

**The History of Modern Espionage
HIS343 -- Summer Abroad 2021
Oxford University**

Prof. Timothy Andrews Sayle
tim.sayle@utoronto.ca
308N Munk [in Toronto]

Course Description and Objectives:

How have spies shaped the past, and how will they shape the future? HIS343 explores the rise of modern intelligence over the long 20th century, from Anglo-Russian imperial competition before World War I through to the post-9/11 era. Students will study the contribution of intelligence services to victories and defeats in war, and their role in times of peace. The course will also examine the relationship between intelligence services and their society. What do we really know about espionage – and how do we know what we know? SABR students will discuss these issues in Oxford, and, among other field trips, visit the home of the Ultra-secret code-breaking site at Bletchley Park and the sites where Winston Churchill directed the Battle of Britain.

Marking Scheme:

Essay:	20%
Participation:	20%
Presentations (2 x 10%):	20%
Field Trip Response (2 x 10%):	20%
Exam:	20%

Format:

Classes take place Monday through Wednesday mornings from 9am to noon. Every Thursday is spent on a field trip. There are no classes on Fridays or weekends.

Students will complete and submit an essay before arriving at Oxford. At Oxford, the course will run as a discussion-based class and not a lecture course. The course requires your active participation in discussion and your engagement with assigned readings.

Essay:

The essay is due before the course begins. The essay will encourage you to explore a theme in intelligence history. (I will provide a list of essay topics and suggested readings.) By completing this essay before classes begin, you will have gained significant background knowledge to ensure your participation in the classroom. Because the essay will be finished by the time you arrive in Oxford, you can focus your energies on our class discussions.

Participation and Presentations:

You will deliver two in-class presentations, and the presentations will set up our class discussions. (What is explained below will happen twice for each student):

You will be assigned to a small group (approximately three students) and a topic.

For each topic, the whole class will complete a common set of readings, while the presenters will also read one or two short pieces of extra material that I will provide in advance.

At least two days before your presentation, your group will meet with me in my Oxford office hours to discuss your presentation and other materials. After that meeting, your group will prepare a one-page handout that will be distributed (electronically) to the class one day before your presentation. The handout may include any information you think important, as well as discussion questions.

My responsibility is to get you the material well in advance so that you can become the expert on this particular subject. Your responsibility is to present the information effectively and then guide a discussion (and I will help you prepare this in our advance meeting).

Everyone in the class has a responsibility to make each discussion valuable to all of us by doing the assigned reading and engaging in discussion.

Field Trip Response:

The class will embark on four field trips:

- The Imperial War Museum (London) and *HMS Belfast*
- Bletchley Park
- Churchill War Rooms (also called the Cabinet War Rooms)
- The Imperial War Museum (Duxford)

Before each field trip I will offer a prompt, designed to elicit your reflections on the site or museum we visited. You will respond to two of the prompts, for whichever two field trips you are most interested in reflecting further.

The prompts should be submitted on the second Friday after the field trip, ie. eight days after the Thursday field trips. Each response will be 500-750 words.

Exam:

There will be a final in-class exam on the last Wednesday of the course. The exam will cover the material you have read for discussion.

Tentative Course Outline:

NB: (This outline is subject to change. Each day's topic will be further divided to include sub-themes for presentations):

Week 1: From the Great Game to the Great War

- What is Intelligence History? Why study it?
- The Great Game: Anglo-Russian Competition in Asia
- Spy Scares, War Scares, and the Origins of Modern Intelligence
- **Field Trip:** Imperial War Museum, London, and *HMS Belfast*

Week 2: The First World War and the Interwar Era

- Intelligence at War (Part I)
- The Russian Revolution and Soviet Intelligence
- Intelligence in the Era of Appeasement
- **Field Trip:** Bletchley Park

Week 3: The Second World War

- Surprise Attacks and the War's Origins
- Intelligence at War (Part 2)
- D-Day, Deception, and the Endgame
- **Field Trip:** Churchill War Rooms

Week 4: The Cold War and Beyond

- The Cold War: Atomic Spies, Covert Operations, and Nuclear Crises
- The Explosion of Intelligence: 9/11, the Global War on Terror, and the Uncertain Future
- *Final Exam*
- **Field Trip:** Imperial War Museum, Duxford