**SSCI E-100B: Graduate Research Methods and Scholarly Writing in the Social Sciences**

**Time: Monday 5:30-7:30**

**Location: Sever 101**

**Title: The History of Chemical Warfare - From WWI to Syria**

**Instructor: Dr. Asher Orkaby (orkaby@post.harvard.edu)**

**Course Content**

There is a widespread assumption that chemical weapons are a morally reprehensible weapon and that the international community will not hesitate to respond to their use. Recent history has demonstrated that there are political and economic limits to international moral judgement. Countries have used chemical weapons and suffered few repercussions. Most recently Syrian President Bashar al-Assad’s use of chemical weapons against internal opposition in the ongoing Syrian civil war has led to a debate about the appropriate international reaction to chemical weapon use in warfare. President Obama and members of his administration have repeatedly referred to the use of chemical weapons as the “red line” which, if crossed, Bashar al-Assad’s regime will face unspecified harsh responses. However, despite confirmed use of chemical weapons, Assad’s regime has not suffered serious consequences.

This course will trace the origins of chemical weapons and the moral debate surrounding their use in warfare. Through historical case studies, students will be able to draw lessons from the first uses of poison gas to contemporary chemical wars and gain a better understanding of the crisis in Syria.

**Course Goals**

This course will serve as a guide to the building blocks of research in the fields of international history and international relations. Students will learn how to pose research questions, read and understand the existing literature in their fields, find primary sources and formulate academic arguments. By the end of the semester students will have worked to complete their individual ALM Thesis Proposals.

**Course Requirements**

*Class Participation*: Each student will be expected to come to class having read the weekly material and to participate actively in class discussion.

*Weekly Assignments*: Students will work through smaller assignments to build up to the final thesis proposal submission.

*Book Review*: 1,000 word book review on academic book of your choice published within the last 12 months. Choice to be approved by course instructor.

*Conference Presentation*: Present your research proposal to the class.

*Research Proposal*: Submit your ALM thesis proposal as your final paper.

**Grading**

*Class Participation* – 20%

*Weekly Assignments* – 20%

*Book Review –* 20%

*Conference Presentation* – 10%

*Thesis Proposal* – 30%

**Required Texts**

\*\*\*Available for purchase at Harvard COOP and on reserve as Lamont Library\*\*\*

Wayne Booth et al, *The Craft of Research, third edition,* University of Chicago Press*, 2008.*

Joost Hiltermann, *A Poisonous Affair: America, Iraq, and the Gassing of Halabja*

Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*

Richard Price, *The Chemical Weapons Taboo*

Jonathan Tucker, *War of Nerves: Chemical Warfare from World War I to Al-Qaeda*

*A Guide to the ALM Thesis (*http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic1114851.files/Guide%20to%20the%20ALM%20Thesis-%207th%20Ed.pdf)

\*\*Supplemental texts will be available on the course website

**University Notes:**

The Extension School is committed to providing an accessible academic community. The Accessibility Office offers a variety of accommodations and services to students with documented disabilities. Please visit www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/resources/disability-services-accessibility for more information.

You are responsible for understanding Harvard Extension School policies on academic integrity (www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/student-conduct/academic-integrity) and how to use sources responsibly. Not knowing the rules, misunderstanding the rules, running out of time, submitting the wrong draft, or being overwhelmed with multiple demands are not acceptable excuses. There are no excuses for failure to uphold academic integrity. To support your learning about academic citation rules, please visit the Harvard Extension School Tips to Avoid Plagiarism (www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/resources/tips-avoid-plagiarism), where you'll find links to the Harvard Guide to Using Sources and two free online 15-minute tutorials to test your knowledge of academic citation policy. The tutorials are anonymous open-learning tools.

**January 25 – Introduction to Chemical Warfare**

Tucker, *War of Nerves* (Prologue)

*The Craft of Research* (pg. 1-26)

Course Site: Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Chap. 4)

*Research Learning Goal:* Thinking about topics.

**February 1 – The Poison Gas Taboo**

Powers, *A Problem from Hell* (Preface and Chap. 1)

Course Site: Book Review for Power, *A Problem from Hell*

*A Guide to the ALM Thesis* (pg. 12-21)

*Assignment Due:* Research Topic of interest – presented to class.

*Research Learning Goals*: The golden rule of questions.

