COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Oil and gas have always been important to global and domestic politics, but their importance seems to have received renewed attention in recent times as a result of increasing concerns over the effects of oil exploration on the environment and especially climate change, indigenous rights and cultures, and technological innovations that have led to a boom in the US shale industry. The Obama administration’s objections to the Keystone XL pipeline and the ongoing conflict between the BC and Alberta governments over the Kinder Morgan pipeline are two examples of the complex politics of oil.

This course seeks to enhance students’ understanding of the challenges of managing oil wealth and the critical role of oil in shaping, and being shaped by, power and politics such as the relationships between state and social actors, between the oil industry and oil-producing communities, between regions or provinces, or between provincial and federal governments. It focuses primarily on domestic politics, but also explores how the international and geopolitical dimensions of oil affect and are affected by domestic political decisions, public policies, political regimes, the oil industry, and social actors. The course features case studies of countries from North America, Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Course topics include introduction to basic concepts, access to oil markets and pipeline ‘wars’; fossil fuel, climate change, and the politics of clean energy transition; the relationship between oil, democracy/authoritarianism, and conflict, and the larger debate about whether or not oil wealth leads to poor economic and political consequences (i.e., the
‘resource curse’ debate); and an assessment of some of the policy efforts designed to help oil-rich countries mitigate or avoid the resource curse.

COURSE EVALUATION AND REQUIREMENTS

Class Attendance and Participation: 10%
In-class midterm 25%
Final Exam: 35%
Research Paper: 30%
Total: 100%

NOTES:
• Late essays will be subject to a 3% penalty per day
• Course syllabus will be made available via the POLI 349 page on Course Spaces. Some reading materials are readily accessible electronically from the Uvic Library. All other reading materials will be posted to the POLI 349 page.

EVALUATION GUIDELINES

1. Attendance and Participation (10%)
Active attendance and participation in broader class discussions are important aspects of this course and they constitute a good portion of the final grade. Students are therefore expected to be engaged in discussions at all times. Such engagement requires students to have read required texts prior to classes and possibly taken brief notes on pertinent issues the assigned readings address. I strongly encourage you to come to class prepared to discuss the readings as well as with questions and/or observations regarding the course material and the cases that we are examining.

2. Term Research Paper (30%) Due by 4:00 p.m. on Nov. 23
Students will write a 10-12 page (typed and double-spaced 12pt Times New Roman font) paper on a topic of choice. The paper should be based on one or more of the themes discussed in the course but sources to be used should include readings not listed in this course outline. This is an analytical scholarly writing exercise; essays that merely describe or narrate past or present events in an uninteresting manner will not receive a high grade. Please consult with the instructor about selected topic/issue before beginning the writing process. This consultation should be done as early as possible.

An excellent research paper will have the following:
• A clear title/heading
• Three main sections: introduction, body and conclusion
• A well thought out thesis statement, which should typically be stated in the Introduction
• A focused and manageable research question
• Proper organization of overall arguments to ensure both brevity and coherence
• Engage critically with theoretical debate and/or empirical cases we have explored in the course readings and lectures.
• Shows evidence of academic research by buttressing argument with verifiable sources from peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles and academic books. Wikipedia is not a scholarly source. A minimum of ten sources is required for the paper, excluding news articles and online sources but including peer-reviewed journal articles academic books, and book chapters
• Proper and consistent usage of an accepted citation format
• A list of cited sources (references) on the last page. Only include sources that you actually used in the paper
• Proofreading to detect and correct avoidable typographical errors.

3. Midterm Exam (25%) Scheduled for October 18
Midterm exam is scheduled in class on October 18. The exam will cover all the lectures and assigned readings up to the midterm exam.

4. Final Exam (35%; Date to be determined)
This is a 2-hour exam, taken at the scheduled exam time. This includes materials covered in readings and class lectures. The final exam questions cover material for the entire course.

Please do not make any travel plans for December until you know the date of the final exam for this course.

GRADING POLICIES & SCALE:
Students must complete all assignments in order to get credit for the course. Numerical grades will be converted to letter grades as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passing Grades</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90 – 100</td>
<td>Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. Normally achieved by a minority of students. These grades indicate a student who is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>77 – 79</td>
<td><strong>Very good</strong>, <strong>good</strong> and <strong>solid</strong> performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>73 – 76</td>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong>, or <strong>minimally satisfactory</strong>. These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>70 – 72</td>
<td><strong>Marginal</strong> Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>65 – 69</td>
<td><strong>Very good</strong>, <strong>good</strong> and <strong>solid</strong> performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60 – 64</td>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong>, or <strong>minimally satisfactory</strong>. These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td><strong>Marginal</strong> Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Learning Environment:**
The UVic Academic Calendar notes: “The University of Victoria is committed to promoting critical academic discourse while providing a respectful and productive learning environment. All members of the university community have the right to experience and the responsibility to help create such an environment.” Students and community partners have diverse views on the issues discussed in this course, and we seek to create an environment in which all perspectives – including those of the instructors – can be analyzed critically in a respectful fashion.

**Attendance, Assignments, and Grading:**
The UVic Academic Calendar states: “Students are expected to attend all classes in which they are enrolled.” Attendance will be taken, and any student who attends fewer than 70 percent of scheduled class sessions will be assigned
a grade of “N” for the course. Students must complete all assignments (see Course Requirements) in order to get credit for the course.

