

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

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Course Introduction

This course focuses on international and global perspectives within political geography, not simply the locations of conspicuous capes or strategic bays. It is designed to promote critical thinking skills through emphasis on the enduring problems and emerging challenges that produce international relations and economic globalization. The course is designed for the upper-division level. It surveys some important aspects of the discipline of political geography and conventional topics in international affairs. The course does *not* engage in a systematic inventory of regional issues and local conflicts. Instead, contemporary developments in the world's regions (especially Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union as well as Southwest Asia and sub-Saharan Africa) are used to illustrate concepts from lectures and readings. Conceptually, the course includes attention to conventional issues like 'geopolitics', 'globalization', and 'genocide' and also addresses theoretical questions concerning the 'hyphen' between 'nations' and 'states'. Critically, the course seeks to develop rigorous thinking about such explicitly spatial themes as these while also challenging simplistic claims like 'the world is flat'. Accordingly, assignments incorporate contemporary, popular, and scholarly texts, as well as politically charged images and sounds from web-based archives; significant cartographic artifacts and novel geographic visualizations are also key components in the course.

In Part I, the class considers imperialism and geopolitics using conventional and critical perspectives. Historically, the course surveys the 19th century 'grand chessboard' and 'classical' geopolitics before considering newer forms of power. Keywords including 'state', 'scale' and 'conflict' as well as 'great game' geopolitics and notions of objective and perceived strategic value are the prime focus initially. Empirically, cases including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Ghana, Great Britain, India, Russia, Rwanda, the Soviet Union, and the United States are used to illustrate competing geopolitical perspectives and strategic assumptions. Next, questions about the Cold War and ideas about 'containment' strategies will be presented in terms of their geographic components, threat perceptions, and territorial designs. In Part II, current thinking on topics including: ethno-nationalism, uneven development, civil war, resource conflict, state failure, food security, transboundary disputes, world-systems analyses, and neoliberal urbanization will be the focus. Overall, readings, lectures, and recitations are designed to introduce, conceptualize, and criticize key ideas, practices, and processes affecting global affairs and linking them to uneven geographic outcomes.

Recitation and Performance

In response to student requests, the course was restructured in 1996 as a two lectures/one recitation per week format. *This experiment is successful when all students come to the discussion sections having read the material, completed the 'key terms and concepts' worksheet, and prepared additional questions or critical comments.* Mandatory recitation meetings provide an opportunity to discuss and debate materials in general and to seek conceptual clarification. RECITATIONS BEGIN THE WEEK OF JANUARY 12. Details about the format and requirements of the research paper will also be given in recitation. The TAs will take weekly recitation attendance. Success in this course is a function of the well-proven formula: attendance, staying current with the readings, and asking for help when needed. Use of the lecture notes from the website is no substitute for class attendance.

Sources and Web-based Materials

There is no text though we will read various text-like chapters as well as research articles on electronic reserve; **brief** supplements or web-links (i.e. *Economist* articles) will be added to the homepage throughout the semester as relevant events unfold. Details on accessing the electronic files are given on the course webpage - http://www.colorado.edu/geography/class_homepages/geog_4712_s09/ PDF files of the class materials (text-only and key diagrams/maps) used in lecture are also available via the website for pre-lecture printing and this should help to alleviate frantic note-taking. The username for these notes is **geog4712** and the password is **xxxx** (see print copy or ask the TAs).

Grades, Exams, Deadlines

Grades are assigned on the basis of 30% midterm; 30% final examination; 30% term paper and 10% recitation performance. *It is imperative that all students come prepared to the discussion section with the weekly reading completed. The same readings will be the basis for the questions on half of the mid-term and final examinations.* The midterm will be **WEDNESDAY MARCH 4th at 7pm, location TBA**. Written proposals for the paper are due to your TA on **FRIDAY MARCH 13th at 5pm**. Final term papers must be submitted to your TA by 5pm on **MONDAY APRIL 6th**. The final examination will be **TUESDAY 5th MAY 1:30-4:00pm**.

Course Description

We begin with a brief history of “geopolitics”, particularly as the field developed in the West alongside exploration, colonization, and imperialism. Here, arguments from the Social Darwinist school, including ‘environmental determinism’ and ‘organic states’ are introduced to contextualize the contemporary climate of early geopolitical thinking. Such arguments are also considered using more modern ‘critical’ approaches and are introduced alongside arguments about U.S. power relative to German *geopolitik* and global strategy surrounding the Cold War. Looking at the post-Cold War world, we then examine the “Third Wave of Democracy” and uneven outcomes associated with neoliberal globalization. Here, we consider various ‘transitologists’ and ‘shock therapists’ to understand recent developments in ‘post-Soviet Russia’, the ‘Middle East’, and ‘Africa’. Questions about ‘Europe’s limits’ and Turkey’s ‘proper place’ in the community of nations and the European Neighborhood are also detailed in this section. After the midterm, we turn to comprehensive frameworks for understanding the variable geography of contemporary global economic and political changes, including “uneven development” and “world-systems theory.” Then we use these theories, among others, to understand contemporary changes within particular world regions and across spatial scales. We examine economic changes first, particularly under the rubric of “globalization”, and look at what effects these dramatic changes have on localities in parts of the Third World. Finally, we analyze the reasons why “nationalisms” and conflicts seem to be booming, both literally and figuratively despite popular decrees about “globalization’s flatteners” and the “end of the nation-state”. We conclude with considerations of how the political geography of the 21st century world might evolve and how nations/states might transform or vanish.

