

The Central Intelligence Agency 1947 to Today

Professor Jefferson Morley
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Course Description

In "The History of the CIA: 1947 to the Present" you will learn the history of one of the most secretive and influential organizations in the world: the Central Intelligence Agency. Demonized and glamourized more often than it is understood, the CIA is a government agency with 20,000 employees, an annual budget of \$15 billion, and a history that spans six decades of intrigue, violence, scandal and achievement. While the agency's activities are cloaked in official secrecy and Hollywood myth, this course pulls back the veil of secrecy and misinformation that surrounds the agency to reveal the reality of its actions and their impact on the world.

Course Objectives

Through video conferences, podcasts, writing assignments, readings, and discussion with fellow students, and the professor, you will:

- Learn how the CIA came into existence and how it is organized.
- Learn how the agency has mounted secret operations to manipulate other societies in the name of U.S. foreign policy and national security.
- Understand the legacy of CIA covert action and espionage in Cuba, Iran, the Soviet Union, Vietnam, and in the United States itself.
- Analyze the CIA's successes, scandals and mistakes
- Interpret CIA documents
- Comprehend the CIA's technological prowess, its embrace of torture, and the waging drone war
- Gain perspective on the CIA's relationship with a dozen American presidents
- Learn about its relationship with other intelligence agencies such as the FBI, Department of Homeland Security, and the National Security Agency.

Skills Developed

You'll learn how read and analyze CIA documents.

You will improve your writing skills, especially for the Web and for Washington-based organizations.

You will learn how to assess find and assess the latest news about the CIA.

You will master the vocabulary of the intelligence profession

You will improve your online research skills

You will gain the ability to contextualize and assess government actions and statements from national intelligence agencies

You will learn how to hold the CIA accountable.

You will learn to work in teams and collaborate on research

You will improve your information and media literacy

You will become familiar with the legal, ethical and political issues raised by CIA actions.

Students who complete the course will gain writing skills, and deeper insight and independence of thought about the role of the CIA in the American government and the world.

Professor

I am a journalist and author based in Washington DC. I have been writing about the CIA for national publications since 1985. I worked at the New Republic and the Nation, before joining the Washington Post where I spent 15 years as an editor and reporter, ultimately becoming the World News Editor at washingtonpost.com. I've also worked as the Washington Editor of Salon.com. I'm the editor and co-founder of JFK Facts (jfkfacts.org)

This is an upper level undergraduate history course. You can expect lots of short writing assignments in this course. You will be asked to express your opinions about the CIA-- and to defend your views in dialogue with other students. And if you take the course from credit, you will have the chance to work with me personally to tailor your study of the CIA to your educational, professional, or political goals.

Grading

1 percent of your grade will be based on your introduction of yourself in the first week.

20 percent of your grade will be based upon your participation in five discussions, which involve short writing assignments.

35 percent will be based on five in-class quizzes. Three will be 15 minutes long (worth 5 points each) and two will be 30 minutes long (worth ten points each.)

--The 15-minute quizzes will be given on 2nd, 6th and 10th sessions of the class.

--The 30-minute tests will be given on the 4th and 8th sessions

20 percent will be based upon a 3-5 page "spy report" due at the 5th session;

24 percent will be based upon a 750-word Op-Ed article due on the last day of class.

There will be lots of short writing assignments for class discussion, debate, and evaluation. Five of these assignments will be graded, four points each. These assignments will call for different modes of writing including blog posts, Tweets, organization chart, news stories, policy memos, after-action report, and press release.

Grade Scale

A: 90-100 points; B: 80-89; C 70-79; D: 60-69. F: Below 60

Required Reading

The primary textbook for the class is Tim Wiener's magisterial book *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA*, published in 2007. With the author's permission, I will provide excerpts from this book, and other course readings to all students in PDF form, free of charge. But I am a big believer in the advantages of traditional bound books. If you want to get the most of out of the class, I recommend buying the paperback edition of *Legacy of Ashes*. It recounts many events and issues that this course does not cover and will enhance your understanding the CIA's history immensely. The paperback is available on Amazon.com for \$12.46

Course Outline

Week 1 Conference: From OSS to CIA to JFK (July 6-10)

In a video conference with students, I'll give an overview of the course, expectations, grading and then I will tell the story of the first two decades of U.S. intelligence, from 1943 to 1963.

