

Oil, Water, and War
Syracuse University
PSC/MES 367
Maxwell Hall Room 108
Mondays: 6pm – 9pm

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“Suddenly, seemingly unconnected news about Katrina and Rita hitting the Gulf Coast’s oil refineries; the ongoing war in Iraq; the nuclear ambitions of Iran; the populist politics of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela; the appalling corruption in most oil producing countries; the de facto nationalization of Yukos in Russia; the steep rise in costs of everything oil-related; and even increasing share prices of companies involved in solar, wind and nuclear energy all pointed in the same direction. Oil is running out, and nobody is ready for the cataclysm that is bound to follow.”--Basil Gelpke, Producer ‘A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crush’, 2006

“Water, like religion and ideology, has the power to move millions of people. Since the very birth of human civilization, people have moved to settle close to it. People move when there is too little of it. People move when there is too much of it. People journey down it. People write, sing and dance about it. People fight over it. All people, everywhere and every day, need it.” --- Mikhail Gorbachev, 2001

Course Description and Objectives

Water and hydrocarbons (for our purposes, oil and natural gas) are essential for life and modern society, respectively, but are distributed unevenly throughout the world. This course considers the political implications of the global competition for these resources from both a historical and contemporary perspective. In this regard, the class will be divided into four main sections. During the first half of the course we will focus on issues pertaining to the geopolitics surrounding oil and natural gas, and in the later half of the course we will do the same for water. Each of these parts will begin with a section on the history of the geopolitical dynamics of oil and water followed by a section focused on current issues and potential conflicts surrounding these scarce resources. However, while the title of the course implies a focus on overt physical conflict, which is both a possibility and occasional reality, this class will consider present and future conflict in a more nuanced way by asking questions about how the struggle for valuable but limited resources affects not only potential conflict but also policy debates, economic and foreign policies, and investment in new technology and infrastructure.

Even though the issues of oil and water are interdisciplinary by their very nature, this course emphasizes policy issues, specifically with regard to economics and security. Please note that this class is also cross-listed with Middle Eastern Studies. Therefore, we will have a special emphasis

on the dynamics of oil and water politics in the Middle East. The goal of this course is to first provide you with a historical understanding of the evolution of the geopolitical issues surrounding oil and water. However, the “how we got here” portions of the class are not intended to be simply intellectual exercises, since this history both informs and affects present political circumstances. The portions of the class that are focused on present day and future geopolitics surrounding oil and water seek to prepare students to engage in debates about policies that states and other entities might pursue to satisfy needs for petroleum and water. More generally this course seeks to refine your abilities to write competently and persuasively on issues pertaining to both history and policy.

The struggle for the control of oil and water resources has been so central to international politics that some experts and policy makers have claimed that whereas the 20th century was characterized by a global struggle for petroleum, the 21st century will be marked by a struggle for water. But as we will see, the age of petroleum is not over yet. This course provides a comprehensive introduction to the historical and contemporary politics of oil and water by discussing the causes, dynamics and implications of struggles for these resources in different parts of the world. With the help of specific examples and cases from all around the world, we will explore historical connections between oil, water, and war.

Course Materials

Three books, listed below are required for this class, and will be read, for the most part in their entirety.

- Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power*, Free Press, 2009.
- Steven Solomon, *Water: The Epic Struggle for Wealth, Power, and Civilization*. Harper Collins, 2010 (Note: A paperback copy should be available in late January or early February. Since we will be using this book in the second half of class, you can wait for that to become available)
- *The Global Politics of Energy*, The Aspen Institute, 2008.

These books are available for purchase as the Syracuse University Bookstore at the Schine Student Center. You can also find inexpensive and used copies of these books on the internet at sites like amazon.com and half.com. A quick search indicated that you should be able to purchase the required books for the class for around \$40 or less.

In addition to the books listed above, there are many additional readings such as articles or book chapters that will be provided to you either on blackboard or as handouts. Many additional readings come from Michael Klare, professor of Peace and World Security Studies, and author of the books *Resource Wars* (2002), *Blood and Oil* (2004), and *Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet* (2008). These books are helpful and highly recommended, although not required for purchase. Any of these books can be purchased online and the most recent book is available at the SU bookstore.

