

# The History of Oil

Fall 2024

HIST:1115/EES:1115 / ENVS:1115 / GEOG:1115



**Lecture: TTH 11:00-11:50am (0AAA)**  
[W55 Chemistry Building \(CB\)](#)

**Discussion: F 11:30-12:20pm (0A01)**  
[30 Schaeffer Hall](#)

**Discussion: F 1:30-2:20pm (0A02)**  
[74 Schaeffer Hall](#)

**University of Iowa**  
**College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

**Professor Richard (Tyler) Priest, Department of History**

Email: [tyler-priest@uiowa.edu](mailto:tyler-priest@uiowa.edu)

Office: 163 Schaeffer Hall, 319-335-2096

Zoom Meeting Room: <https://uiowa.zoom.us/j/9397749856>

Drop-in hours: Mon 1:00-2:30pm; Thus 9:00-10:30am (163 SH or by Zoom). Also available by appointment in person or on Zoom.

Bio: <https://history.uiowa.edu/people/tyler-priest>; <http://typriest.com/>

**John Jepsen, Teaching Assistant**

Email: [john-jepsen@uiowa.edu](mailto:john-jepsen@uiowa.edu)

Office: 380 Schaeffer Hall

Zoom Meeting Room: <https://uiowa.zoom.us/j/4022911939>

Drop-in hours: Tues 12:30-2:00pm (380 SH or by Zoom); Wed 11:00-12:30pm (Zoom)

**Professor Colin Gordon**

DEO, Department of History

Contact: [colin-gordon@uiowa.edu](mailto:colin-gordon@uiowa.edu), 276 SH, 319-335-2303

**"The meek shall inherit the Earth, but NOT its mineral rights."  
- J. Paul Getty, American oilman and one-time richest person in the world**

### **Description**

This course provides broad historical perspective on the business, diplomacy, geology, technology, politics, environment, and culture of the global oil (petroleum) industry. It asks students to contemplate the big questions surrounding the origins, development, and meaning of the "Age of Petroleum," an age in which we continue to live. How and why did oil become the most powerful international business of the last 160 years? What were the factors behind oil's emergence as the world's main transportation fuel, a chief source of heat and electricity, and the building block for a proliferating array of consumer goods? How and why did struggles over oil become central to world politics and shape the rise and fall of nations? How do we wrestle with the trade-offs between the unprecedented wealth and prosperity generated by oil development and the social, economic, and environmental costs that have come with it? How has the search for oil fostered human awareness of both Earth's deep history and the fragility of ecosystems on which we depend?

### **Learning Objectives**

Students completing this class will gain essential insight into modern global history. The course emphasizes the importance of thinking historically, developing explanations for why the past unfolded as it did, rather than along an alternative path. In this class, which fulfills a General Education Requirement for "Historical Perspectives," students will study both primary and secondary sources to learn how professional historians work. The course also satisfies the "Sustainability" GE Requirement, which focuses on the "interconnectedness of human actions across complex natural systems." The subject of petroleum is perhaps one of the most important to understanding the challenges and opportunities for creating healthy ecosystems, social systems, and economies.

In addition to expanding your knowledge base, this course aims to improve your written and oral expression of ideas and sharpen your analytical abilities in reading, writing, listening, and note taking. In the discussion sections, we will use inquiry-based activities to build skills in critical thinking, teamwork, and effective written and oral communication. As oil development will continue to have a large impact on our lives, this course is also designed to expand your understanding of the costs and benefits of oil to modern society and to prepare you to confront the challenges of ensuring energy sustainability over the long run. This course will also serve as a gateway for further study in History, as well as in other energy and sustainability-related courses at the University of Iowa.

**Core Competencies for General Education in Historical Perspectives  
(Adapted from the American Historical Association Tuning Project)**

History is about comprehending the temporal (time-based) conditions of existence. The basic work of historians is to explain change and continuity over time. Historians rely on a set of evolving rules and methods that enable us to study the past with clarity and rigor. Such study requires evidence and informed analysis, along with an appreciation for differing interpretations. In this class, we will be working with both primary and secondary sources to learn to “think historically” in becoming apprentice historians. Students will work on acquiring the following skills and competencies in the study of history:

