

New Course Announcement

Spring 2010, INTAF 597

The Political Economy of the Global Metals and Mining Industry

Have you ever wondered why diamonds are a rebel's best friend? Do you know what blood diamonds are? Have you ever thought about what will happen when the world runs out of copper, or how much precious metal is contained in all those old cell phones lying un-used in people's drawers? Why is it that countries that have been blessed with an abundance of natural resources seem to be cursed with continual conflict and low economic growth?

These important questions are addressed in a new, interdisciplinary graduate seminar taught by "Executive in Residence" --Michael Komesaroff at the School of International Affairs here at Penn State. Komesaroff, who is Australian, has over 30 years of leadership and managerial experience in the mining industries of China, Japan, Russia and Australia as well as parts of Africa and Latin America. Komesaroff has been appointed SIA's first Executive in Residence for the Spring 2010 semester.

The seminar will include analysis and discussion of important case studies such as the nationalization of Chile's copper industry in the 1970s and the withdrawal of international mining companies from disastrous investments in Papua New Guinea.

Student participation will be encouraged through the use of "live" interactive telephone hook-ups with industry leaders and experts who can be questioned directly on major issues such as their sincerity in supporting sustainable development, their policies toward development and the treatment of indigenous people, and the risks of an expanded nuclear power industry. Multi-media presentations will be used to support specific sessions related to Chinese mineral investments in Africa, mineral sustainability in Siberia, and other critical issues that are shaping the international mining industry.

Proposed Curriculum Topics

Digging In: Course Introduction

Lay of the Land: The Structure and Operation of the Global Mining Industry

Pay Dirt: Key Elements of Mining, Mineral Processing and Metals Production

Blessing or a Curse? Minerals in Developing Countries

Sustainable Development – A Steady Vein or a Vain Pursuit?

Involvement of Indigenous People —Implications for Local Community Development

Foreign Drills and Local Skills: Technology Transfer Issues

Negotiating Access Agreements: International Norms, Corporate Profits and National Interest

Mineral Royalties and Resource Nationalism

The Hungry Dragon: The Resource Factor in China's Overseas Role

Glowing Prospects but Serious Fallout: The Politics and Technology of Uranium

If you want more information on the course contact Professor Denis Simon at dfs12@psu.edu. Subject: Spring Course 2010