

Tuesday 25/08/2015

20.00 Cultural event at Groninger Forum, Hereplein 73, 9711 GD Groningen

Admission is free for participants to the Summer School 2015 and for alumni.

Energy, Popular Culture and Geopolitics

The Groningen Energy Summer School invites you to a special evening in the Groningen Forum, Hereplein location. The host for the evening will be Dr Jaap de Wilde, Professor of International Relations and Security Studies at the University of Groningen. The evening's programme will include an introduction by Prof. de Wilde, a showing of the feature film *Syriana*, followed by a discussion with the public.

Syriana (US 2005) is a thriller, written and directed by Stephen Gaghan, starring George Clooney (who also produced the film), Matt Damon and Amanda Peet.

Loosely based on Robert Baer's memoirs, *See No Evil*, the film dramatizes geopolitical dynamics around the global petroleum industry. The CIA, migrant workers, Washington legal eagles, and Arab elites are all part of a complex network of power that links multiple locations: Iran, Texas, Washington, Geneva, Lebanon, and Spain. The film has a number of parallel plots, and the scenes alternate across storylines



According to Wikipedia (06-06-2015)

The movie's title is suggested to derive from the hypothesized *Pax Syriana*, as an allusion to the necessary state of peace between Syria and the U.S. as it relates to the oil business. In a December 2005 interview, Baer told NPR that the title is a metaphor for foreign intervention in the Middle East, referring to post-World War II think tank strategic studies for the creation of an artificial state (such as Iraq, created from elements of the former Ottoman Empire) that ensured continued western access to crude oil. The movie's website states that "'Syriana' is a real term used by Washington think-tanks to describe a hypothetical reshaping of the Middle East."

There will therefore be plenty to discuss around the screening: from the portrayal of geopolitical relations in Hollywood films to the contrast between Syria then (2005) and now.