- Ability to engage in historical inquiry, research, and analysis.
  - Develop a disciplined, critical stance on the world that demands evidence and information.
  - Understand the dynamics of change and continuity over time.
  - Explore the complexity of human experience across time and space.
  - Evaluate a variety of historical sources for their credibility, perspective, and position.
- Practice historical empathy.
  - Value the study of the past for its contribution to lifelong learning and critical habits of mind.
  - Recognize the ongoing provisional nature of knowledge.
  - Explore multiple viewpoints that provide perspective on the past.
  - Recognize where you stand in the flow of history.
- Understand the complex nature of the historical record.
  - Distinguish between primary and secondary materials and decide when to use each.
  - Choose among multiple tools, methods, and perspectives to interpret materials from the past.
  - Recognize the value of conflicting narratives and evidence.
- Generate significant, open-ended questions about the past and devise strategies to answer them.
  - Identify and summarize other scholars’ historical arguments.
  - Learn to pose questions based on evidence and interpretations.
  - Identify the kinds of sources and information needed to answer historical questions.
- Craft historical narratives and argument.
  - Write effective narratives that describe and analyze the past for its use in the present.
  - Understand that the ethics and practice of history mean recognizing and building on and citing other scholars’ work.
  - Defend a position and revise this position when new evidence requires it.
- Practice historical thinking as central to engaged citizenship.
  - Engage a diversity of viewpoints in a civil and constructive fashion.

- Work cooperatively with others to develop positions that reflect deliberation and differing perspectives.
- Apply historical knowledge and analysis to contribute to contemporary social dialogue.

### **Core Competencies for General Education in Sustainability (UIowa College of Liberal Arts and Sciences)**

According to the UN World Commission on Environment and Development, “sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Courses in the area of sustainability focus on using a systems-thinking approach. That is, sustainability touches all natural and human life and in turn all human endeavors and activities, with courses studying the interconnectedness of human actions across complex natural systems, focusing on the consequence of these interactions over time and by place, including how these typically evolve, creating multiple, unintended outcomes.

- Foundational Understanding
  - Students identify foundational concepts and terminology associated with sustainability and systems-thinking.
- Systems Thinking
  - Students investigate the interconnectedness of human and natural systems.
  - Students apply system thinking and evidence-based approaches to critically evaluate sustainability issues.
- Application to Everyday Life
  - Students evaluate how their own actions affect and are affected by society’s ability to meet sustainability goals.
- Culture, Diversity, and Institutions
  - Students investigate how particular institutional and/or cultural processes support or interfere with sustainability goals.
  - Students understand how sustainability may change depending on perspective (e.g., local to global, near to long-term, resource-poor to resource-rich).

### **Textbook/Materials**

The following required text may be purchased at [Iowa Hawk Shop](#) or from most book retailers on-line. A copy is also for 4-hour loan at the Main Library.

Robert McNally, *Crude Volatility: The History and the Future of Boom-Bust Oil Prices* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), ISBN: 978-0231178150 (pbk.), \$26 at Amazon.com.

We will also be reading a good portion of Anthony Sampson, *The Seven Sisters: The Great Oil Companies and the World They Shaped* (New York: Bantam, 1975). This book is out-of-print, but PDFs of the chapters are posted in ICON. It is also available on 4-hour loan from the Main Library. Alternatively, used copies of this book are widely and cheaply available from online retailers.

Other course readings and materials are posted as PDF documents, JPEGs, or via hyperlink in ICON/Canvas. See “Schedule” below for complete list of readings.

### **Preparation and Workload**

The general expectation is that you come to the course eager to learn about the history of oil. The course is designed with the assumption that you have little or no prior knowledge of the subject. Rather, it is designed to introduce you to the history oil, expose you to various ways of thinking about the subject, and suggest different disciplinary approaches to help you consider an academic major.

According to University of Iowa guidelines, in a 3-semester-hour course, students should expect (on average) 6 additional hours of outside work per week or a total around 9 hours per course if classroom time is included. A student taking 5 courses (3 credit hours each) should expect to spend around 45 hours a week on academic work. The university considers 45 hours of academic work a week the norm.

**ICON/Canvas Course Management Website**, <https://uiowa.instructure.com/>.

We will use ICON/Canvas to manage materials for the class. The syllabus, PDFs of readings, website links, announcements, and grades can all be accessed through this site. All are organized by week in the “Modules” section of the website. Use your HawkID and password to log into ICON/Canvas. Remember to check the ICON/Canvas course website regularly. You should also check your UIowa email account daily for messages or updates from us on the course. This will be our principal means of communicating with you outside of class.

### **Class Format/Conduct**

This class will be taught through a combination of engaged lecture and inquiry-based discussion. Tuesday and Thursday meetings will consist of lecture, Q&A, Top Hat interactions, and occasional large group discussions. Friday meetings will consist largely of discussions about lectures and other course materials. The Friday meetings will also involve quizzes, in-class writing, and group exercises and activities.

Attendance at both Tuesday-Thursday lectures and Friday discussions is required to do well in the class. **For the exams, you will be responsible for assigned readings, films, and sources, as well as material presented in lecture and in discussion.** Attendance policy is outlined below. If you are unable to attend class because of illness, authorized University activities, or other circumstances that warrant special attention, you must

notify the instructors by email or telephone at the earliest possible opportunity. Only an excused absence entitles students to make up graded work.