Because geopolitical issues surrounding oil and water are undergoing frequent change, readings might be added and/or substituted based on the unfolding of world events throughout the semester. Students are encouraged to follow the news about the topics we discuss in class from news organizations such as *The New York Times*, the BBC, etc.

Sites of Interest:

Students should consult a reliable news source on a daily basis such as *The New York Times* (www.nytimes.com), the BBC (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/>), *The International Herald Tribune* (www.ihf.com), BBC World Service (<http://bbc.co.uk/worldservice/>), the *Washington Post* (washingtonpost.com) and *The Wall Street Journal* (<http://online.wsj.com>). Good sources of news commentary come from *Slate* (Slate.com), *The Nation* (thenation.com) and *Foreign Policy* (foreignpolicy.com).

US Department of Energy, www.energy.gov

Energy Information Administration, Official Energy Statistics from the US Government, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/>

Water World, www.waterworld.org

International Water Management Institute, www.iwmi.cgiar.org

The Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database, www.transboundarywaters.orst.edu/database

Oregon State University, The Middle East Water Collection

<http://digitalcollections.library.oregonstate.edu/cdm4/client/mewaters/>

Finally, I recommend following these IR blogs:
duckofminerva.blogspot.com, walt.foreignpolicy.com, drezner.foreignpolicy.com,
lawyersgunsandmoneyblog.com

In addition to readings, we will also watch the following movies throughout the semester:

- *A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crash*, Lava Productions, 2006.
- *Syriana*, 2005.
- *Thirst*, Alan Snitow & Deborah Kaufman, 2004.
- *Cadillac Desert*, PBS, 1997.
- *Gasland*, 2010

Course Requirements

Breakdown:

- Attendance and participation – 15%
- Weekly Discussion Board Postings – 20%
- Policy Report Group Project: Oil – 30%
 - Individual Draft: 10%
 - Final paper: 10%
 - Presentation: 10%
- Policy Report Group Project: Water – 30%
 - Individual Draft: 10%
 - Final paper: 10%
 - Presentation: 10%
- Peer review: 5%

Details:

- **Attendance and participation:** Your attendance and participation are required for every class, especially since we only meet once a week. Each student may miss one class, no excuse necessary, no questions asked. Any additional class missed for which a university-approved excuse and documentation is not provided will adversely affect your grade. It is helpful for you to give me notice if you are going to miss a class for any reason, and you are encouraged to meet with me to discuss what you missed. Even if you must miss class for personal reasons (for example, missing class for a job interview, etc.), please let me know.
- **Weekly Discussion Board Postings:** In order to enhance our discussions of the readings (and to make sure that everyone does the readings), each week everyone in the class will post a comment on the readings on the Discussion Board section of the course Blackboard site. It should be about a paragraph and must address a specific aspect of the readings, while tying this issue to the week's topic more generally. Comments should be posted by 8pm on Sunday night. By Wednesday night at 8pm, each student must remark another post on the message board (in a few sentences), returning to these posts after we have discussed the readings in class. Students are also encouraged (but certainly not required) to cite or link to outside sources (for example, a recent stories in the news) in their posts.
- **Policy Reports:** There are no formal exams for the course. Instead, you will prepare two policy reports, one for each major section of the course (oil and water) on a specific topic, for a specific client, both of your choosing. These will be group projects, although each individual student will be responsible for their own section of the report. The reports will be in the format of a consulting report, in which you will be given a topic to write about and a client to write for, so in addition to providing information you will be also providing you client with recommendations related to the topic and question at hand. I will provide a list of potential topics and clients, but the groups, once formed are free to suggest their own topic and client. For example, one topic might be "What are the most promising future sources of petroleum for the rapidly growing economy of the People's Republic of China?," for which your client might be the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc. Your client may be either a government entity, as listed above, or an individual (for example, President Obama), or a private enterprise (for example, Gazprom).
 - The class will be divided into groups of about four people, each with different topic. There will be two group projects during the semester. In the first half of the course, the groups study petroleum problems. In the middle of the semester, the groups will be dissolved to create new groups that will be assigned new topics related to problems of water.
 - Each group project consists of two components: individual and collective, and will be worth of 20% of your total grade. Grades for group project are earned in two phases: a **draft** component is due on the dates indicated in the outline; it is graded quickly and returned to its author for revisions. The **final** report by the group is due on the dates indicated below in the course outline. Every member of the group receives the same grade for the group's final report, but draft grades are particular to the author. Group reports should be double-spaced, typed in 12 point font, with

one-inch margins and a cover page that includes the names of the group members and title of the project. Also, please keep in mind the following academic integrity guidelines: You must specifically cite the sources of any facts (including statistics, tables, and graphs) that are not common knowledge; you must use quotation marks around all material from which you are quoting directly; and you must use footnotes to cite all ideas and materials taken from other authors, including class readings and web pages. (More information on citation is below)