**Late Policy and Absences:**
You are ultimately responsible for your own learning. Therefore, you are still responsible for any material covered in class when you are absent from class on a given day, including: assigned readings, information from class discussions, information about assignments, etc. If you must submit your essay late, you will receive a penalty of 3% per day (weekends included).

Deadline extensions will be granted only for documented illnesses (doctor’s note required) or on compassionate grounds (e.g. death in the family, again with documentation), or other emergencies (with documentation).

**Please note: all assignments are mandatory for this course. According to University policy, failure to complete one or more of the required assignments will result in a grade of ‘N’ (incomplete) for the course. An ‘N’ is equivalent to a fail for your GPA.**

**PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**
Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that you submit individually or as a member of a group. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust and responsibility. It is expected that students will respect these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research and service. Therefore, plagiarism and other acts against academic integrity are serious academic offences.

**The responsibility of the institution -** Instructors and academic units have the responsibility to ensure that standards of academic honesty are met. By doing so, the institution recognizes students for their hard work and assures them that other students do not have an unfair advantage through cheating on essays, exams, and projects.

**The responsibility of the student -** Plagiarism sometimes occurs due to a misunderstanding regarding the rules of academic integrity, but it is the responsibility of the student to know them. If you are unsure about the standards for citations or for referencing your sources, ask your instructor. Depending on the severity of the case, penalties include a warning, a failing grade, a record on the student’s transcript, or a suspension. It is your
responsibility to understand the University’s policy on academic integrity, which can be found on pages 32-34 of the undergraduate calendar.

Please see the (revised) academic integrity policy: http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html

**COURSE EVALUATION SURVEY (CES):**
I really do value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of the term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. When it is time for you to complete the survey you will receive an e-mail inviting you to do so. You will need to use your UVic Netlink ID to access the survey, which can be done from your laptop, table, or mobile device. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time.

**Resources to Assist You:**
*Learning and Teaching Centre.* The learning and teaching centre is used by everyone -- undergraduate students, graduate students and professors. I encourage you to visit them to get assistance with writing and reading issues/questions/challenges in current or past assignments. Assistance from the centre can make a huge difference in your confidence and writing and reading skills, and can ultimately improve your grades! Visit their website at: http://ltc.uvic.ca/servicesprograms/twc/students.php

*Time Management.* At one time or another, most of us have problems managing our time. Learning how to manage your time and workload is an important skill. Counseling services offer excellent courses on time management and provide one-on-one assistance. Visit them or their website at: http://coun.uvic.ca/learning

*Personal Challenges.* You may also want to contact a counselor if delays in your coursework completion are due to personal challenges you face over the semester: http://coun.uvic.ca. You can also find a separate link here for resources for students who have a disability.

*Learning Disabilities.* I strongly urge you to contact Center for Accessible Learning if you have a learning disability or any health issue that might interfere with you achieving your learning goals. It is important that the learning
environment for this course is equitable and inclusive. Please talk to me early in the term about academic accommodations you might require, and visit the Center. http://www.uvic.ca/services/cal

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week One: September 5 & 7  Introduction
*Introduction & Welcome: Motivation for Class
*Discussion of Course Outline/Requirements
*Brief Discussion of reading (during class on September 7)

Required Reading:

Documentaries
- CBC. 2015. “Working on Canada’s oil rigs | Up Close.” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2z0s1vJ8MJg

Week Two: September 10, 12, 14
Introduction to the Oil Industry: History, Impact, Actors, Markets, and Prospects


Documentary


Week Three: September 17, 19, 21:

Understanding the History & Strategic Importance of Oil from International Political (IR) Economy and International Relations (IPE) Perspectives


Week Four: September 24, 26, 28

Resource Nationalism


Further Reading

Week Five: October 1, 3, 5
Oil and Indigenous Resistance


Week Six: October 10, 12 (*October 8: Thanksgiving Day. No Class)
Pipelines and Politics of Transporting Oil


Week Seven: October 15, 17 19 (*October 19: In Class-Mid Term Exam)
The Resource Curse Debate: Is Oil a Curse or Blessing?


Week Eight: October 22, 24, 26
Can the Resource Curse be Reversed or Avoided: Policies, Options, and Challenges


Documentary

• Al Jazeera. 2011. “UN slams Shell over Nigeria oil pollution.” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmI3xjZk_y0

Week Nine: October 29, 31, November 2
Oil at the Intersection of Nuclear Power Politics


Week Ten: November 5, 7, 9
Changing Dynamics of the Oil Industry (I): The Role of China


Week Eleven 12, 14, 16
* Reading Break
**No classes

Week Twelve: November 19, 21, 23
Changing Dynamics of the Oil Industry (II): The USA Transition to Oil ‘Self-sufficiency’


Week Twelve: November 26, 28, 30
Changing Dynamics of the Oil Industry (III): Climate Change and Clean Energy Transitions


Further Reading


Week Thirteen December 3, 5

Wrap up and review

NOTE:

Class Schedule: Under special circumstances, there may be some changes to the syllabus. Students will always be informed well in advance. The instructor reserves the right to correct or modify the syllabus as the course progresses.

USEFUL LINKS:

U.S. Energy Information Agency
https://www.eia.gov/beta/international/

Organization of Petroleum Countries (OPEC)

McKinsey & Company Energy Insights