Arrive to class on time and be attentive for the entire period. If you arrive late, come in quietly – but don't make arriving late a habit. During class time, do not chat with neighbors, read materials unrelated to class, eat or drink noisily, or otherwise disturb the meeting. Smartphones, laptops, and tablets are allowed in the lecture, provided they are used only for note taking or tasks directly related to the course. Silence all cell phones before you enter the room. Do not answer phones or send/check messages during class. At all times, please be respectful of classmates and the professor. The goal is to learn from others' ideas in an open, tolerant atmosphere.

### **Tuesday-Thursday Meetings**

This class demands a high level of engagement by students with the readings and assignments. Come to class having prepared from the readings, videos, and/or documents assigned for that day. PowerPoint slides that accompany Tuesday-Thursday lectures will be posted on ICON/Canvas. The PowerPoint slides will be mostly images, not bullet-point details of the lectures. Part of learning in a classroom format is listening actively and taking notes on things you find important. Feel free to meet with the instructors for tips on taking notes and studying for this class. Early in the semester, we will work on note taking strategies and skills (see below). If you miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining notes from a classmate. Oral and virtual (Top Hat) participation in class lectures is strongly encouraged.

This course will use the **Top Hat** "student response system" to promote active learning in class. Please [Top Hat FAQ for Students](#). Students can use any device with internet connectivity (smartphone, laptop, or tablet) to connect to the daily Top Hat session. We will use this software to take attendance, pose questions, and assist with discussion. Top Hat requires a license to participate. Create and access your Top Hat account through your ICON course site. The license is \$10 per student for the semester, which will be charged to your Ubill. You may [opt out](#) of this content, but the consequences of doing so may affect your outcomes in this course. Students who change their minds after the opt-out deadline and wish to participate may purchase a license from Top Hat at the full retail price. One active Top Hat license will cover multiple courses at once.

### **Friday Meetings**

On Fridays, your teaching assistant will guide classroom discussions (maximum 30 students). Friday discussions serve two purposes. First, they will serve as review and Q&A sessions for lectures and other course material. The quizzes during the first six weeks are designed to help you keep up with course material and prepare for the midterm exam. Meetings during the second half will focus on working with primary sources in addition to review of course material. Primary sources are documents, physical objects, or creative works that were written or created during the time under

study. They offer an inside view or contemporary perspective of a particular event or time. They are the raw materials with which historians build narratives. Primary sources include maps, photographs, news stories, archival documents, diaries, speeches, artwork, propaganda films and advertisements, political cartoons, and songs, poems, and fiction. Such sources will provide an opportunity for creative exploration of the themes presented on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

**Drop-In Hours: Professor Priest, Mon 1:00-2:30pm, Thus 9:00-10:30am; TA John Jepsen, Tues, 12:30-2:00pm (in person or by Zoom); Wed, 11:00-12:30pm (Zoom).**

During these times, we will be available to meet either in our offices or virtually. "Drop in" means that you do not need an appointment. We are also available by appointment (in person or by Zoom) if you are unable to attend drop-in hours. **Professor Priest's "Personal Meeting Room" link is: <https://uiowa.zoom.us/j/9397749856>.** **TA John Jepsen's link is: <https://uiowa.zoom.us/j/4022911939>.** Please speak with us whenever you have any questions, if you need help, or would like to discuss any course-related matters individually. If your schedule makes it difficult for you to come to drop-in hours, send us an email or talk to us after class so that we can set up an appointment at some time that works for both of us. All electronic communication outside of class must take place through UI emails. Our policy is to respond to all student emails during weekdays within 24 hours. We cannot guarantee responses to emails on weekends, but we usually find time to do so.

### **Tues-Thus Attendance**

Attendance will be taken via Top Hat every Tuesday and Thursday. Attendance will count for 10 points, or 10% of your final grade. You are allowed three unexcused absences without penalty on your attendance grade. You are allowed one excused absence for short-term illness without documentation, if you notify us by email within 24 hours of missing the class. For further absences, you must provide documentation, using [this form](#) to share the reasons for an absence with me, or else it will be counted as unexcused. The form also may be found on ICON under the **Student Tools** tab at the top of the page where course evaluations are located.

Attendance grading criteria is as follows:

- 20 points – No more than 3 unexcused absences
- 18 points – No more than 4 unexcused absences and above average participation
- 16 points – No more than 5 unexcused absences and average participation
- 14 points – No more than 6 unexcused absences and average participation
- 12 points – No more than 7 unexcused absences and below average participation
- 10 points or below – More than 7 unexcused absences

### **Participation and Engagement**



You will be evaluated on your participation and engagement (P&E) in Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday meetings. You can earn P&E credit through oral participation, Top Hat responses, and Friday group activities.

We understand that speaking in class can be a stressful or daunting experience for some students. But learning to organize and communicate your thoughts orally is an important part of academic development and an essential part of becoming an engaged citizen. We expect everyone to contribute to discussions and to making the classroom and comfortable and respectful intellectual environment in which all can participate.