The course has an integrative character and requires basic knowledge about international affairs. It seeks to answer big questions about how global social, political, and economic processes unfold to transform individuals or communities and produce particular national places or urban spaces. Reading a substantive newspaper or magazine, such as *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Economist* or the *BBC News* webpage (news.bbc.co.uk) helps dramatically to acquire (or develop) knowledge of global conflicts and current events. *The International Crisis Group* (www.crisisweb.org), *World Press Review* (www.worldpress.org), *ReliefWeb* (www.reliefweb.int), *Institute for War and Peace Reporting* (www.iwpr.net), and *International Relations and Security Network* (www.isn.ethz.ch) provide up-to-date, nuanced, transparent sources of background material and localized analysis of conflict and displacement worldwide.

Lecture Outline

Part I: Histories and Theories of States, Sovereignties, and Geopolitics

- Week 1: (Jan 12) Course Introduction
(Jan 14) What is Political Geography? 'Balkanization', 'domicide', and other 'keywords'
- Week 2: (Jan 19) *Martin Luther King, Jr Holiday (no class) NO RECITATIONS MEET THIS WEEK*
(Jan 21) Geographies of 'the State' and How to Avoid the 'Territorial Trap'
- Week 3: (Jan 26) 'Politics from Nature' and the Origins of 'Environmental Determinism'
(Jan 28) Classical Geopolitics: The Pivot, The Heartland, and the Eurasian landmass
- Week 4: (Feb 2) U.S. Geopolitical Traditions and Foreign Entanglements
(Feb 4) Thinking Critically: German Geopolitics
- Week 5: (Feb. 9) Cold War US Geopolitics
(Feb. 11) Democratization and the Third Wave
- Week 6: (Feb. 16) Empire?
(Feb. 18) "What Ever Happened to Globalization?"
- Week 7: (Feb. 23) Critical Geopolitics: Still relevant?
(Feb. 25) *Astropolitiks* and *Sub-topias*
- Week 8: (March 2) Regions, Sovereignty, and Civilization: 'Europe' and the 'Turkish' Limit
(March 4) Review for **MIDTERM EXAMINATION @ 7pm, location TBA**

Part II. Contemporary Topics: Development, Globalization, Urbanization, Nationalism, and Conflict

- Week 9: (March 9) Geographic Approaches to Uneven Development
(March 11) World-Systems Theory - Wallerstein
- Week 10: (March 16) World-Systems Theory - Modelski
(March 18) Critiques of World-System Theories

MARCH 23-27 SPRING BREAK

- Week 11: (March 30) Migration and Urbanization
(April 1) Theories of Nationalism
- Week 12: (April 6) Banal and Scientific Applications of Theories of Nationalism
(April 8) Iconic and Athletic States, Nationalities, and Identities: Sporting the nation
- Week 13: (April 13) Ethno-territorial Conflicts
(April 15) The Political Geography of Civil Wars
- Week 14: (April 20) New 'Lines in the 'Sand''
(April 22) Beyond US Hegemony and New Geographies of Conflict
- Week 15: (April 27) Pseudo-states and Other 'Places that Don't Exist...'
(April 29) Chaos and Cosmos in the World System
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Recitations and Readings

keyword in (ALL CAPS) after title matches electronic reserve file name.

Week 1 (Jan. 12) Introduction

Reading: Dahlman/ Ó Tuathail “Broken Bosnia: localized displacement” (BROKEN BOSNIA);
Wood “Geographic Aspects of Genocide” (WOOD)
Keywords: “Boundaries; *Geopolitik*” (DICTIONARY WEEK 1)

Week 2 (Jan 19) States and Territorialities (NO RECITATION THIS WEEK)

Reading: Taylor “The State as Container” (TAYLOR 1994)
Agnew “The Three Ages of Geopolitics” (THREE AGES)
Ó Tuathail “Thinking Critically: An introduction” (THINKING CRITICALLY)
Keywords: “Great Powers; Organic State Theory” (DICTIONARY WEEK 2)

