DEMystifying U.S. Intelligence

Preliminary Syllabus

Stanford Continuing Studies

Instructors: Profs Thomas Fingar and Barry Schutz

Dates/Times: Prof Barry Schutz will be available for a few minutes after each class and Prof Tom Fingar will be available on evenings when he is present. For course questions and administrative comments, please contact only Prof Schutz by email.

Course Grading:

Three Options:
- No Grade Requested (default option)
- If you elect to Credit/No Credit, attendance will determine grade
- If you elect a letter grade, the paper to be elaborated later will determine your grade

Course Description

This course focuses on the importance of intelligence analysis in the entire intelligence process. While espionage and covert action comprise the sexy material for intelligence in the movies and in fictional literature, it is written analysis that provides policymakers with the knowledge that they need. It is no exaggeration to say that it is impossible to understand the objectives, priorities, approaches, and instruments of American foreign policy without understanding the processes of intelligence production. This course examines roles, missions, and methods of the U.S. Intelligence Community, and how intelligence professionals, primarily analysts, manufacture an essential product for the effective making of foreign policy.

Instructors

Thomas Fingar served as the first Deputy Director of National Intelligence for Analysis and, at the same time, Chairman of the National Intelligence Council from 2005 through 2008. His responsibilities included production of the President’s Daily Brief, National Intelligence Estimates, and implementation of the historic 2004 Intelligence Reform Act. He also served as Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research in the administrations of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

Barry Schutz career as an intelligence analysis included analytic stints in the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). His career as an academic carried him to faculties at Georgetown University, the Naval Postgraduate School, the National Intelligence University and, as a research scholar, Stanford. He taught overseas at the University of Lancaster (UK),
University of Zimbabwe, and as a Fulbright Professor in the Higher Institute of International Relations in Maputo, Mozambique.

**Course Resources**
The following books, to be available at the Stanford Bookstore, are required for graded students but recommended for credit/no credit students.

- Thomas Fingar, *Reducing Uncertainty: Intelligence Analysis and National Security*
- Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy. Fifth Edition*

**Other Recommended Books**
Jennifer Sims and Burton Gerber (Editors), *Transforming U.S. Intelligence*
Amy Zegart, *Flawed by Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JSC, and NSC*
Amy Zegart, *Eyes on Spies: Congress and The United States Intelligence Community*
Abram Shulsky and Gary Schmitt, *Silent Warfare: Understanding the World of Intelligence*

Additional recommended readings will be added during the presentation of the course.

**The Syllabus**

**Week 1/ Barry Schutz / Who Makes Up The U.S. Intelligence Community?**

We begin with a brief overview of the course and its multi-layered requirements and expectations. Most of this first class will focus on a description and explanation elements and missions of the U.S. intelligence community (IC).

**Assigned Readings**

Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, Chapters 1 to 4

**Optional Readings:**

Thomas Fingar, “Analysis in the U.S. Intelligence Community: Missions, Masters, Methods” (Moodle)

**Week 2/ Thomas Fingar / What Does the IC Actually Do? Myths and Expectations**

Much of what you think about intelligence comes from works of fiction and sloppy or sensational journalism that exacerbates fears and raises expectations to what intelligence can do. Actual capabilities are nonetheless very impressive and both policymaker and public expectations about that the IC can or should be able to know are unrealistically high. This second class will examine escalating expectations and the increasing scope of IC missions and customers.
Readings

Fingar, Reducing Uncertainty, Chapter 2

Optional Readings

Ernest May, “The Twenty First Century Challenge for U.S. Intelligence” Jennifer Sims and Burton Gerber, Transforming U.S. Intelligence” (Moodle)
Jennifer Sims, “Understanding Friends and Enemies” in Sims and Gerber (Moodle)
Sims, “Understanding Ourselves” in Sims and Gerber (Moodle)

Week 3/ Guest Lecture: Prof. Amy Zegart, Hoover Institution, Stanford University (Topic and Readings TBD)

Week 4/April 23: Barry Schutz / What Intelligence Analysts Do

Stealing secrets is an important part of what intelligence agents do but most information used by intelligence analysts is neither purloined nor classified. The key is to translate data into insight and to provide both information and insights to all decision-makers who need it; when they need it; and in a form they can use it. Intelligence analysis is similar in some respects to journalism and academic research, but it also differs in several important ways, not least of which is that what is said or written can influence the actions of the most powerful and influential country in the world.

Readings

Fingar, Reducing Uncertainty, Chapter 3.

Optional Readings

R.Z. George and James B. Bruce (Eds.) Analyzing Intelligence: Origins, Obstacles and Innovation, Chapters 1, 10 11 (Moodle)

Week 5/ Thomas Fingar / Current Intelligence and Strategic Analysis

Policymakers are less interested in predictions about the future than in learning what they can do to shape the future. Most say they want more strategic and opportunity analysis that will clarify where events are headed; what drives them and what might change their trajectory; and many critics of the IC claim that analysts spend too much time on current intelligence at the expense of longer term analysis. But political and policy agendas compel decision makers to deal with immediate problems that crowd out longer term thinking and interest in strategic analysis. That said, it is impossible to do good work on current problems without understanding broader and deeper strategic trends.
Readings

Fingar, Chapter 4
Lowenthal, Chapter 6

Optional Readings


Week 6/ Guest Lecture: Amb. Karl Eikenberry, Freeman Spogli Institute, Stanford University (Topic and Readings TBD)

Week 7/ Guest Lecture: Prof David Holloway, Spruce Chair in International History, Stanford University (Topic and Readings TBD)

Week 8/ Thomas Fingar and Barry Schutz / Reforming and Transforming U.S. Intelligence

Political and media comparisons of 9/11 to Pearl Harbor as an intelligence failure and public ire at the course of events in Iraq created conditions that enabled the 9/11 Commission to put its calls and blueprint for intelligence reform on the national agenda. The result was the Intelligence Reform Act of 2004 mandating the most extensive changes to the national security establishment since 1947. This created both a mandate and an opportunity for change and transformation of the IC. The class examines how that happened; what was mandated; and what happened in response.

Readings

Fingar, Reducing Uncertainty, Chapter 1
Fingar, “All-Source Analysis” (Moodle)

Optional Readings