P&E grading criteria is as follows:

20 points – High level of P&E

18 points – Above average P&E

16 points – Average P&E

14 points – Below average P&E

12 points – Minimal P&E

10 points or below – Sub-minimal P&E

### **Weekly Learning Objectives Study Questions/Lecture Notes**

Note taking is a vital skill to assist learning and synthesizing information. One objective of this course is to improve your comprehension of academic lectures and readings. Each week, Learning Objective **Study Guides** will be posted in ICON. They will consist of a series of questions and terms to help guide you through the assigned readings, primary documents, and/or films for that week. The best use for the weekly study guides is to outline or write-out answers to the questions as you do the assignment. The study guides are for your own use and are not to be submitted for a grade. During the first Discussion meeting on 8/30, we will spend time discussing best practices for taking notes and using the study guides.

### **Quizzes**

At the beginning of class on six different Friday meetings early in the semester, your TA will administer a short quiz (2-5 questions, multiple choice and/or short answer) based on the lectures and readings from that week. These are to ensure that students are completing the course readings/films and understanding the material. We will count your highest scores from five quizzes.

### **In-Class Writing and Response Papers**

During the second part of the semester, you will submit five short writing assignments. Three of these will be written in-class during the Friday discussion. The other two will be “response papers,” 2-3-pages (500-750 words) in length. Response papers are short commentaries or responses to assigned readings or films, designed to help deepen your thinking about various oil-related subjects. They should be submitted in advance of the Friday discussion section. Further instructions will be provided.



## **Exams**

There are two exams for this class, a midterm (35 points) and final (45 points), worth a combined 40 percent of your final grade. The midterm, administered in class on October 15, will cover all course material from the beginning of the semester through October 11. The final exam (date TBD) will cover all material since the midterm. The format for the exams will be matching questions, multiple-choice questions, and written-answer questions. Exam study guides will be provided in advance for each exam, and your TA will host an exam review session for both the midterm and final.

## **Missed Assignments**

Only students whose absences are excused will be given the opportunity to make up overdue assignments without penalty. It is expected that all work will be made up as soon as possible after the missed assignment. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor or TA immediately if a paper or exam was missed (or is about to be missed). Specific arrangements for make-ups will be made on a case-by-case basis. Unless there are truly extraordinary circumstances, students must contact the instructors within one day after the missed assignment to make arrangements.

There is a window of one week for making up an assignment or exam. If you have a documented reason for missing the exam, you have one week to make it up. For example, you may not make up the midterm, even with a documented excuse, at the end of the semester. If you require more than one week to make up the midterm exam, you are advised to drop the course.

## **Academic Integrity**

Honesty is an essential value of our academic community. Learning depends on the interchange of ideas and the cooperative pursuit of knowledge. This can only be achieved through trust and honoring mutual obligation. Academic dishonesty in the form of cheating, lying, plagiarism, or other forms of misrepresentation diminishes your education and the classroom experience for other students, undermining the educational mission to serve all students fairly and equally.

Please familiarize yourself with the university's [Policy on Academic Dishonesty](#).

Plagiarism, a form of academic dishonesty, includes, but is not limited to, intentional or unintentional use of direct quotes without proper attribution and/or quotation marks; the use of someone else's ideas without appropriate attribution; and handing in someone else's work as your own. You will submit written work in electronic form to an ICON drop box that includes a plagiarism detection function. Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled ([CLAS Academic Policies Handbook](#)).

In this class, students may study with classmates and collaborate on ungraded exercises. However, please be aware that to succeed in this class you will have to be able to work through and master the material on your own. No collaboration is allowed for graded assignments. You may not share your work with others or ask to see others' work prior to submitting the assignment for a grade, as it is considered academic misconduct. Students are responsible for understanding this policy; if you have questions, ask for clarification.

**\*\*Posting material online\*\***

Please note that students are forbidden from posting any class materials (power points, syllabi, quizzes, tests, etc.) onto any website. All materials will be made available through ICON. Any posting of any class materials on any website will be considered Academic Misconduct and will be reported to the University Administration.

**Evaluation**

At A Glance:

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Points/Percentage</i>
Tues-Thus Attendance	Ongoing	20 points (10%)
Participation and Engagement	Ongoing	20 points (10%)
Quizzes (6 – Best 5)	Various	25 points (12.5%)
In-Class Writing (3)	Various	15 points (7.5%)
Response Papers (2)	Various	20 points (10%)
Midterm Exam	October 10	35 points (17.5%)
Final Exam	TBA	45 points (22.5%)
Total		180 points

Course Letter Grade:

There are 180 points possible in the course. Your final grade will be calculated according to the following scale:

180-167 – A  
 166-162 – A-  
 161-156 – B+  
 155-151 – B  
 150-144 – B-  
 143-138 – C+  
 137-133 – C  
 132-126 – C-  
 125-120 – D+  
 119-114 – D  
 113-108 – D-  
 107-     -- F

A grade: demonstrates exceptional work that goes beyond the mere recitation of content encountered in the class. Written A work demonstrates a high level of critical thinking and analysis and the ability to synthesize concepts learned throughout the semester to produce an insightful perspective on the subject at hand. To achieve an A, students must consistently attend class, engage with the subject matter, and demonstrate preparedness. We do not award A+ grades in this course.