Week 3 (Jan 26) Environmental Determinism, Organic States, Classical Geopolitics

Reading: Bassin “Politics from Nature” (BASSIN)
Taylor and Flint pp. 48-63 (TF_GEOPOLITICS)
Johnson “Roots of American Militarism” (JOHNSON_MILITARISM)
Keywords: “Imperialism; Mahan; Monroe Doctrine” (DICTIONARY WEEK 3)

Week 4 (Feb 2) US vs. German Geopolitics

Reading: Ó Tuathail pp. 111-136 (GERMAN GEOPOLITICS)
Spykman “Geography and Foreign Policy” (SPYKMAN)
Keywords: “Am. Century; Isolationism” (DICTIONARY WEEK 4)

Week 5 (Feb 9) the Cold War and post-Cold War Democratic Transitions

Reading: Herz “Rise and Demise of the Territorial State” (HERZ)
Taylor and Flint pp. 74-96 (TF_GEOPOLITICS_2)
Ó Loughlin “Ordering the Crush Zone” (CRUSH_ZONE)
Zakaria “Illiberal Democracy” (ILLIBERAL DEMOCRACY)

Week 6 (Feb 16) Empires and Forms of Control

Reading: Ignatieff “The American Empire: The burden” (IGNATIEFF)
Barnett “The Pentagon’s New Map” (PENTAGON’S MAP)
Roberts, Secor, and Sparke “Neoliberal Geopolitics” (NEOLIBERAL GEOPOLITICS)
Agnew “American Hegemony” (AGNEW HEGEMPIRE)

Week 7 (Feb 23) Moving Beyond Critical Geopolitics and Anticipating Alternatives

Reading: Agnew “A New Age of Global Geopolitics” (NEW AGE)
Dalby “Is Critical Geopolitics Still Relevant?” (DALBY)
Paglen “Groom Lake and the Imperial Production of Nowhere” (PAGLEN)
Davis “selections from Buda’s Wagon” (DAVIS_BUDA)

Week 8 (March 2) Europe and Thoughts About How to Define its Limit

Reading: Zielonka “How New Enlarged Borders will Shape the EU” (ZIELONKA)
Dahlman “Turkey and EU Enlargement” (DAHLMAN)

Week 9 (March 9) Poverty and Uneven Development

Reading: Sachs, et al “Geography of Poverty” (GEOG_OF_POVERTY)
Harvey “selections from Notes on the Theory of Uneven Development” (HARVEY)
Taylor “Monstrous Hybrids” (TAYLOR_COMMENTARY)

Week 10 (March 16) Effects of Globalization and Explanations/Critiques from World-Systems Theory

Reading: optional: Flint and Taylor pp. 1-65 (WORLD_SYSTEMS)
Friedman “It’s a flat world, after all” (FLAT_WORLD)
Watts “Conjunctures and Crisis, pt. I” (CONJUNCTURES)
Tesfahuney “Mobility, Racism, and Geopolitics” (TESFAHUNEY)

Week 11 (March 30) Migration and Urbanization/Introduction to ‘Nationalism’

Reading: Grant and Nijman “Re-Scaling of Uneven Development in Ghana and India,” (RESCALING)
Portes and Roberts “The Free Market City” (PORTES_ROBERTS)
Davis “selections from Planet of Slums” (DAVIS_SLUMS)
Taylor and Flint pp.192-234 (TF_NATIONALISM)

Week 12 (April 6) Inventing and Representing the Nation

Reading: Anderson “selections from Imagined Communities” (IMAGINED_COMMUNITIES)
Houlihan “Sport, Nationality, Identity” (HOULIHAN)
Hobsbawm “Invented Traditions” (HOBSBAWM)

Week 13 (April 13) Ethno-territorial conflicts

Reading: Collier “What Fuels Civil War?” (CIVIL_WARS)
Dahlman “Political Geography of Kurdistan” (DAHLMAN_KURDISTAN)
Secor “Islamism, Democracy, and the Headscarf ”(HEADSCARF)

Week 14 (April 20) Future Conflicts and Fluid Boundaries

Reading: Harris “Navigating Uncertain Waters” (HARRIS)
Newman “Borders in a Borderless World” (NEWMAN)
Le Billon “the Geopolitical Economy of Resource Wars” (LEBILLON)

Week 15 (April 27) The End of the Nation/State?

Reading: Kolstø “The Sustainability and Future of Unrecognized Quasi-States” (QUASI_STATES)
Leeson “Better Off Stateless?” (LEESON)
The Economist “Wars of Religion” (ECONOMIST)
Redux: Dahlman/ Ó Tuathail “Broken Bosnia: localized displacement” (BROKEN_BOSNIA)

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<http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

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If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices.

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Classroom Behavior:

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy is especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with the politically sensitive subject matter of this class. Diversity of opinion is welcomed. *PLEASE TURN OFF CELL PHONES.*