**February 8 – World War I**

Richard Price, *The Chemical Weapons Taboo* (Chap. 1 – 2)

Tucker, *War of Nerves* (Chap. 1)

*The Craft of Research* (pg. 29-66)

*A Guide to the ALM Thesis* (pg. 24-31)

*Assignment Due*: Present your research questions

*Research Learning Goals*: Finding Primary Resources

**February 15** - **President’s Day, No Class**

**February 22 – The 1925 Geneva Accords and the Norms of Warfare**

Richard Price, *The Chemical Weapons Taboo* (Chap. 3-4)

*The Craft of Research* (pg. 68-101)

Course site: 1925 Geneva Accords, full text

Book Reviews for Richard Price, *The Chemical Weapons Taboo*

*Assignment Due*: List of potential primary sources for your topic

*Research Learning Goals*: Literary Reviews

**February 29 - Italy in Ethiopia and WWII**

Tucker, *War of Nerves* (Chap. 3-5)

Richard Price, *The Chemical Weapons Taboo* (Chap. 5)

Joseph Borkin, *The Crime and Punishment of I.G. Farbin* (Chap. 3, 9-10)

<http://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/sociopolitica/sociopol_igfarben02.htm>

Course Site: “The use of chemical weapons in the 1935-36 Italo-Ethiopian War,” SIPRI 2009.

Chapter on Zyklon B usage in Auschwitz

*Assignment Due*: List of secondary sources related to your topic

**March 7 – Memorializing Victims and International Justice**

*Special Library Session with Dr. Susan Gilroy* –

*Location*: Widener 240, which is off the Atkins Reference Room on the 2nd floor

Powers, *A Problem from Hell* (Chapter 4)

Joseph Borkin, *The Crime and Punishment of I.G. Farbin* (Chap. 11)

<http://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/sociopolitica/sociopol_igfarben02.htm>

United Nations War Crimes Commission. Law Reports of Trials of War Criminals. Vol. 1, London, 1947. See pp. 93-104

<https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/Law-Reports_Vol-1.pdf>

*The Craft of Research* (pg. 171-200)

*A Guide to the ALM Thesis* (pg. 45-46)

*Research Learning Goals*: Bibliography format

**March 14 – Spring Break, No Class**

**March 21 – Egypt’s Chemical War in Yemen**

*Special Guest Lecture from Dr. Doug Bond* – an explanation of the ALM thesis

*The Craft of Research* (pg. 103-127)

Tucker, *War of Nerves* (Chap. 9-10)

Course Site: Asher Orkaby, “Egyptian Chemical Warfare in Yemen and the Limits of the Poison Gas Taboo” (in press, *Diplomatic History*)

*Assignment Due*: Book Reviews due in class

*Research Learning Goals*: Formulating an argument

**March 28 – Iran-Iraq War, 1980-1988**

Tucker, *War of Nerves* (Ch. 13)

Richard Price, *The Chemical Weapons Taboo* (Ch. 6)

Powers, *A Problem from Hell* (Chapter 8 - Iraq)

Joost Hiltermann, *A Poisonous Affair: America, Iraq, and the Gassing of Halabja* (Ch. 1-3)

*The Craft of Research* (pg. 130-169)

Course Site: Selected Declassified US Documents

*Research Learning Goals*: Using government documents

**April 4 – Saddam Hussein and the Gassing of the Kurds**

Joost Hiltermann, *A Poisonous Affair* (Preface, Intro., Ch. 5-7, look at the oral history bibliography on pg. 283-291)

Course Site: Book review of Hilterman, *A Poisonous Affair*

*Assignment Due*: Bring a government archival source example relevant to your topic

*Research Learning Goals*: Using Oral History

**April 11 – The First Gulf War and Weapons of Mass Destruction**

Joost Hiltermann, *A Poisonous Affair: America, Iraq, and the Gassing of Halabja* (Ch. 5-7, 9)

Course Site: James Russell, *Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East: Directions and Policy Options in the New Century*(Chap. 1)

Course Site: 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention

*Assignment Due*: Select a possible subject for oral history related to your topic

*Research Learning Goals*: Expanding the confines of your argument

**April 18 – Tokyo, Syria, and the Poison Gas of Tomorrow**

Hiltermann, *A Poisonous Affair* (Conclusion)

Powers, *A Problem from Hell* (Chapter 14 – Conclusion)

Tucker, *War of Nerves* (Chap. 17-18)

<http://www.diplomaticourier.com/2015/10/07/the-tenuous-taboo-egypt-isis-and-chemical-weapons-in-the-middle-east/>

Course Site: Richard Price, “How Chemical Weapons Became Taboo,” *Foreign Affairs*

*Research Learning Goals:* Translating your academic writing to the wider world and writing conclusions.

**April 25 and May 2 Student Presentations**

10-15 minute conference presentations of your thesis

*ALM Thesis Proposal Due in Class*