

**POLS 3208**  
**POLITICS OF OIL**

***Course Description and Objectives:***

This is a course on the complex relationship between oil and politics. It seeks to develop students' research, thinking and writing skills about the role of oil in the international political system as well as in domestic politics. Today, oil undeniably affects all aspects of our lives but who really controls oil resources and what does that mean for national and international distribution of political power? How has the contest over oil resources affected the relations among nations as well as the economic, political, social and environmental development of oil-rich countries? What are the alternatives to oil and what needs to be done to reduce dependency on it? This course will address these questions as well as analyze and compare individual cases of how oil shapes the way we think about the world.

***Course Requirements:***

**A. Midterm exam (100 points)**

The exam will consist of a set of short answer questions. I will provide review sheet for the exam and distribute it a week before the exam. I will also use the class before the midterm as a review session. The questions on the exam will mostly come from the review sheet.

**B. Final Exam (100 points)**

The final exam will not be cumulative. It will be held on the date and time assigned by the university. I will also provide a review sheet for the final exam on the last week of classes.

**C. Research Project (175 points):**

The research project will constitute the majority of your final grade. Writing the research paper will be an ongoing process throughout the semester and will take place in several progressive steps.

1. Topic Proposal: (ungraded)

You will write one or two paragraphs indicating what research topic you are interested and why. I will not give you any specific list of topics because I want you to choose a topic that genuinely interests you about oil politics. If you are not sure about what you want to study, I am more than happy to make suggestions and lead you in a direction that might interest you. Please make use of my office hours to discuss possible topics with me.

2. Research Outline and Annotative Bibliography: (25 points)

In roughly two pages you need to provide an outline of the project, indicating what specific question you intend to address, why the question is significant or interesting, what your argument is and how you intend to prove your point. In addition to those two pages, you need to provide an annotative bibliography in which you will summarize in a few sentences how your

preliminary resources contribute to your project. (This means that you will have done some preliminary research on your project by this date.) I expect your bibliography at this stage to include at least six sources. This exercise will improve your research skills and help you greatly in preparing for your final research paper. I will give you more instructions in class.

3. Draft Paper: (50 points)

Based on your proposal and outline, you will write a 15-page draft paper and submit it for feedback and revisions. This draft must be complete in the same format as the final paper (see below). Once I grade and give back your paper with comments, I will meet with each of you individually to discuss the ways to improve your paper.

4. Final Paper: (100 points)

Your final paper should be about 15-page long (not including the title page and bibliography). The paper is expected to be a scholarly paper, with all that the phrase entails: footnotes, bibliography, a coherent structure, and a familiarity with relevant literature (more instructions regarding the paper will be given in class).

D. Participation (25 points):

You are expected to participate in class discussions and activities. Because this is a small class, it will be very obvious if you miss class and/or refuse to actively participate. I will not take attendance.

***Final Grade Calculation:***

400- 368	A
367- 360	A-
359- 352	B+
351- 328	B
327- 320	B-
319- 312	C+
311- 288	C
287- 280	C-
279- 272	D+
271- 248	D
247- 240	D-
Below 239	F

***Required Readings:***

The following books have been ordered at the University Coop:

Daniel Yergin, *The Prize*, Simon and Schuster, 1991

Francisco Parra, *Oil Politics: A Modern History of Petroleum*, I.B. Tauris, 2004.

Terry Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty*, University of California Press, 1997.

Michael T. Klare, *Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Dependency on Imported Petroleum*, New York: Henry Holt 2005.

***Administrative Policies:***

- If you miss an exam because of an emergency (documentation required), you can be given a make-up exam. However, you need to notify me in advance of your reason for the absence. If you miss the make-up exam that is scheduled for everyone, you will not be given another opportunity. There will be no exception to this policy.
- Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. For information regarding the university policy, see Section VI of "The Student Conduct Code" available at <http://www.dosa.uconn.edu> by clicking on "Judicial Affairs", then clicking on "Part VI: Academic Integrity in Undergraduate Education and Research". Also see the link to "Judicial Process FAQ" which is available from <http://www.dosa.uconn.edu> after clicking on the "Judicial Affairs" link. Also, for useful information on plagiarism and the proper use of sources and citations, see "Writing Sources: A Guide for Harvard Students" at: <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~expos/sources>
- Our class is available through the HuskyCT. On our class website, you can find the calendar for important dates, the syllabus, some lecture outlines (under course materials), grades, links to additional resources, a discussion board and class email list. I will use the HuskyCT to communicate with you: to distribute assignments, useful information, test preparation hints and other material. It will also allow you to ask me questions and to learn from other students' questions.
- I encourage students to come and talk to me during office hours to discuss materials or pose any questions about readings, lectures, or assignments. You should also be in contact with each other outside of class or on the discussion board of our class HuskyCT to share questions and ideas.
- I welcome your feedback any time. Please do not hesitate to voice your concerns and/or suggest ways to improve the class.

## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS FOR THE COURSE

### Week 1:

Introduction to the course

Informational Session on Library Research Materials

**Readings:**

Please familiarize yourself with online oil resources, some of which are:

- Energy Information Administration (EIA) at <http://www.eia.doe.gov>
- International Energy Administration (IEA) at <http://www.iea.org>
- BP Statistical Review of World Energy at <http://www.bp.com/worldenergy>
- Oil and Gas Journal at <http://www.ogj.com>
- Joint Oil Data Initiative (JODI) at <http://www.jodidata.org>
- International Association for Energy Economics (IAEE) at <http://www.iaee.org>
- Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) at <http://www.opec.org>

### Week 2:

Fundamentals of Oil I:

*Oil Supply, Peak Oil, Oil Consumption*

**Film:** The Incredible Journey of Oil- Part I (Available online at <http://www.abc.net.au/science/crude/> ) (30 min.)

**Readings:**

Energy Information Administration - Oil Market Basics ([http://www.eia.doe.gov/pub/oil\\_gas/petroleum/analysis\\_publications/oil\\_market\\_basics/default.htm](http://www.eia.doe.gov/pub/oil_gas/petroleum/analysis_publications/oil_market_basics/default.htm) )

BP Statistical Review of World Energy- Oil Statistics (<http://www.bp.com/worldenergy/> )

### Week 3:

Fundamentals of Oil II:

*Oil Trade, Refining, Stocks, Prices*

**Readings:**

OPEC World Oil Outlook 2008 (please skim through) (<http://www.opec.org/library/World%20Oil%20Outlook/WorldOilOutlook08.htm> )

**Week 4:**

**History of Oil I:**

*Rise of Oil Business, Creation of Seven Sisters, Competition Over Resources, Oil and World War I*

**Film:** The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power ("Our Plan", "Empires of Oil", "The Black Giant")

*Library call number HD 9560.5 P75 1992*

**Readings:** Yergin chp 1, 2, 6, 9

**Week 5:**

**History of Oil II:**

*Oil and World War II, Post-War European Energy Crisis, Iranian Nationalization and US British Coup, Suez Crisis, 1967 and 1973 Wars*

**Film:** The Prize ("War and Oil", "Crude Diplomacy", "Power to the Producers")

**Readings:** Yergin chp. 18, 23, 24, 25

**Week 6:**

**History of Oil III:**

*1973 Embargo and OPEC Revolution, 1979 Iranian Revolution, 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War, 1991 Gulf War, 2003 US-BR Occupation of Iraq*

**Film:** *The Prize* ("The Tinderbox", "The New Order")

**Readings:** Yergin chp. 26, 28, epilogue

**Week 7:**

**Structure of Oil Industry I:**

*From Oligopoly to Cartel, Deregulation of 1980s, Rising Oil Nationalism and State-owned Oil Companies*

**Readings:** Parra chp. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9

**Week 8:**

No classes- Spring Break

**Week 9:**

**Structure of Oil Industry II:**

*Multinational Corporations and Host-Government Relations, Oil Agreements*

**Readings:** Parra chp. 13, 14, 16,17

\*Radon, Jenik "The ABCs of Petroleum Contracts: License-Concession Agreements, Joint Ventures, and Production Sharing Agreements" in Tsalik and Schiffrin (eds.) *Covering Oil: A Reporters Guide to Energy Development*, New York: Open Society Institute (2005), pp. 61-86. (Available online at

[http://www.soros.org/initiatives/cep/articles\\_publications/publications/covering\\_20050803/osicoveringoil\\_20050803.pdf](http://www.soros.org/initiatives/cep/articles_publications/publications/covering_20050803/osicoveringoil_20050803.pdf) )

**Review Session**

**MIDTERM**

**Week 10:**

**Effects of Oil Dependence I: Oil Exporting States**

*Dutch Disease, Oil Curse, Rentier State, Authoritarianism, Conflict, Human Rights Violations, Environmental Degradation*

**Readings:** Karl chp 3, 9, 10

**Week 11:**

**Effects of Oil Dependence I: Oil Exporting States (cont'd)**

**Film:** The Curse of Oil

*Avery Point Library call number HD 9560.5 E98 2004 (171 min)*

**Readings:** \*Stiglitz, Joseph E. "Making Natural Resources into a Blessing rather than a Curse" in Tsalik and Schiffrin (eds.) *Covering Oil...* pp. 13-20  
\*Waskow, David and Carol Welch, "The Environmental, Social, and Human Rights Impacts of Oil Development" in Tsalik and Schiffrin (eds.) *Covering Oil...* pp. 101-128.

**Week 12:**

**Effects of Oil Dependence II: Oil Importing States**

*Oil Addiction, US Foreign Policy and Energy Security*

**Films:** The End of Suburbia

*Torrington/Waterbury Libraries HT 352. U6 E54 2004 (78 min)*

Blood and Oil

*HD 9566.B55 2008 (60 min)*

**Readings:** Klare chp 1, 2, 3, 4

**Week 13:**

**Effects of Oil Dependence II: Oil Importing States (cont'd)**

**Readings:** "Foreign Policy and National Security Implications of Oil Dependence" Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives (March 22, 2007)

<http://www.internationalrelations.house.gov/110/34241.pdf>

**Week 14:**

**Effects of Oil Dependence III: Oil Importing States (cont'd)**

*The New Geopolitics of Oil (The New "Great Game")*

**Readings:** Klare chp 5, 6

**Week 15:**

**The Future of Energy**

*End of Oil? Alternatives to Oil?*

**Readings:** Klare chp 7

Energy Information Administration - Renewable and  
Alternative Fuels Basics

[http://www.eia.doe.gov/basics/renewalt\\_basics.html](http://www.eia.doe.gov/basics/renewalt_basics.html)