History 4821G
Spy vs. Spy
Winter 2024

Thursdays 3:30-5:30, Location TBA
Course combines in-person and synchronous online activities.
Details will be announced on OWL.

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

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Office Hours: Online by appointment

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.


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](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](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](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.