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 2 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.

In addition, **twice during the course each student will write a 5 page paper discussing a group of readings (at least 3) from a specific week.** What are the questions or events discussed by readings from that week? How do they fit with larger class themes or theories examined? What are the authors’ arguments and what evidence do they bring to bear? **A hard copy of that paper is required in class on Friday.** These papers will be assigned during the first week of class.

**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 weeks 14 and 15 all students will present (5-7 minutes) their main findings to the class.

**Grading and responsibilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation/reaction papers</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five page paper (2x)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper and Presentation</td>
<td>55%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Required Texts**


Michael Klare, *Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America’s Growing Petroleum Dependency*

**Themes and Readings**

**READINGS CAN BE FOUND ON LIBRARY ELECTRONIC RESERVE OR AS NOTED ON OUR COURSE BLACKBOARD SITE**

**Week 1**

**Oil Industry Politics and History I: The Five Sisters and Imperialism**

1/10, 12, 14

- Francisco Parra *Oil Politics: A Modern History of Petroleum* (IB Tauris, 2004), pp. 6-54 (On blackboard site)


**Week 2**

**Oil Industry Politics and History II: ARAMCO and American Exceptionalism**

1/17

*Martin Luther King Day*

1/19, 21

- Francisco Parra *Oil Politics: A Modern History of Petroleum* (IB Tauris, 2004), pp. 89-145 (On blackboard site)

Week 3  The American Oil Camp

1/24, 26


1/28  TBA

Week 4  America’s Kingdom

1-31, 2/2, 4


Week 5  Debates I: Resource Curses and Economic Development

2/7, 9


2/11  NO CLASS

Week 6  Debates II: Resource Curses and Political Development

2/14, 16, 18


U.S. States," *Comparative Political Studies*, 41, 4/5 (April/May), pp. 477-514.

**Week 7:** Debates III: Push Backs and Critiques of the Curses

2/21, 23, 25


**Week 8:** Debates IV: Regional Variations, Africa and the Middle East

2/28, 3/2, 4


**Week 9** Spring Break 3/7-3/11
Week 10  Oil and (American) Wars
3/14, 16


Michael Klare, Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America’s Growing Petroleum Dependency, chapters 1-3

3/18  NO CLASS

Week 11  Oil and War: Invading Iraq for Oil?
3/21, 23, 25


Michael Klare, Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America’s Growing Petroleum Dependency, chapters 4, 5, and 7.


Week 12  Natural Resources and Sub-state War
4/4, 6, 8


Week 13  Resources and War Economies in Africa and the Middle East
4/11, 13, 15


Pete Moore and Christopher Parker, “The War Economy of Iraq” Middle East Report and, Moore, “Making Big Money on Iraq,” Middle East Report

Week 14  Paper Presentations
4/18, 20, 22

Week 15
4/25  Last Class