

POS 4931 Oil in Global Politics
Spring 2020

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This course focuses on the political effects of resource wealth and especially oil and natural gas. In the middle of the last century, economists believed strongly that countries rich in oil and gas stood to prosper and to use those resources to develop quickly into advanced economies. Fifty years later, many scholars think oil-rich countries are less likely to be democratic, stable, or for women to enjoy strong roles in government and the economy. In addition, U.S foreign policy for the last century has held a central assumption that a major security priority is to secure access to Persian Gulf oil. What accounts for these trends, and are they accurate? Can oil play any positive roles in development?

We will explore the origins of the world oil and gas markets. We will then spend much time exploring the impact of resource wealth on regime type, political stability, long-term economic prospects, violent intrastate conflict and interstate war, women's participation in the economy and politics, and US foreign policy.

Full disclosure: I have been researching and writing about oil politics for more than twenty years. I have strong prior beliefs about what oil wealth does, and does not, cause in the political world. To put those beliefs up front, I am mostly convinced that oil is not generally a 'curse' for the countries that produce it, with some important exceptions (i.e. women's economic empowerment). In fact, I continue to find strong evidence that there are some clear blessings that come from oil wealth for developing countries. Those, of course, run counter to the even clearer evidence that fossil fuels are central to human-induced climate change. So there is a tradeoff: make use of the benefits of oil wealth now to reduce poverty etc. or do not and recognize that the cost is immediate human benefit.

I use the scientific method to study oil and politics and when the data tell me something, I listen. In fact, my first serious exploration of oil and politics began with me expecting to confirm the resource curse. I couldn't, no matter how hard I tried, and the result was the start of a now-large research program demonstrating the stabilizing political impact of oil sectors. This course will prepare you not just to explore the politics of oil scientifically, but to use the tools of the scientific method to do social science research on a range of topics.

Research Design/Proposals. In addition to learning about the political science research on oil, you will learn quite a lot this semester about how to craft high quality research proposals. These are NOT research papers: they are careful approaches to 'designing' research projects and involve virtually all parts of scientific research other than the research and writing. You will write a research proposal for a project focused on oil and one or more political outcomes, and the proposal will be your major writing task for the course. Preparing this research proposal will require significant consultation with me, so I encourage you to visit my office hours early and often.

There will also be three in-class writing assessments—on September 22, October 25, and December 1. They will be worth 15% of your grade each, for 45% total. Your research proposal will comprise 20% of your final grade, and a take-home final exam will comprise 25%. The remaining 10% will come from assessment of your in-class participation (which in turn will be based on your contribution to discussions AND your completion of periodic and unannounced short writing exercises in class).

There will also be a contest this semester to guess the price of a barrel of WTI crude oil on the final day of class (April 22, 2020). The student who wins the contest will get a 5% bonus added to her or his final grade. The second closest student will get 3%, and the third 2%. Imagine turning a flat B (85%) into an A- (90%) simply by paying close attention to the dynamics of world oil prices this spring! You can get a start here - <http://oilprice.com/>. Your predictions will be due March 1.

Required Readings

There is just one required book for the course:
Michael Ross, *The Oil Curse* (Princeton 2012)

In addition, I have a book manuscript, co-authored with Dr. David Waldner of the University of Virginia, that we will read later in the semester. There are also many required book chapters and journal articles listed below. We will discuss them on the date in which they appear on the syllabus and you are required to have read them carefully and to be prepared to discuss them in depth on that day. *You are required to print all of these readings and to bring them in hard copy with you to class, along with the notes you have taken while reading.*

Grading

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following numerical scales:

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent	GPA equivalent
A	93-	4.0
A-	90-92	3.67
B+	87-89	3.33
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.67
C+	77-79	2.33
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.67
D+	67-69	1.33
D	63-66	1.0
D-	60-62	0.67
E	<60	0.00
E1	stopped attending	0.00
I	Incomplete ¹	0.00

¹ In my classes incompletes are extremely rare, like white tigers.

Regulations and Such

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Information on UF policies for grading may be found here:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obliged to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with me.

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit umatter.ufl.edu/ to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress. Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit counseling.ufl.edu/ or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services. Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit shcc.ufl.edu/. For the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies. *If circumstances arise that you think will get in the way of you completing the course requirements, PLEASE CONTACT ME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. I want you to succeed, and if we need to make some arrangements to facilitate that I will do everything I can to help you. I can do that more effectively with more time to plan.*

Schedule of Topics and Readings

January 6: Course introduction.

January 8: Thinking about why oil matters, and why it is political.

- Read pp. 8-14 in Ross, *Oil Curse*. Before class watch his interview on UCTV here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7ESq_O3Odw&index=2&list=PLBhR4b4xbS4mJg4mR-PosJORxaJX11p

If you want a preview of where I stand, you can get it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vkBuCbeI9o&list=FLhoLIAR-rUWf67wG2idkTFA&index=44>

January 10: From Western MNCs to OPEC.

- Read the following summaries of the history of the oil market here - <https://www.history.com/topics/industrial-revolution/oil-industry> - and here - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_petroleum_industry. There is a useful timeline here - <http://www.geohelp.net/world.html>.

January 13: Also how to ‘find’ a good research question. Potholes, puzzles and other kinds of topics.

- Alan Lightman, “A Sense of the Mysterious,” *Daedalus*, 132, 4: 5-21. (This is an article about scientific puzzles)
- Gschwend and Schimmelfennig, “Introduction: Designing Research in Political Science,” 1-18.