- I will provide you with information about your report structure and requirements. The goal of the policy reports is for you to demonstrate your ability to persuasively convey information relevant to your topic. You will submit your papers electronically through Turnitin on the course's Blackboard page. You will receive further instructions on this process in class.
- **Presentation:** At the end of the first half of the semester, each group will present the oil-related topic they are assigned to the class in a symposium, which extends over two class meetings. At the end of the semester, we will repeat the exercise, addressing water related problems. Please see the course outline below for the due dates of group presentations. There is no standard format for presentation; it is up to you as a group to come up with a way to present us your topic. However, each group member is expected to participate in presentation. Each group member will be assessed by his/her own performance. Each presentation is worth of 10% of your total grade.
- **Peer Review:** You are expected to evaluate other groups' performance on the day of their presentation. You will be provided with a peer review form and are expected to provide 'insightful' comments on your peers' presentation. You will repeat this exercise at the end of the semester for the second presentations. This exercise will be worth of 5 % of your total grade.

Class Policies

- **Respect:** Students are expected to be respectful of one another. Because this is a class that will address contemporary political issues, students are encouraged to express their (preferably informed) thoughts on these matters, but are expected to do so in a manner that is respectful of others and tolerant of divergent perspectives. Students can expect the same level of respect from myself.
- **Computers and Cell Phones:** Electronic distractions such as Internet or cell phone use during class are unacceptable. As such, there will be no laptop or cell phone use during class. If you would strongly prefer to take notes on your computer, please come talk to me about this.
- **Communication with Instructor:** Besides speaking with me before or after class, or during office hours, email is the best way to reach me. Students are encouraged to make an appointment if their schedule does not accommodate the scheduled office hours. Students should also frequently check the blackboard site for the course, which will be updated frequently with announcements and documents.

- **Disability Policy:** Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498. Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS to me and review those accommodations with me. For further information, see the ODS website, Office of Disability Services <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/>. Any student who feels they need additional help should not be afraid to discuss the matter with the instructor. Such issues are of course confidential.
- **Academic Honesty:** In short, passing off the ideas of someone else as your own will not be tolerated. Please note that in this course we follow the University’s Academic Integrity policy on academic honesty, which can be found at: http://supolicies.syr.edu/ethics/acad_integrity.htm
Students caught using the ideas or research that are not their own without appropriate attribution or documentation will be subject to disciplinary action ranging from a re-write of the assignment in question to failure of the course, at the instructor’s discretion. To avoid the problem of plagiarism (presenting someone else’s words, ideas, opinions as your own), be sure to *attribute* all information, data, arguments, and language – even if paraphrased – borrowed from sources to the original author and to *document* the source fully.
 - **Attribution** = “According to Daniel Yergin...”
 - **Documentation** = source citation in foot- or end-note form or using parenthetical citation: (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 92). Parenthetical citation requires a “Works Cited” list at the end of the paper.

If students are unsure of whether something should be cited it is always best to err on the side of caution or ask the instructor. No one will be penalized for too much citation. It is worth mentioning here that plagiarism is surprisingly easy to catch. Don’t do it.

There is no required citation style for this course. However, students must use a standard citation style, rather than citing sources in an indiscriminate format. Students may find different citation formats at the following sites:

- MLA citation: <http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/mla>
- Chicago-style citation: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
- APA citation: <http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/apa>

Course Schedule (Tentative)

- “Bb” denotes this reading may be found on the course Blackboard site.