I'll explain How World War II gave birth to the CIA; how the new organization built its power and reputation with "covert action" operations that overthrew governments in Iran and Guatemala in the 1950s only to suffer humiliating defeat at the Bay of Pigs in Cuba in 1961, a fiasco led to triumph and tragedy. The triumph was the Cuban missile crisis, where the CIA's technological wizardry proved invaluable for the U.S. government; the tragedy was the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963, an intelligence failure that has yet to be fully explained.

CIA in the News: Students will organize themselves into regional desks (Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe, Middle East), each of which will focus on collecting news stories about the CIA in that region.

Reading: *Legacy of Ashes*, Chapters 2-3, pp. 9-35

Supplemental readings: Excerpt from Senate Report on the Interrogation of Khalid Sheik Mohammed, pp. 211-216; Wall Street Journal Op-Ed, "Interrogation Saved Lives."

Writing: Op-ed Blog post

Graded Discussion (4 points): Should the U.S. use torture?

Week 2: The Rise of Covert Action: Iran and Guatemala (July 13-17)

In a podcast and PowerPoint presentation, I'll trace the agency's rise to world power by examining the inner workings of two secret operations that destroyed popular democratic governments in Iran and Guatemala in 1953 and 1954.

CIA in the News: Middle East desk presents top stories of the week from the region

Reading: *Legacy of Ashes*, Chapters 8-10, pp. 83-119

Writing: Analytic memo

Ungraded Discussion: CIA methods in Iran and Guatemala

Quiz 1: Covert Action v. Espionage

Week 3: Reckoning: Bay of Pigs (July 20-24)

In a podcast and PowerPoint presentation I'll recount the CIA's first and worst defeat--when Fidel Castro's revolutionary army destroyed an agency-trained brigade in April 1961.

CIA in the news: The Americas desk reports

Reading: *Legacy of Ashes* Chapter 17, pp. 197-211.

Optional reading: *Nightwatch*, pp. 85-111

Writing: Tweeting the News

Ungraded Discussion: What in the world is the CIA doing?

Announcement: Select a document for the first paper, A Spy Reports, due Week 5 (Aug. 3)

Week 4—Triumph and Tragedy: From Missile Crisis to the Death of JFK (July 27-31)

In a podcast and PowerPoint presentation I will examine one of the agency's greatest successes and one of its worst failures, which happened 13 months apart in 1962 and 1963 using original CIA documents to reconstruct what happened and why.

CIA in the news: The Asia desk reports.

Reading: *Legacy of Ashes*, Chapters 18-19, pp. 218-243; *Our Man in Mexico*, Chapters 15-16, pp. 191-214

Writing: After-action report

Ungraded Discussion: What went wrong in Cuba? In Dallas?

Test 1: CIA in the 50s and 60s.

Week 5—Conference: From Vietnam to Reagan (Aug. 3-7)

In a video conference with the entire class, I will trace the CIA's tumultuous evolution from 1964 to 1989, starting with central role in the Vietnam War, both in intelligence analysis and targeted assassination, as well as its illicit role in the Watergate scandal and the surveillance of American citizens. When the activities were exposed in 1975, the agency faced a serious congressional investigation for the first time, leading to budget cuts and retrenchment. The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980s led to the revival of the

agency's fortunes and to another scandal, the Iran-Contra affair, which cost the agency dearly.

CIA in the News: The Asia desk reports:

Reading: *Legacy of Ashes*, Chapters 23-25, pp. 281-310

Writing: Submit 1st paper: A Spy's Report

Week 6 Scandal: CHAOS on Capitol Hill (Aug. 10-14)

In a podcast and PowerPoint presentation I will tell the story of how the CIA started spying on Americans leading to Watergate scandal and the first congressional investigation of the CIA in 1975.

CIA in the News: The Africa desk reports

Viewing: documentary film, *The Man Nobody Knew*, about CIA director William Colby

Reading: *Legacy of Ashes*, Chapters 30, 31, 33, pp. 368-393; Newsweek on Operation Chaos, June 23, 1975;

Writing: Press release

Graded Discussion: Your congressional representative on mass surveillance. (4 points)

Quiz 2: CIA Lingo

Week 7 —Troubled Revival: The Iran-contra scandal (Aug 17-21)

In a podcast and PowerPoint presentation How the CIA was revived under President Ronald Reagan, leading to a secret operation to trade arms for hostages in service of a secret war in Central America and a scandal that ended with senior agency officers under indictment for the first time.