January 15: Why national ownership matters.

- Paasha Mahdavi, “Why do Leaders Nationalize the Oil Industry? The Politics of Resource Expropriation,” *Energy Policy* 75 (2014): 228-243.

January 17:

- Ross, *Oil Curse*, pp. 1-8.
- Jorgen Andersen and Michael Ross, “The Big Oil Change: A Closer Look at the Haber-Menaldo Analysis,” *Comparative Political Studies* 47, 7 (2014): 993-1021.

January 20: The Origins of the Resource Curse Paradigm in Political Economy.

- Hossein Mahdavy, “The Patterns and Problems of Development in Rentier States: The Case of Iran.”

January 22:

- Beblawi and Luciani, “The Rentier State.”

January 24: The Political Resource Curse and How Important Cases Become Dominant in Science

- Benjamin Smith (2004) “Oil wealth and regime durability in the developing world, 1960–1999.” *American Journal of Political Science* 48(2): 232–246.

January 27:

- Ross, chapter 2.

January 29: More Oil, Less Democracy? research question due.

- Michael Ross, “Does Oil Hinder Democracy,” *World Politics* 53 (April 2001): 325-61.

January 31:

- Ross, chapter 3

February 3: Writing Assessment 1.

February 5:

- Stephen Haber & Victor Menaldo, “Do Natural Resources Fuel Authoritarianism?” *American Political Science Review* 105, 1 (February 2011): 1-26.

February 7: More Oil, less Development?

- Jeffrey Sachs and Andrew Warner (1995), “Natural Resource Abundance and Economic Growth,” National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 5398.

February 10:

- Ross, chapter 6.

February 12:

- Brunnschweiler, Christa. 2008. Cursing the Blessings? Natural Resource Abundance, Institutions, and Economic Growth. *World Development* 36, 3, 399–419.

February 14: No class. I am at MIT for a book workshop on *Rethinking the Resource ‘Curse,’* which we will read later in the semester.

February 17: Measuring oil wealth so we can study it quantitatively.

- Ross section chapter 1 pp. 14-25.

February 19:

- Kristopher Ramsay, “Revisiting the Resource Curse,” *International Organization* 65 (Summer 2011): 507-29.

February 21: Measurement continued.

- Benjamin Smith (2017) “Resource Wealth As Rent Leverage,” *Conflict Management & Peace Science* 34, 6: 597-617.

February 24:

- Macartan Humphreys 2005. “Natural Resources, Conflict, and Conflict Resolution,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, 4: 508-37.

February 26: Oil and Internal Conflict (Civil War). finalized research question due.

- Paul Collier & Anke Hoeffler, “Greed and grievance in civil war,” *Oxford Economic Papers* 56 (2004), 563-595.

February 28: Writing Assessment 2.

March 9:

- Koubi, Vally, Gabriele Spilker, Tobias Böhmelt and Thomas Bernauer. 2014. "Do natural resources matter for interstate and intrastate armed conflict?" *Journal of Peace Research* 51(2): 227–243.

March 11:

- Smith, Benjamin, "Exploring the Resource-Civil War Nexus," Chapter 13 in T. David Mason and Sara M. Mitchell, *What do We Know About Civil Wars?* Rowman & Littlefield 2016.

March 13:

- Ross, Michael L. "How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from Thirteen Cases." *International Organization* 58, no. 1 (2004): 35-67.

March 16:

- Ross chapter 5.

March 18:

- Brunnschweiler, Christa N. and Erwin H. Bulte. 2009. "Natural Resources and Violent Conflict: Resource Abundance, Dependence and the Onset of Civil Wars," *Oxford Economic Papers* 61 (4): 651-674.

March 20:

- Basedau, Matthias and Jann Lay. 2009. "Resource Curse or Rentier Peace? The Ambiguous Effects of Oil Wealth and Oil Dependence on Violent Conflict," *Journal of Peace Research* 46, 6: 757-76.

Oil and Women's Empowerment

March 23:

- Background: the Political Economy of Women in the Labor Market.

March 25:

- Steven Fish 2002. "Islam and Authoritarianism." *World Politics* 55: 4-37.

March 27:

- Ross, chapter 4

March 30:

- Exchange on Ross's chapter 4 in *Politics & Gender* 2009 by Caraway, Kang, Charrad, Norris, Tripp, and Ross.

April 1: Writing Assessment 3.

Oil and Interstate War

April 3:

- Jeff Colgan, "Oil and Revolutionary Governments: Fuel for International Conflict," *International Organization* 64, 4 (October 2010): 661-694.

April 6:

- Cullen Hendrix, “Oil Prices and Interstate Conflict,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* (2015).

April 8:

- Benjamin Smith and Hye Ryeon Jang, “Pax Petrolica? A Closer Look at the Oil-Interstate Conflict Link,” working paper.

April 10:

- Benjamin Smith and Hye Ryeon Jang, “Great Powers, Oil, and War: Petroleum Market Geography and Interstate Conflict.”

What the Heretics Have to Say

April 13:

- David Waldner and Benjamin Smith, “Renting Sovereignty: Endogenous Borders and the Resource Curse”

April 15:

- Benjamin Smith and David Waldner, *Rethinking the Resource ‘Curse,’* Introduction and Chapter 1

April 17:

- Smith and Waldner, Chapters 2-3

April 20:

- Smith and Waldner, Chapters 4-5

April 22: Final Research Design Project Due, uploaded to Canvas. Course Review. Final exam distributed via Canvas.

April 27: Final exam due, uploaded to Canvas, by noon.