Part I – How We Got Here – A History of Oil in Geopolitics

Week 1 – January 24

Introduction and overview

Recommended:

- Read: Klare (2002) Chapter 1 (Bb)

Petroleum through World War I

Recommended:

- Read: Klare (2002) Chapter 2 (Bb)
- Read: Yergin Chapters 1-8

Week 2 – January 31

Form groups and assign group topics

Petroleum in the Interwar Period

To Do:

- Read: Yergin Chapter 9-15

Oil in WWII and the Onset of the Cold War

To Do:

- Read: Klare (2002) Chapter 3 (Bb)
- Read: Yergin Chapters 16-21

Week 3 – February 7

Countries vs. Companies: Corporate Culture of NOCs in the ME

To Do:

- Read: Marcel, V. (2008) *Oil Titans: National Oil Companies in the Middle East*, Introduction and chapter 1. (Bb)

People, Corporations, Politics

Movie: *Syriana*

To Do:

- Read: Marcel, V. (2008) *Oil Titans: National Oil Companies in the Middle East*, chapter 3. (Bb)

Part II – Contemporary Geopolitics and Oil

Week 4 – February 14

Due: Group Terms of Reference due by Wednesday, February 16

Work on group projects

The Importance of OPEC

To Do:

- Read: Yergin, Chs. 29-33
- Read: *The Global Politics of Energy*, chapter 3

US Policy and the Persian Gulf – Militarized Resource Protection

To Do:

- Read: Bacevich – “Blood for Oil,” Chapter 7 in *The New American Militarism*, pp175-204 (Bb)

Recommended:

- Read: Klare (2004) – Chapter 1, 2, and 6 (Bb)

Recent Developments

To Do:

- Read: Yergin, Chs. 34-37 and Epilogue

Week 5 – February 21

Is the Era of Cheap Oil in the past? Oil Crush?

Movie: *A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crush*

To Do:

- Read: Lynch, M. “‘Peak Oil’ is a Waste of Energy”, *NYT*, August 24, 2009.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/25/opinion/25lynch.html>

US Policy and Oil – Introduction

To Do:

- Read: *The Global Politics of Energy*, Forward, Preface, Chapters 1 and 2
- *The Nation* Special Issue on Oil Dependence (selected articles on Bb)

Week 6– February 28

Due: Oil Policy Report Individual Drafts

Russia, China, and Energy

To Do:

- Read : *The Global Politics of Energy*, Chapters 4 and 5

Recommended:

- Read: Klare (2004), chapter 6 (Bb)

Energy Policy and Climate Change

To Do:

- Read : *The Global Politics of Energy*, Chapters 6, 7 and 8
- Read: *Economist* special issue on oil (Selected articles on Bb)

Recommended:

- Browse articles at: <http://topics.syracuse.com/tag/hydrofracking/index.html>
- Listen to the story at:
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=104565793>
- Read: Friedman: "The Power of Green," *The New York Times Magazine*, April 15, 2007. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/15/magazine/15green.t.html>

Oil Conclusion – Contemporary Policy Issues

To Do:

- Read: *The Global Politics of Energy*, Chapter 9, 11, Concluding Observations
- Read: Lisa Margonelli, "A Spill of Our Own," *The New York Times*, May 1, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/02/opinion/02margonelli.html>
- Read: Julia Baird, "Oil's Shame in Nigeria," *Newsweek*, July 18, 2010
<http://www.newsweek.com/2010/07/18/oil-s-shame-in-africa.html>

Week 7 – March 7

Work on group projects, presentation

Transition to Water – Energy and Water Resources

Movie: *Gasland*

Week 8 – March 14

No Class – Spring Break

Part III – How We Got Here – A History of Water, Geopolitics, and Civilization

Week 9 – March 21

Due: Oil Policy Memos

Oil Policy Report Presentations

Week 10 – March 28

Form groups for and assign topics for water projects

Water and Civilization

To Do:

- Read: Soloman – Chapters 1-6

Water and the Rise of the West

To Do:

- Read: Soloman – Chapters 7-9

Water and Industrial Society

To Do:

- Read: Soloman – Chapters 10-13
- Read: *National Geographic* Special Issue on Water (Selected articles on Bb)

Part IV – Contemporary Water Issues – A Human Right or the New Oil

Week 11 – April 4

Due: Water Policy Report Terms of Reference due by Friday, April 8

Sources and uses of fresh water, and water ‘realities’

To Do:

- Read: Soloman Chapter 14

Recommended:

- Read: Shiklomanov, I. (1998) ‘World Water Resources: A new Appraisal and Assessment for the 21st Century,’ Summary (*on Blackboard*)
- Browse the UN Millennium Development Goals webpage, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

Water ‘Wars’, ‘Conflicts’, ‘Disputes’ or ‘Crisis’? Five approaches to water

To Do:

- Read: Dolatyar, M. & Gray, T. S (2000) Ch. 2: ‘Five Approaches to Water Scarcity’, in *Water Politics in the Middle East: A Context for Conflict or Cooperation?*, London: Macmillan, p. 15-59. (*on Blackboard*)
- Read: *Economist* special issue on water (Selected articles on Bb)

Water-related Conflicts I: Will future wars be about water? Or, is international cooperation possible?

To Do:

- Read: Gleick, P. (1993) “Water and Conflict,” *International Security* 18:1, p. 79-112. (Bb)
- Wolf, A. (1998) “Conflict and Cooperation along international Waterways,” *Water Policy* 1:2, p. 251-265. (Bb)

Recommended:

- Kukk, C.L. & Deese, D.A. (1996) “At the Water’s Edge: Regional Conflict and Cooperation over Fresh Water,” *UCLA Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs* 21, p. 21-64. (Bb)
- Gleick, P.H. (2006) “Water and Terrorism,” *Water Policy* 8, p. 481-503. (Bb)

Movie: *Thirst*

Week 12 – April 11

Water, Power and Politics in the Middle East (I): Egypt, Turkey, Iraq, Syria

To Do:

- Read: Soloman chapter 15

Recommended:

- Read: Klare (2002) chapters 6 and 7 (Bb)
- Read: Gleick, P.H. (1994) “Water, war, and peace in the Middle East,” *Environment* 36:3, p.6-24. (Bb)

Water, Power and Politics in the Middle East (II): Water in the Israeli-Palestine Conflict

To Do:

- Read: Elmusa, S. (1996) “The Land-Water Nexus in Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 25:3, p.69-78. (Bb)

Recommended:

- Read: Zeitoun, M. (2008) Ch. 4: “Highly Politicised Hydropolitics”, in *Power and Water in the ME: The hidden Politics of the Palestinian-Israeli Water Conflict*, London: I.B.Tauris, p. 63 -85. (Bb)

Week 13 – April 18

Due: Water Policy Report Individual Drafts

Water, Power and Politics in South and Southeast Asia

To Do:

- Read: Elhance, A. P. (1999) Ch. 5: “The Ganges- Brahmaputra-Barak Basin’, in *Hydropolitics in the 3rd World: Conflict and Cooperation in International River Basins*,

Washington DC, USIP, p.155-189. (Bb)

- Read: Samaddar, Ranabir (1997) “Flowing Waters and the Nationalist Metaphors”, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 20: 195-206. (Bb)

Water, Power and Politics in Central and East Asia

To Do:

- Read: Elhance, A. P. (1997) “Conflict and Cooperation over Water in the Aral Sea Basin”, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 20: 207-218. (Bb)
- Read: Weatherbee, D.E (1997) “Cooperation and Conflict in the Mekong River Basin”, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 20: 167- 184. (Bb)

Recommended:

- Read: Klare (2008) – Chapter 5 (Bb)

Week 14 – April 25

Water in the US

Movie: *Cadillac Desert*

To Do:

- Read: Boronkay, C. & Abbott, W. J. ‘Water Conflicts in the Western United States’, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 20: 137-166. (on Blackboard)
- Read: Klare (2008) – Chapter 7

Corporations vs. Communities: water as an economic good vs. water as a human right

To Do:

- Read: Priceless, *Economist*, July 19, 2003 (Bb)
- Read: Gleick, P.H. (1999) “The human right to water,” *Water Policy*, 1:5, p. 487-503. (Bb)
- Read: Gunther, M. ‘Is Water a Human Right?’ *Huffington Post*, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marc-gunther/iswater-a-human-right_b_51645.html

Conclusion – “A New Geography of Conflict?”

To Do:

- Read: Soloman – Chapter 17 and Epilogue

Recommended:

- Read: Klare (2002) chapter 9

Week 15 – May 2

Water Policy Report Presentations

Water policy papers due Friday, May 7.