This course examines a central concern of developing countries today: to what extent do natural resources shape political and social dynamics? Are natural resources a curse? On the one hand, exploitation of resources is associated with bad governance, civil strife, and general underdevelopment. Therefore, some conclude that easy money is bad for you. On the other hand, a number of countries have successfully exploited their own natural resources while still achieving productive economic growth and stable governance. Consequently, some conclude that resources are not important as believed. Making sense of these competing claims is a primary task of the course. Thematically we will analyze debates about how resources affect economic development (the curse), how resources interact with regime type (democracy versus authoritarianism), how resources may influence violent conflict (capturing, smuggling, and selling), how oil firms have influenced global politics (the history of oil exploration), and whether pursuit of resources determine a country’s foreign policy (war for oil?). Cases studies will include North and South America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. In addition to shorter assignments, a course research paper will be required.

Requirements:

This is a seminar course dependent upon student participation. It is emphatically not a lecture based course. Please bring copies of the readings to class each week (beginning week 3 until week 14). To facilitate participation, each student will write a 1 page “reaction paper” to that week’s readings. The point of these papers is NOT TO SUMMARIZE the readings but raise a question or discussion point to think about. Papers are due by each Monday 9am and should be uploaded to the appropriate forum on the Blackboard classroom site.

There will be two short, in-class exams, week 10 and 14.

The principle writing assignment for the class is a 10-15 paper which will focus on one country. We will meet to discuss your paper. The country based paper will be focused on some resource dependent or exporting country and explore some theory or question from the semester to that case. A 3 page outline and bibliography for your paper is due during Week 8. During the final two weeks, all students will present (5-7 minutes) their main findings to the class.
Grading and responsibilities

Reaction papers 30%
Short exam (2X) 30%
Final Paper and Presentation 40%

Required Texts


Themes and Readings

**Week 1**  
**Political Economy: Markets, States, and Societies I**

8/25-27  

**Week 2**  
**Political Economy: Markets, States, and Societies II**

9/1  
*LABOR DAY*

9/3  

(interview Mitchell)  

**Week 3**  
**The Modern Oil Industry: It all started in Cleveland…**

9/8-10  
Daniel Yergin, *The Prize*, Chapters 1-5

**Week 4**  
**Oil Industry Politics and History II**

9/15-17  
Daniel Yergin, *The Prize*, Chapters 6-15
Week 5  The International Oil Market
         Robert Adelman, “The Real Oil Problem,” Regulation, Spring 2004
         Robert Vitalis 2009, America’s Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil
         Frontier (New York: Verso), Forward and pp.1-26

Week 6  ARAMCO and American Exceptionalism
9/29-10/1 Robert Vitalis 2009, America’s Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil
           Frontier (New York: Verso), pp. 27-120

Week 7:  The Saudi-American Oil Camp
10/6-8   Robert Vitalis 2009, America’s Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil
           Frontier (New York: Verso), pp., 121-264 and Afterword

Week 8  Resources and War Economies (Course paper precise due)
           World Bank Occasional Paper. (skim and focus on the main findings)
           Mary Kaldor, Terry Lynn Karl and Yahia Said (Pluto Press)
           Philip Le Billon, “The political ecology of war: natural resources and armed
           conflict,” Political Geography (2001)
           Pete Moore and Christopher Parker, “The War Economy of Iraq” Middle
           East Report and, Moore, “Making Big Money on Iraq,” Middle East Report

Week 9  Film
10/20-22 The Ambassador

Week 10 Midterm Week
10/27  Spring Break
10/29  Short exam (in class)
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<th>Week 11</th>
<th>Resources and the Global Order</th>
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<th>Week 12</th>
<th>Resource Curses: Political and Economic Development</th>
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<th>Week 13</th>
<th>Critiquing the Curse Arguments</th>
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| Week 14 | |
|---------| |
| 11/24   | **NO CLASS** |
| 11/26   | **Short exam (in class)** |

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<th>Week 15</th>
<th>Paper Presentation Week</th>
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