B grade: attempts critical thinking and analysis and shows solid grasp of the required reading. Students who achieve B-level work consistently attend class and demonstrate preparedness.

C grade: demonstrates a basic level of effort and competence with the course materials but also gaps in critical thinking, comprehension or synthesis of the material, and incomplete command of basic facts. Irregular attendance often results in C-level work.

D grade: does not meet basic standards of competency in the course. D-level work shows incomprehension of the course content and falls short of expectations for college-level coursework. A significant number of absences and a failure to complete assignments often result in substandard work.

Grades for quizzes and response papers will be posted within one week. Grades for the midterm will be posted within two weeks.

There is a window of two weeks for appealing grades. Once you have received a grade for a given assignment (paper, exam), you have two weeks to appeal if you think you have received an incorrect score. For example, we will not consider an appeal at the end of the semester for the midterm exam. Rarely, and almost only in the case of an obvious error, do we change grades.

### **Where to Get Academic Support for This Course**

Students may find the Writing Center and Tutor Iowa useful for this course:

Writing Center: <https://writingcenter.uiowa.edu/>.

Tutor Iowa: <http://tutor.uiowa.edu/>.

### **Websites for Oil History**

["Oil in American History,"](#) special issue of the *Journal of American History*, co-edited by your professor.

[American Oil & Gas Historical Society](#) - An industry sponsored website that contains extensive resources and information about the history of oil and gas in the United States.

[IMDb List of the “Best Films about Oil”](#) - This is a list compiled and ranked by your professor of 85 feature films (excluding documentaries) and streaming series about the subject of oil, or about subjects at least tangentially related to it. When you gather with friends to watch a movie or series this semester, consider choosing some of these titles.

[IMDb List of the “Best Documentary Films about Oil \(and Gas\)”](#) - This is a list also compiled and ranked by your professor of 50 documentary films about the subject of oil and gas. These are some other options for movie night.

## SCHEDULE

\*Readings and other assignments should be completed BEFORE class on the day they are assigned. Quizzes will be administered during Friday discussion class.

### Week 1

#### **8/27 Lecture: Introduction**

#### **8/29 Lecture: What is History? What is Oil?**

Reading: Katherine Pickering Antonova, “What is History” 3 – 3.2, in *The Essential Guide to Writing History Essays* (Oxford Press, 2020), pp. 30-44 (PDF)

#### **8/30 Discussion: How to Take This Class (Reading, Studying, Note-taking)**

Websites: Jonathan Wilson, [How to Study a History Textbook](#) (A “secondary source”); UI History Teaching and Writing Center, [Taking Lecture Notes](#)

**Quiz 1** - Based on Week 1 Lecture and Study Guide

### Week 2

#### **9/3 Lecture: Let There Be Artificial Light**

#### **9/5 Lecture: Oil on the Brain: The Origins of the Oil Industry**

Reading: McNally, *Crude Volatility*, pp. 1-19

Film: [The Prize: Episode 1, Our Plan](#), first 20 minutes

#### **9/6 Discussion: Who Owns the Oil Underground?**

**Quiz 2** - Based on Week 2 Lectures and Study Guide

## **Week 3**

### **9/10 Lecture: John D. Rockefeller and Standard Oil**

Reading: McNally, *Crude Volatility*, pp. 19-32; Anthony Sampson, *The Seven Sisters: The Great Oil Companies and the World They Shaped* (New York: Viking, 1975), pp. 21-32 (PDF)

Film: [The Prize: Episode 1, Our Plan](#), minutes 20-42

### **9/12 Lecture: Challengers to Standard Oil**

Reading: McNally, *Crude Volatility*, pp. 32-40; Sampson, *The Seven Sisters*, pp. 32-59 (PDF)

Film: [The Prize: Episode 2, Empires of Oil](#), first 38 minutes

### **9/13 Discussion: Standard Oil's Nemesis**

Website: UI History Teaching and Writing Center, [How to Read a Primary Source](#)

Primary Sources: "On the Standard Oil Company: Ida M. Tarbell, John D. Rockefeller, U.S. Supreme Court" (PDF)

