

Readings in Espionage
HONS 3199.hn9
Spring 2026

Course Information

Institution: University of Texas at Dallas
Meeting Time: Tuesday, 9:00 - 9:50 AM
Modality: In-Person

School: Hobson Wildenthal Honors College
Class Location: AD 2.238
Course Pre-requisites: CV Honors Students

Course Description: Honors reading courses explore contemporary interdisciplinary topics in the sciences, social sciences, humanities, and engineering.

Instructor Information

Instructor: Wendi Kavanaugh

Email: wendik@utdallas.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment Only, please email

Learning Outcomes

1. **Analyze historical and contemporary intelligence operations**
Students will examine and compare espionage strategies and their impact on global affairs using evidence from course readings.
2. **Critique ethical and strategic dimensions of espionage**
Students will identify and evaluate moral dilemmas, tradecraft techniques, and decision-making processes presented in historical accounts and fictional narratives.
3. **Interpret and apply textual evidence in written analysis**
Students will select significant quotes from assigned readings each week and produce structured analyses that explain context, meaning, and relevance to course themes.

Attendance & Participation

This course takes place every Tuesday, and you must attend each session. Unless stated otherwise, all homework must be submitted by Noon CST on the Monday before class. Active participation is crucial; if you do not complete the required reading and homework, it's best not to attend, as you won't be able to engage meaningfully in discussions. Multiple absences will negatively impact your grade. We'll focus on discussion topics that are relevant to the group, so please come prepared with questions and ideas for each session.

Homework

This assignment helps you engage closely with the texts by analyzing a single passage each week. By focusing on one quote, you'll practice connecting specific language to broader themes of espionage, such as betrayal, tradecraft, ethics, or cultural context.

Instructions

1. **Choose one passage** (1–3 sentences) from the week's assigned reading. Don't forget to add the page number for your quote.
2. **Introduce the quote:** Provide context (who is speaking, what's happening, why it matters).
3. **Analyze the dilemma/Reflect briefly:** Explain how the passage illustrates espionage's moral or cultural dilemmas. Consider themes like loyalty, betrayal, ethics, gender, tradecraft, or contemporary challenges. Connect the passage to the larger course themes or to another text we've read.

4. **Length Requirement:** 300–400 words (about 1 page, double-spaced). The quote should not count towards the word count. Enough to move beyond summary and provide meaningful analysis.

Required Reading Materials

1. Purnell, Sonia. *A Woman of No Importance the Untold Story of the American Spy Who Helped Win World War II*. New York, New York: Viking, 2019.
2. Graham, Elyse. *Book and Dagger: How Scholars and Librarians Became the Unlikely Spies of World War II*. First edition. New York, NY: Ecco, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2024.
3. Gioe, David V., and Joseph M. Hatfield. 2021. "A Damage Assessment Framework for Insider Threats to National Security Information: Edward Snowden and the Cambridge Five in Comparative Historical Perspective." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 34 (5): 704–38.
4. Burnett, Berenice, Erica Forktus, and David V. Gioe. "Spying (in)Spies: The Dwindling Likelihood of an Oxford Spy Ring to Rival the Cambridge Five." *Contemporary British History* 38, no. 1 (2024): 45–70.
5. Macintyre, Ben. *The Spy and the Traitor the Greatest Espionage Story of the Cold War*. 1st pbk. ed. New York: Broadway Books, 2019.
6. Zegart, Amy B. *Spies Lies and Algorithms: The History and Future of American Intelligence*. Princeton, New Jersey; Princeton University Press, 2022.

Course Calendar

Class Date	Readings	Homework	Due Date
Jan 20	Day One		
Jan 27	Purnell, Chapters: Prologue - 4	1	Noon, Jan 26
Feb 3	Purnell, Chapters: 5-8	2	Noon, Feb 2
Feb 10	Purnell, Chapters: 9 - Epilogue	3	Noon, Feb 9
Feb 17	Graham, Chapters: Intro - 4	4	Noon, Feb 16
Feb 24	Graham, Chapters: 5-7	5	Noon, Feb 23
Mar 3	Graham, Chapters: 8 - end	6	Noon, Mar 2
Mar 10	Articles (Gioe & Hatfield; Burnnet, Fortkuts, Gioe)	7	Noon, Mar 9
March 17	Spring Break		
Mar 24	Macintyre, Chapters: Intro-4	8	Noon, Mar 23
Mar 31	Macintyre, Chapters: 5-8	9	Noon, Mar 30
Apr 7	Macintyre, Chapters: 9-12	10	Noon, Apr 6
Apr 14	Macintyre, Chapters: 13 - End	11	Noon, Apr 13
Apr 21	Zegart, Chapters: 1-4	12	Noon, Apr 20
Apr 28	Zegart, Chapters: 5-7	13	Noon, Apr 27
May 5	Zegart, Chapters: 8 - end	14	Noon, May 4

Grading

Attendance & Participation - 50 points (50%)

Weekly Quote Analysis - 50 points (50%)

Grading Scale

Grades are not rounded in this course. in this course. Extra credit is not offered in this course. Please see the grade table below:

A+ 100 - 97	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F below 60
A 93-96	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

Course Policies

- **Communications:** Emails about the course must be sent using your UT Dallas email. Emails will be answered within two business days. Please add HONS 3199 in the subject line. You may also reach out to the instructor using e-Learning; for e-Learning tutorials please refer to the website: ets.utdallas.edu/elearning for additional information.
- **Late Work:** Late work is not accepted in this course.
- **Extra Credit:** There is no extra credit offered for this course.
- **Classroom Citizenship:** The purpose of this class is to create and participate in critical discussions. The weekly discussion space allows students to explore the ideas, concepts, and experiences of the authors we are reading. While respectful disagreement can enhance classroom discussion, this class is not a debate.
- **Academic Integrity:** Please review [the section](#) within the UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures webpage. All work submitted must be *your own* original work. While AI programs are valuable tools, the use of any programs is strictly prohibited in this class.
- **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Please review [the section](#) within the UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures webpage.
- **Academic Support Resources:** Please visit the [Academic Support Resources](#) page to view the University's academic support resources for all students.
- **Technology:** Unless prior approval is received from the instructor, the use of cell phones, laptops, tablets, and other devices are prohibited during class. If you have notes from the readings, please print them prior to arriving. Our course will rely on eLearning for homework. If you experience any issues with your UT Dallas account, contact the UT Dallas Information Resources Help Desk: assist@utdallas.edu or 972-883-2911.
- **Comet Creed:** This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same: "As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do."

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.