

History 4821G

Spy vs. Spy

Winter 2024

N.B. It is anticipated that this course will not be offered in 2024-25.

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This is a **draft** syllabus. Please see the course site on OWL for a final version.

Course Description

An introduction to close reading and the techniques of structured intelligence analysis. Working individually and in groups, students will analyze a series of historical case studies from the 20th and 21st centuries. Topics include espionage, cyber war, terrorism, organized crime, homeland security, counterintelligence, and decision support.

This course teaches the utility of evidence-based, qualitative analysis in settings where decisions must be made collaboratively under uncertain or adversarial conditions.

Prerequisite(s):

1.0 History course at the 2200 level or above.

Course Syllabus

In the second half of the 20th century, a series of highly public failures forced intelligence agencies to evaluate methods that until that time had mostly relied on the unconscious, intuitive judgements of individual analysts and subject-matter experts. Over the same period, psychologists, computer scientists and later behavioural economists showed that human cognition is susceptible to a wide variety of biases. In other words, when thinking quickly we take shortcuts that make our reasoning error-prone, and it is often hard for us to recognize those errors. Structured analytic techniques are designed to slow down our thinking and make it public, so that others may critique and build on it.

In this course, the historian's traditional method of close reading is combined with the structured analytic techniques that now form the core methodology of intelligence analysis. Working individually and in teams, students will learn to analyze case studies that are complex and ambiguous, and often full of unknowns. This is excellent training not only for a career in history, but in law, politics, business, the social sciences, the military, law enforcement and a variety of other fields.

Expected Preparation

You will be given a short collection of readings and exercises to do before each scheduled meeting. It is crucial that you take this requirement seriously, read the materials carefully and do the exercises. Since teamwork is an essential component of this class (and your grade),

students who are not prepared for class will not only be letting themselves down, but some of their classmates, too.

Participation and Professionalism

You are required to participate in each scheduled meeting. *Failure to participate in more than two meetings without prior approval or a note from your academic counsellor may result in a failing grade.* Since you will be working closely with others using teleconferencing and shared online documents as well as in person, it is important to be respectful, to share your own ideas and to listen carefully to the ideas of others.

Teamwork and Peer Evaluation

Each assignment you will be randomly assigned to a team of about 7 people. Grades for the team portion of the assignment will be shared by all members of the team. At the end of each assignment, you will submit a very brief peer evaluation for the members of your team. I will use these assessments, in conjunction with my own, to determine your individual contribution to team assignments.

Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course students will

- Be aware of a range of biases and heuristics that interfere with sound reasoning
- Be familiar with some techniques for effectively conducting teamwork online and in person
- Be familiar with a wide variety of techniques to externalize and critique thought processes and to qualitatively deal with unknown data
- Have some knowledge of significant recent episodes in the history of security intelligence and foreign intelligence

Methods of Evaluation

There will be five assignments, worth 20% each, spread uniformly throughout the term. Each assignment has an individual portion, a team portion, and a portion that combines my assessment of in-class work with peer assessments of the student's contribution to team performance.

Each assignment has a suggested due date and, a week later, a zero date. If you hand in your assignment before the zero date, you will receive full credit for your work. After the zero date, it will be worth nothing.

Students must submit all course assignments to pass the course.

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, you must provide valid medical or other supporting documentation to Academic Counseling as soon as possible.

Course Materials

There are two required texts for this course.

Beebe, Sarah Miller & Randolph H. Pherson. *Cases in Intelligence Analysis: Structured Analytic Techniques in Action*, 2nd ed. Los Angeles: CQ Press, 2015.

Omand, David. *How Spies Think: Ten Lessons in Intelligence*. Penguin UK, 2021.

You will also be required to use software provided by the university:

- You will need access to Microsoft Office tools (especially Word, PowerPoint, and Excel). These are available through your Office 365 account
https://wts.uwo.ca/office_365/index.html
- Graded assignments will also require teamwork that will be conducted through MS Teams
https://wts.uwo.ca/microsoft_teams/index.html
- You may also find it convenient to install Zoom for team meetings and office hours appointments
<https://wts.uwo.ca/zoom/index.html>

All other course materials will be provided electronically on OWL.

Course Schedule and Readings

- BRIEFING 01: POISONING
Read before class: Beebe & Pherson, Ch. 1 “Who Poisoned Karinna Moskalenko?”; Omand, “Introduction” and “Lesson 1: Situational Awareness”
Techniques introduced: Structured Brainstorming; Starbursting; Premortem Analysis; Structured Self-Critique
Workload: Assignment 01 handed out.
- BRIEFING 02: SPY
Read before class: Beebe & Pherson, Ch. 4 “Is Wen Ho Lee a Spy?”; Omand, “Lesson 2: Explanation” and “Lesson 3: Estimations”
Techniques introduced: Deception Detection; Force Field Analysis
Workload: Assignment 01 due.
- BRIEFING 03: OUTBREAK
Read before class: Beebe & Pherson, Ch. 9 “Death in the Southwest”; Omand, “Lesson 4: Strategic Notice”
Techniques introduced: Multiple Hypothesis Generation; Analysis of Competing

Hypotheses; Key Assumptions Check

Workload: Assignment 01 zero date, Assignment 02 handed out.

- BRIEFING 04: SNIPER
Read before class: Beebe & Pherson, Ch. 11 “The DC Sniper”; Omand, “Lesson 5: Our Own Demons”
Techniques introduced: Classic Quadrant Crunching
Workload: Assignment 02 due.
- BRIEFING 05: HOMELAND
Read before class: Beebe & Pherson, Ch. 12 “Colombia’s FARC Attacks the US Homeland”; Omand, “Lesson 6: Obsessive States of Mind”
Techniques introduced: Multiple Scenarios Generation; Indicators; Red Hat Analysis
Workload: Assignment 02 zero date, Assignment 03 handed out.
- BRIEFING 06: BOMBER
Read before class: Beebe & Pherson, Ch. 10 “The Atlanta Olympics Bombing”; Omand, “Lesson 7: Manipulation, Deception and Faking”
Techniques introduced: Pros-Cons-Faults-and-Fixes
Workload: Assignment 03 due.
- BRIEFING 07: POLITICS
Read before class: Beebe & Pherson, Ch. 15 “Iranian Meddling in Bahrain”; Omand, “Lesson 8: The Person on the Other Side”
Techniques introduced: Morphological Analysis
Workload: Assignment 03 zero date, Assignment 04 handed out.
- BRIEFING 08: TERRORISTS
Read before class: Beebe & Pherson, Ch. 13 “Understanding Revolutionary Organization 17 November”; Omand, “Lesson 9: Trustworthiness”
Techniques introduced: Foresight Quadrant Crunching; What If? Analysis
Workload: Assignment 04 due.
- BRIEFING 09: TALIBAN
Read before class: Beebe & Pherson, Ch. 6 “The Road to Tarin Kowt”; Omand “Lesson 10: Subversion and Sedition”
Techniques introduced: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
Workload: Assignment 04 zero date, Assignment 05 handed out.
- BRIEFING 10: PROPAGANDA
Read before class: “Russian Disinformation” from Pherson & Pherson, *Critical Thinking for Strategic Analysis*, 3rd ed. CQ Press, 2021; Omand, “Final Lesson in Optimism”
Techniques introduced: Revising SATs
Workload: Assignment 05 due.

Additional Statements

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.

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