Natural Resource and World Politics, POSC 371/471  
MW 12:45-2:00pm 

Professor Pete W. Moore 

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This course examines a central concern of socio-economic development: 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. This course will begin by historically and politically unpacking the evolution of the global oil industry. The focus this semester will be on the relationship between flag (states) and commerce (profits from resources). It will range from Cleveland to Saudi Arabia. A second theme will investigate the interaction between control of resources and violent conflict. Cotton, minerals, and other resources have historically been linked to violent conflict. What is this relationship? Finally, we will examine debates about how resource dependence shapes the fate of democracy. 

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 an in-class exam week 9. 

The principle assignment for the semester is a research paper (20 pages minimum) which can focus on one country or one case. We will meet to discuss your paper. A 3 page outline and bibliography for your paper is due 10/14. During the last week of the semester, each student will present (5-7 minutes) their main findings to the class.
Grading and responsibilities

Reaction papers 15%
Individual Class Presentation 15%
Midterm Exam 30%
Final Paper and Presentation 40%

Required Texts

Robert Vitalis, America’s Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier (Verso Books, 2009)


Themes and Readings

Week 1 Introduction: Markets, States, and Societies
8/31 No Class


Week 2 The Global Oil Market
9/5 LABOR DAY
9/7 Watch short “Interview with Mitchell”

Week 3 The Modern Oil Industry: It all started in Cleveland…
9/12-14 Daniel Yergin, The Prize, Chapters 1-5
Francisco Parra, Oil Politics, pp. 6-54

Week 4 Oil Industry Politics and History
9/19-21 Daniel Yergin, The Prize, Chapters 9-10
Francisco Parra, *Oil Politics*, pp. 89-145 (focus on chapter 5)

IEA, “Oil Supply Security” (skim and contrast with Adelman/Jones approach)


John McPhee, “Coal Train,” in *Uncommon Carriers*

**Week 5**

**From Cleveland to Saudi Arabia: America’s Colony**


**Week 6**

**ARAMCO and American Exceptionalism**


**Week 7:**

**Resources and Conflict**

10/10-12 *Film: The Ambassador*

**10/14**

**Research Paper Precis Due**

**Week 8**

**Resources and Conflict: Africa and the Middle East**


Mahmood Mamdani, “Beyond Native and Settler as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism” *Society for Comparative Society and History* (2001)

**Week 9**

**Break and Exam**

10/24  *Fall Break*

10/26  *Exam*

**Week 10**

**Resource Imperialism**


Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, Introduction and Chapters, 1 and 2

**Week 11**

**Cotton, Slavery, and Profits**

11/7-9  Andre Gunder Frank, “The Development of Underdevelopment”

Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, Chapters 3-11

**Week 12**

**Global Cotton Today**

11/14-16  Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, Introduction and Chapters 12-14

**Week 13**

**Resource Curses: Resources and Democracy**


Week 14  Critiquing the Curse Arguments


Week 15  Paper Presentation Week

1/30-12/2