Course Syllabus

Course# POGO 750-001  
Title: Intelligence Analysis  
Spring 2020  
Michael Morell  
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Michael V. Hayden Center for Intelligence, Policy, and International Security  
Schar School of Policy and Government  
George Mason University

Course Information  
Meets: Wednesdays, Jan 22-Apr 29, 4:30 pm to 7:10 pm  
No class on Feb 26th  
Location: Arlington Campus, Van Metre Hall 322

Office Hours and Contact Information  
Office Hours: Wed, 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm or by appointment  
Office: Van Metre Hall 617  
I will be in my office during the above day/times. If I cannot be there for some reason, I will send the class an email so stating. Making an appointment ahead of time, even during office hours, is a good idea. But you are always free to just drop by. I am also available by email, phone, or text.  
Email: mmorell2@gmu.edu  
Phone: 703-888-8331

Course Description: This course is both a class about intelligence analysis (what is it, why is it important, what is good analysis, what is bad analysis, and what are the factors that lead to both) and a class in how to do intelligence analysis (identifying the key questions, gathering and assessing data, coming to a conclusion, assessing confidence in that conclusion, and presenting all that in an effective way either in writing or orally). The course will be a mix of lectures about analysis and a series of analytic exercises, some of which will be done individually and some of which will be done in groups.

1 Judith Wilde, Chief Operating Officer of the Schar School and a Schar School professor shared with me the syllabus for her graduate-level class on grant writing. I found it very helpful in putting together this syllabus, the first one I have ever done. I incorporated some of Judith’s ideas for classroom policies and in some cases used language similar to hers for those policies. I am indebted to her for sharing her syllabus.
Course Objectives: A student should emerge at the end of the class with both a detailed understanding of intelligence analysis and with significantly sharpened analytic skills – critical thinking, writing, and briefing skills.

Course Content:

- Lectures by the instructor.
- Two guest lecturers as well as a panel of currently serving intelligence analysts.
- Weekly assignment. Each student, at the beginning of the semester, will choose a topic from a list provided by the instructor of real-world national security issues for which they will be responsible during the semester. The students will provide to the instructor at the beginning of each class a two paragraph (no longer than one page) essay on something that occurred on their “account” during the week. The first paragraph will summarize the new development and the second will outline what key questions the student believes need to be answered by the Intelligence Community regarding the development. Twice during the semester, the students will brief this written assignment to the class.
- Two in-class group analytic exercises. The instructor will provide teams of students with an information packet prior to the class, and the teams will assess it during the class and brief the results to the class. Team size will be five to six students.
- Two out-of-class individual analytic exercises. The instructor will provide a packet of information to each student. Students will use their critical thinking skills to answer a series of questions, and they will prepare a two-page paper outlining their findings. The exercises will then be discussed during class.
- A final exam designed to test the individual student’s knowledge about intelligence analysis.

Course Requirements/Evaluation

- Class Participation – (10 percent): Attendance at all class sessions is strongly recommended. “Class participation” takes into account a student’s presence in class and contributions to classroom discussion (earnest discussions with other students and the instructor and courteous, professional, and respectful dialogue).
- Weekly Writing Assignments – (20 percent).
- Group exercises (20 percent)
- Individual exercises (30 percent)
Final Exam (30 percent)

Course Outline, Assignments.

- Jan 22nd – Introduction to the course; introduction of the instructor; introductions of the students; selection of substantive accounts; lecture on what is intelligence analysis, what it its purpose, and why is it so important;

- Jan 29th – Weekly writing assignment due; lecture on critical thinking skills; exercises on critical thinking; lecture on the different types of intelligence analysis; lecture on the key attributes of quality analysis; class analytic exercise: Characteristics of Terrorists in the United States.

- Feb 5th – Weekly writing assignment due; lecture on how to do analysis; lecture on the sources of good analysis and bad analysis in the process of producing it; lecture on Finding bin Ladin

- Feb 12th – Weekly writing assignment due; Group Exercise #1, Violence During the Second Intifada; group assessments and presentations. First batch or oral briefings of the weekly writing assignment.

- Feb 19th – Weekly writing assignment due; guest speaker on an intelligence success, Kristin Wood, Link or No Link Between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein?

- Feb 26th – NO CLASS

- Mar 4th – Weekly writing assignment due; lecture on the successful presentation (oral and written) of intelligence analysis; second batch of individual briefings of the weekly writing assignment.

- Mar 11th – NO CLASS, Spring Break

- Mar 18th – Weekly writing sample due; lecture on an intelligence failure, Iraq and WMD; third batch of individual briefings on weekly writing assignments.

- March 25th – Weekly writing sample due; first individual exercise, The Hijacking of an Iranian Oil Tanker due before the start of class; Class discussion of this assignment; fourth batch of briefings of weekly writing assignments.

- Apr 1st – Weekly writing sample due; Group exercise #2, Syria’s Construction of a Nuclear Reactor; group assessments and presentations. Fifth round of briefings.

- Apr 8th – Weekly writing sample due; sixth round briefings. Panel of current CIA analysts for a Q&A on analysis and on the profession of analysis.
• Apr 15th – Weekly writing sample due; second individual exercise, *The 1985 Philippine Election*, due before the start of the class. Class discussion of this assignment.

• Apr 22nd – Weekly writing sample due; review of the key course concepts.

• Apr 29th – Q&A with special guest, Martin Petersen, long-time CIA analyst, manager of analysis, teacher of analysis, creator of the Kent School for Intelligence Analysis.

• TBD – Final Exam

**Course Readings.**

There are no required readings. Students interested in going beyond the lectures should consider reading:


**Class Policies**

**Written Work.** Written work submitted to the instructor must be single-spaced with 12-point type (Times New Roman font), 1-inch margins all around, and one line between paragraphs. Assignments must not exceed the specified page limit. If you are providing a hard copy of an assignment, and it is more than one page long, please do not use both sides of a single sheet of paper.

**Communication.** You must have a working GMU email account in order to receive class notifications and to submit assignments.

**Electronic Devices.** Cell phones and other communicative devices should not be used during this class, except in the case of an emergency. Please keep them stowed away. Laptops or tablets (e.g., iPads) are encouraged for the purpose of taking notes. Engaging in activities not related to the course (e.g., gaming, email, chat) will result in a deduction in your participation grade.

**University Policies**

**Disability Accommodations.** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

**Academic Integrity.** Faculty in the Schar School have zero tolerance for academic dishonesty and will strictly enforce Mason’s honor code. As a reminder, the Honor Code is as follows:

*To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.*