Challenges to US National Security Through 2040,” 2021 https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/NIE_Climate_Change_and_National_Security.pdf

October 11: Oil and International Order

- Vitalis, *Oilcraft*, entire
- Colgan, *Partial Hegemony*, Chapters 2, 5, 6, 8 and Conclusion
- Students will come to class prepared to declare which oil exporting country they will use for their final paper. Discussion of the cases in class.

October 18: Oil and War (with special attention to the 2003 Iraq War)

- Jeff D. Colgen, “Fueling the Fire: Pathways from Oil to War,” *International Security*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Fall 2013)
- Ross, *The Oil Curse*, Chapter 5
- Michael Klare, *Blood and Oil*, (Metropolitan Books, 2004), Chapter 4
- F. Gregory Gause, III, *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf*, (Cambridge University Press, 2010), Chapter 6
- Emily Meierding, “Dismantling the Oil Wars Myth,” *Security Studies* (Vol. 25, No. 2, 2016)
- Hye Ryeon Jang and Benjamin Smith, “Pax Petrolica? Rethinking the Oil-Interstate War Linkage,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2, (2021)

October 25: Second Essay Due

October 25: The “Rentier State”: Oil and Democracy

- Ross, *The Oil Curse*, Chapters 1-4
- Stephen Haber and Victor Menaldo, “Do Natural Resources Fuel Authoritarianism? A Reappraisal of the Resource Curse,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 105, No. 1 (February 2011)
- David Waldner and Benjamin Smith, “Rentier States and State Transformations,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Transformations of the State* (Oxford University Press, 2015)

November 1: The “Rentier State”: Oil, Institutions and Political Stability

- Terry Lynn Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-States*, (University of California Press, 1997), Chapter 3
- “Introduction,” in Mary Kaldor, Terry Lynn Karl and Yahia Said (eds.), *Oil Wars*, (Pluto Press, 2007)
- Benjamin Smith, “The Wrong Kind of Crisis: Why Oil Booms and Busts Rarely Lead to Authoritarian Breakdown,” *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Vol. 40 (Winter 2006)
- Yu-Ming Liou and Paul Musgrave, “Oil, Autocratic Survival and the Gendered Resource Curse:

When Inefficient Policy is Politically Expedient,” *International Studies Quarterly*, (Vol. 60, No. 3 – 2016).

November 8: The “Rentier State”: The “Rentier State”: Oil and Economic Development

- Ross, *The Oil Curse*, Chapter 6
- Giacomo Luciani, “Allocation v. Production States: A Theoretical Framework,” in Luciani (ed.), *The Arab State*, (University of California Press, 1990)
- Christa N. Brunnschweiler, “Cursing the Blessings? Natural Resource Abundance, Institutions and Economic Growth,” *World Development*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (March 2008)

November 15: Outline of the final essay due. Bring it to class. Individual Meetings with students.

November 22: NO CLASS – READING DAY

November 29: Student Presentations on Final Paper and Course Wrap-Up

- your presentation should be no more than 15 minutes. A Power Point might help, but be careful about how you use it. Do not put a lot of words on the Power Point and then read them off. That is death by Power Point. Use the Power Point to outline your presentation, present numbers/ charts/graphs, focus attention with interesting images, emphasize main themes

ESSAYS

In-Semester Essays (2,500 words) – these essays can be written based solely upon the assigned readings and classroom discussions. I would encourage you to concentrate on those sources and not do outside research on these. Consider them blue book exams that you do at home. I am looking for you to integrate the class material (readings and lectures/class discussions) into coherent arguments.

Essay #1 – Due on October 4: In what circumstances do producer countries hold the most power in the world oil market? What conditions reduce their power? Discuss in light of changes in the world oil market since World War II.

Essay #2 – Due on October 25: Does oil lead to war? Discuss in terms of both the arguments that possession of oil makes a state more aggressive and in terms of the arguments that possession of oil makes a state a tempting target. Refer to cases discussed in class and in the readings.

Final Essay (4,000 words)

Due on a date to be determined in consultation with the class, during the final exam period.

Is there an “oil curse” in terms of democratic political development, political stability and successful economic development? Discuss the logic of the “oil curse” argument, the strengths and weaknesses of that logic, and whether the “oil curse” argument successfully applies to one oil/gas exporting country of your choice.

You will have to do some outside research on this essay. I will expect you to bring a short, preliminary bibliography (at least 4 sources, 2 of which have to be books) to our individual meeting scheduled around October 19. That means that you will have to properly cite your sources in the paper. Unlike the two in-semester essays, this is not like a blue-book essay.

University Policies

Attendance Policy

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Makeup Work Policy

Students will be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student's grade, for the reasons stated in Student Rule 7, or other reason deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1](#)).

"The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2](#)).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. (See [Student Rule 24](#).)

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

"Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one's work,

should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case” ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)).

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Resources office on your campus (resources listed below) Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

Disability Resources is located in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit disability.tamu.edu.

Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, a person who is subjected to the alleged conduct will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University’s goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS).

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University's [Title IX webpage](#).

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy self-care by utilizing available resources and services on your campus

Students who need someone to talk to can contact Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) or call the TAMU Helpline (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the *988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988)* or at 988lifeline.org [Links to an external site.](#).

College and Department Policies

The Bush School of Government and Public Service supports the Texas A&M University commitment to diversity, and welcomes individuals of all ages, backgrounds, citizenships, disabilities, ethnicities, family statuses, genders, gender identities, geographical locations, languages, military experiences, political views, races, religions, sexual orientations, socioeconomic statuses, and/or work experiences (see <http://diversity.tamu.edu/>). Accordingly, all of us in this class are expected to respect the different experiences, beliefs, and values expressed by others, and to engage in reasoned discussions that refrain from derogatory comments or dehumanizing language about other people, cultures, groups, or viewpoints.

Intellectual argument and disagreement are a fundamental element of both the academic world and the policy process. Disagreement does not, in and of itself, mean disrespect. However, the way that disagreement is expressed can be disrespectful. Unprofessional, insensitive, or disrespectful behaviors (such as using dehumanizing, derogatory, or coarse language; dismissing ideas based on the characteristics of the speaker/writer; or expressing threat or intent to harm, even if framed "as a joke") are inconsistent with the Bush School's commitment to diversity, and will not be tolerated by faculty or students participating in this class. This applies both inside and outside of the classroom and includes electronic venues such as GroupMe.