Overview:

**Oil and Water: Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan** will visit the ancient oases of the Silk Road and the bustling modern cities that persist in these same sites along a new ‘silk road.’ Our purpose in visiting 5 of the fabulous cultural and natural sites of the Silk Road will be analyze how the control of oil and water resources have shaped growth, prosperity, and their sustainability over time in these locations. Thus, we will examine how the ancient treatment of water resources sponsored the growth of trading kingdoms along the Silk Road. Recent Empires and authoritarian nation-states in the region have deal with water resources more profligately. On ES, we’ll take a camping trip deep into the Aral Sea bed, desiccated as a result of political competition over water. Natural gas and oil are rich resources in both Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan; we will look at how these resources were treated religiously and then as fuel in the pre-modern world, while emphasizing the key roles that oil and natural gas play in the modern economies of both countries. A half-credit course “Oil and Water” will develop the intellectual framework for examining Oil and Water in the past-and-present context of Silk Road oases. This trip occurs during Ramadan, but Uzbek stores and restaurants will be open until Eid, which is after our departure. Open to first-years, sophomore, and juniors.