Film: [The Prize: Episode 1, Our Plan](#), minutes 42-54

**Quiz 3** – Based on Week 3 Lectures and Study Guide

## **Week 4**

### **9/17 Lecture: Imperial Rivalries and World War I**

Reading: Sampson, *Seven Sisters*, pp. 59-74

Films: [The Prize: Episode 2, Empires of Oil](#), minutes 38-53; Alternate Focus, ["WWI Sykes-Picot Agreement: Post War Goals of Imperialism and Zionism,"](#) (2013), 21 minutes

### **9/19 Lecture: Opening the Door to the Middle East**

Reading: Sampson, *The Seven Sisters*, pp. 74-92 (PDF)

Film: [The Prize: Episode 3, The Black Giant](#), first 37 minutes

### **9/20 Discussion: Maps and Timelines**

Maps: Europe, British Empire, Middle East, Sykes Picot, Red Line Agreement, East Asia, Oil Locations

**Quiz 4** – Based on Maps  
Group timeline exercises

## **Week 5**

### **9/24 Lecture: Technological Innovations**

### **9/26 Lecture: Boomtimes**

Reading: McNally, *Crude Volatility*, pp. 41-58

Film: [The Prize: Episode 3, The Black Giant](#), minutes 28-31

## 9/27 Discussion: Labor and Race in Oil

Reading: Mark Boxell, "Texas, the Tulsa Race Massacre, and White-Supremacist Energies: Petroleum Workers and Anti-Black Violence in the Mid-Continent Oilfields," *Journal of Energy History* #9 (January 2023): 1-15 (PDF)

**Quiz 5** - Based on Week 5 Lectures and Study Guide

## Week 6

### 10/1 Lecture: The Magic of Gasoline

Reading: McNally, *Crude Volatility*, pp. 58-61

Films: [The Prize: Episode 3, The Black Giant](#), minutes 31-33

### 10/3 Lecture: Oversupply and Bust

Reading: McNally, *Crude Volatility*, pp. 61-92; Sampson, pp. 92-103 (PDF)

Film: [The Prize: Episode 3, The Black Giant](#), minutes 33-53

### 10/4 Discussion: Oil and the Environment

Reading: Joseph Pratt, "Letting the Grandchildren Do It: Environmental Planning During the Ascent of Oil as A Major Energy Source," *The Public Historian* 2, no. 4 (Summer 1980): 28-61 (PDF)

**Quiz 6**

## Week 7

### 10/8 Lecture: The Cornerstone Concessions

Reading: Sampson, *The Seven Sisters*, pp. 104-112 (PDF)

Film: [The Prize: Episode 5, Crude Diplomacy](#), first 22 minutes

### 10/10 Lecture: Oil and the Second World War

Reading: McNally, *Crude Volatility*, pp. 92-94; Sampson, *Seven Sisters*, pp. 112-116 (PDF)

Film: [The Prize: Episode 4, War and Oil](#), 55 minutes

### 10/11 Discussion: Exam Review Session

## Week 8

### 10/15 **MIDTERM EXAM**

### 10/17 Lecture: *Pax Americana* (The American Peace)

Reading: McNally, *Crude Volatility*, pp. 94-96; Sampson, *Seven Sisters*, pp. 116-134 (PDF)  
Film: [The Prize: Episode 5, Crude Diplomacy](#), minutes 22-53

### **10/18 Discussion: The New Center of Gravity**

Primary Sources: Everette DeGolyer, "Preliminary Report of the Technical Oil Mission to the Middle East," with supplementary notes (February 1, 1944)

Website: UI History Teaching and Writing Center, [Taking Exams](#)

### **In-Class Writing 1**

## **Week 9**

### **10/22 Lecture: The International Oil Order**

Reading: McNally, *Crude Volatility*, pp. 96-103; Sampson, *Seven Sisters*, pp. 135-166 (PDF)

Film: [The Prize: Episode 6, Power to the Producers](#), first 13 minutes

### **10/24 Lecture: Threats to the Order**

Reading: McNally, *Crude Volatility*, pp. 103-112; Sampson, *Seven Sisters*, pp. 167-185 (PDF)

Film: [The Prize: Episode 6, Power to the Producers](#), minutes 13-30

### **10/25 Discussion: The United States and Foreign Oil**

Primary Sources: U.S. Federal Trade Commission, *The International Petroleum Cartel* (1949) (PDF), Statement of Paul Strasburgh, Oil and Gas Division of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, Congressional Hearings on Oil Imports (1950) (PDF); American Petroleum Institute (API), [Destination Earth](#) (1956)

### **In-Class Writing 2**

## **Week 10**

### **10/29 Lecture: Power to the Producers**

Reading: McNally, *Crude Volatility*, pp. 115-130

Film: [The Prize: Episode 6, Power to the Producers](#), minutes 30-52

### **10/31 Lecture: The First Oil Shock**

Reading: McNally, *Crude Volatility*, pp. 130-139

Film: [The Prize: Episode 7, The Tinderbox](#), first 30 minutes

### **11/1 Discussion: Oil in Popular American Culture**

Primary Sources:



Paintings: Thomas Hart Benton, *Boomtown* (1928), Alexandre Hogue, *Pecos Escarpment* (1936); Jerry Bywaters, *Oil Field Girls* (1940); Edward Hopper, *Gas* (1940); Ed Ruscha, *Standard Station* (1966)

Advertisements: Texaco, "The Petroleum Tree" (1943); Shell, "A to Z" (1957), Humble Oil, "Melting Glaciers" (1962); Humble Oil, "Put a Tiger in Your Tank" (1964); Texaco, "About Women in Oil" (1971); Texaco "Turning Coal into Clean Energy" (1981)

Political Cartoons: Various (1974)

Songs: Johnny Cash, "Roughneck" (1963); Joni Mitchell, "Big Yellow Taxi" (1970); Jerry Reed, "Crude Oil Blues" (1974); Steve Forbert, "The Oil Song" (1979); James McMurtry, "God Bless America" (2008) (look up songs and lyrics online)

### **Response Paper 1**

## **Week 11**

### **11/5 Lecture: The Second Oil Shock**

Reading: McNally, *Crude Volatility*, pp. 139-144

Film: [The Prize: Episode 7, The Tinderbox](#), minutes 30-44

### **11/7 Lecture: The Oil Collapse (The Third Oil Shock)**

Reading: McNally, *Crude Volatility*, pp. 145-159

Film: [The Prize: Episode 7, The Tinderbox](#), minutes 44-53

### **11/8 Discussion: Oil History Jeopardy**

## **Week 12**

### **11/12 Lecture: The Challenge of Environmentalism**

Film: [The Prize: Episode 8, New Order of Oil](#), first 15 minutes

### **11/14 Lecture: The Illusion of Stability**

Reading: McNally, *Crude Volatility*, pp. 160-169

Film: [The Prize: Episode 8, New Order of Oil](#), minutes 15-52

### **11/15 Discussion: Documenting Oil Pollution**

Primary Sources: [EPA "Documerica" Project, 1971-1977](#)

### **In-Class Writing 3**

## **Week 13**

### **11/19 Lecture: Digital Oilfields**

Video: *The History of Offshore Oil & Gas in the United States*, [Pt. 1](#) and [Pt. 2](#) (2011), 16 minutes

### **11/21 Lecture: The Return of Boom and Bust**

Reading: McNally, *Crude Volatility*, pp. 170-192

### **11/22 Discussion: Blood for Oil?**

Reading: John Duffield, "Oil and the Decision to Invade Iraq" *Political Science Faculty Publications* 27 (2012) (PDF)

Primary Source: ["Perspectives on the Iraq War"](#)

**Response Paper 2**

## **Week 14**

**11/26: \*NO CLASS\* - THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**11/28: \*NO CLASS\* - THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**11/29: \*NO CLASS\* - THANKSGIVING BREAK**

## **Week 15**

### **12/3 Lecture: "Unconventional" Oil and Gas**

Reading: Tyler Priest, "Frackenstein's Monster: A History of Unconventional Oil and Gas Technology," in Taylor Brorby and Stefanie Brook Trout, eds., *Fracture: Essays, Poems, and Stories on Fracking in America* (Ice Cube Press, 2016), pp. 120-135 (PDF)

### **12/5 Lecture: Coping with Volatility**

Reading: McNally, *Crude Volatility*, 193-225

### **12/6 Discussion: What the Frack!?**

## **Week 16**

### **12/10 Lecture: Climate Change**

Reading: "The Challenge Without Precedent," *Economist* (April 25, 2020) (PDF)

### **12/12 Lecture: Energy Transition v. Energy Security?**

Reading: McNally, *Crude Volatility*, 225-241

## 12/13 Discussion: #ExxonKnew

Primary Sources: Climate Investigations Center, [Exxon Knew: Must Read Documents](#)

## Week 17

### **TBA: Final Exam**

The Registrar will announce the final examination date and time generally by the fifth week of classes and it will be announced on the course ICON site once it is known. **Do not plan your end of the semester travel plans until the final exam schedule is made public. It is your responsibility to know the date, time, and place of the final exam.**

According to Registrar's final exam policy, students **have a maximum of two weeks after the announced final exam schedule** to request a change if an exam conflict exists or if a student has more than two exams in one day (see the [policy](#) here).

## **CLAS Administrative Policies**

### **Administrative Home**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Academic Policies Handbook at <http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook>.

### **Electronic Communication**

Students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for any communication with instructors or staff in the UI community. For the privacy and the protection of student records, UI faculty and staff can only correspond with UI email addresses.

### **Academic Honesty and Misconduct**

All CLAS students or students taking classes offered by CLAS are expected to abide by the College's [Code of Academic Honesty](#). Undergraduate academic misconduct must be reported by instructors to CLAS [according to these procedures](#).