CIA in the news: The Middle East desk reports

Reading: *Legacy of Ashes*, pp. 459-477; "Confessions of a 'Contra' by Edgar Chamorro with Jefferson Morley (New Republic, August 5, 1985)

Reading: Fact sheet on the Syrian opposition

Writing: Decision memo for the Division chief

Graded Discussion: Should CIA support this group with guns and money? (4 points)

Week 8: Failure I: The Fall of the Soviet Union (Aug. 24-31)

In a podcast and PowerPoint presentation I pose a simple question with several complex answers: Why did the experts at the CIA not anticipate the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991?

CIA in the news: The Europe desk reports

Reading: Robert Gates memoir

Writing: Facebook

Ungraded Discussion: What in the world is the CIA doing?

Test 2: CIA in the 80s and 90s.

Week 9: Conference: The New Enemy: From Communism to Terrorism (Sept. 3-7)

In a video conference with the whole class, I'll tell the story of the post-Cold War CIA: how the transformed itself from a global organization dedicated to spying on and thwarting nuclear-armed superpower and its socialist ideology into a global organization dedicated to spying on and disrupting a poorly armed, network of Islamic militants and their fundamentalist theology. We look at the CIA's war on al-Qaeda starting in 1998 and the agency's failure to identify the conspiracy organized by Khalid Sheik Muhammad and Osama bin Laden to hijack commercial airliners and fly them into targets in New York and Washington. We'll trace how the 9/11 attacks led the CIA and President Bush to conclude erroneously that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, leading to a U.S. invasion and disastrous occupation, featuring the CIA's extensive use of torture and rendition. The resulting backlash helped bring Barack Obama to the White House where he curbed the CIA's actions on the ground while escalating the drone war from above.

CIA in the News: The Asia desk leads

Reading: "The System Was Blinking Red'," From The 9/11 Commission Report, pp. 254-277; "Claims Against Saudi Cast New Light on Secret Pages of 9/11 Report," NYT, Feb. 4, 2015.

Writing: Call to Action

Graded Discussion: Take action on secrecy (4 points)

Week 10: Global War on Terror: The CIA Under George W. Bush (Sept. 10-14)

In a podcast and PowerPoint presentation I'll show why the CIA concluded wrongly Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, and how the systems of rendition and torture were created.

CIA in the News: Africa desk leads.

Reading: *Legacy of Ashes*, Chapter 49, pp. 562-574.

Quiz 3: CIA after 9/11

Week 11: Drone War: The CIA Under Barack Obama (Sept. 17-21)

In a podcast and PowerPoint presentation I'll the story of how President Obama ended the torture system, curbed the practice of rendition, and escalated the drone war.

CIA in the News: Latin America desk leads.

Supplemental Reading: *Kill Chain*, "Drones, baby, drones," pp. 211-234

Writing: Decision Memo

Graded Discussion: Drone strike options for the National Security Adviser. (4 points)

Week 12: Conference: The Future of the CIA (Sept. 21-25)

In a video conference, we'll discuss what the future holds for the CIA: Reform, reorganization, or retrenchment? I'll give my thoughts and the five desks of the class will weigh in with their assessment of the CIA in each region of the world.

Reading: *Legacy of Ashes*, Afterword, pp. 595-601

Writing: Op-Ed articles in the form of a memo for 2016 presidential candidates: 90-1

Discussion: What the next president should do about the CIA.

Academic Policies

For Oplerno's policies on Academic Integrity, Student Conduct, Non-discrimination and Services to Disabled Students, please review the relevant parts of the Student Enrollment Agreement by pasting the following url into your browser:

http://www.professorbolton.com/FILES/Oplerno_Policies_on_Accessibility_Harassment_Academic_Honesty.pdf

Course Details

Course Title: History of the CIA

Class Section: jmorley-001

Start and End Date: July-06-2015 to Sept-25-2015

Faculty Member: Jefferson Morley

Faculty Contact Information: - E-mail address: jmorley@oplerno.com -

Office hours: Friday, 13.00 to 15.00 EST, or by arrangement.

Details of contact: - Online Classroom: Checked daily - Response within 24 hours. - E-mails: Checked daily - Response within 24 hours.