### **CLAS Final Examination Policies**

The Registrar announces the final examination schedule for each class generally by the fifth week of classes. Final exams are offered only during the official final examination period. **No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes.** All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. Once the Registrar has announced the date, time, and location of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar's web site and will be shared with

instructors and students. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time and place of a final exam.

### **Student Complaints**

Students with a complaint about a grade or a related matter should first discuss the situation with the instructor and/or the course supervisor (if applicable), and finally with the DEO (Chair) of the school, department, or program offering the course. Sometimes students will be referred to the department or program's Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS). Undergraduate students should contact [CLAS Undergraduate Programs](#) for support when the matter is not resolved at the previous level.

### **Drop Deadline for this Course**

You may drop an individual course before the deadline; after this deadline you will need collegiate approval. You can look up the [drop deadline for this course here](#). When you drop a course, a "W" will appear on your transcript. The mark of "W" is a neutral mark that does not affect your GPA. To discuss how dropping (or staying in) a course might affect your academic goals, please contact your Academic Advisor. Directions for adding or dropping a course and other registration changes can be found on the [Registrar's website](#). Undergraduate students can find policies on dropping CLAS courses [here](#).

### **Mental Health Resources**

Students are encouraged to be mindful of their mental health and seek help as a preventive measure or if feeling overwhelmed and/or struggling to meet course expectations. Students are encouraged to talk to their instructor for assistance with specific class-related concerns. For additional support and counseling, please see the guidance and resources at [mentalhealth.uiowa.edu](http://mentalhealth.uiowa.edu), including the 24-7 [UI Support and Crisis Line](#). Information about UCS, including resources and how to schedule an appointment, can be found at [counseling.uiowa.edu](http://counseling.uiowa.edu).

Additionally, the Office of the Dean of Students can help students navigate personal crisis situations. They can provide one-on-one support, help with identifying options, and access to [basic needs resources \(such as food, rent, childcare, etc.\)](#). Student Care and Assistance: 132 IMU, [dos-assistance@uiowa.edu](mailto:dos-assistance@uiowa.edu), or 319-335-1162 and more info: [dos.uiowa.edu/assistance](http://dos.uiowa.edu/assistance).

## **University Policies**

### **Accommodations for Disabilities**

The University is committed to providing an educational experience that is accessible to all. If a student has a diagnosed disability or other disabling condition that may impact

the student's ability to complete the course requirements as stated in the syllabus, the student may seek accommodations through [Student Disability Services](#) (SDS). SDS is responsible for making [Letters of Accommodation \(LOA\)](#) available. **The student must provide an LOA to the instructor as early in the semester as possible, but requests not made at least two weeks prior to the scheduled activity for which an accommodation is sought may not be accommodated.** The LOA will specify what reasonable course accommodations the student is eligible for and those the instructor should provide. Additional information can be found on the [SDS website](#).

[Free Speech and Expression](#)

[Absences for Religious Holy Days](#)

[Classroom Expectations](#)

[Non-discrimination](#)

[Sexual Harassment/Misconduct and Supportive Measures](#)

[Sharing of Class Recordings](#)

**\*If the University is closed during class time for any reason, you are responsible for checking the class ICON homepage for immediate updates.**

**\*The instructors reserve the right to modify this syllabus and/or course policies as the semester progresses. Any changes will be presented in class and in announcements through ICON.**

# A FEW WORDS

## from the Department of History

- Want more information about the history major and minor? Visit our [website](#).
- Discover what [careers](#) a history degree might lead to. Many employers seek the analytical thinking and writing skills that history builds. History majors' mid-career salaries are on par with those holding undergraduate business degrees, and history majors earn more than other humanities majors.
  - Learn what innovative teaching and research projects our terrific faculty members are doing by viewing their [individual profiles](#) or by visiting our [Public History](#) site.
  - Get published! Or gain experience working on Iowa's undergraduate history journal. The [Iowa Historical Review](#) publishes honors theses and other historical research papers.
  - Join [Hawkeye History Corps](#), our history club for social events and info sessions on internships and careers. Majors and non-majors welcome.
- Questions about registration or history major requirements? Schedule time with the [History Advisor](#) or check out the [Handbook for Majors](#).
- Interested in doing original historical research? Learn requirements and how to pursue [Honors in the History Major](#).
- Check out available [scholarships](#) and [internships](#).



**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

- Please complete your online course evaluations at the end of the semester.
- Visit the **History Academic Advisor** OR the **Director of Undergraduate Studies** with any questions.
- We love to recognize our students, and we'd love to hear what you're doing! If you have an internship, a project, or news you'd like to share, please email the **History Department**.

### **STAY CONNECTED:**

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[clas.uiowa.edu/history](https://clas.uiowa.edu/history)



**Department of History**



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[Sign up to receive text messages for History undergrads](#)