

## 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 sub-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' and 'globalization' while it 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 a range of texts, old and new, popular and scholarly, 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 19<sup>th</sup> century 'grand chessboard' and 'classical' geopolitics before considering newer forms of power. Keywords including 'state', 'scale' as well as 'great game' geopolitics and notions of objective and perceived strategic value are the prime areas of study 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; during the summer we will hold two recitation-style meetings/week. 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 JUNE 1. Details about the format and requirements of the research paper will also be given in recitation and we will take 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. You must demonstrate use of the 'Recitation Sheets' to receive credit for participation, as simply showing up is no substitute for thoughtful engagement with the material.

### Sources and Web-based Materials

There is no textbook, 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 term 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\\_sum09/](http://www.colorado.edu/geography/class_homepages/geog_4712_sum09/) 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 TA).

### 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 reading completed. The same readings will be the basis for the questions on over half of the mid-term and final examinations. The midterm will be **Monday June 15th in class**. Written proposals for the paper are due in hard copy form to your TA on **Thursday June 11 at 5pm**. Final term papers must be submitted to your TA by **Thursday June 25<sup>th</sup> at 5pm**. The final exam will be **July 2<sup>nd</sup>**, in class.

### 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 both early and contemporary approaches to geopolitical reasoning. 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 uneven outcomes associated with neoliberal globalization and new forms of conflict. 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 different 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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](http://news.bbc.co.uk)) helps dramatically to acquire (or develop) knowledge of global conflicts and current events. *The International Crisis Group* ([www.crisisweb.org](http://www.crisisweb.org)), *World Press Review* ([www.worldpress.org](http://www.worldpress.org)), *ReliefWeb* ([www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)), *Institute for War and Peace Reporting* ([www.iwpr.net](http://www.iwpr.net)), and *International Relations and Security Network* ([www.isn.ethz.ch](http://www.isn.ethz.ch)) provide up-to-date, nuanced, transparent sources of background material and localized analysis of conflict and displacement worldwide.

Week	Date	Lecture Topic	Assignment Due	Reading
Week 1	06.01	What is 'Political Geography'?		Dictionary I; Kaplan
	06.02	Politics: States vs. Natures		Agnew 3 Ages; Bassin; Taylor Container
	06.03	Classical Geopolitics	Recitation sheet 1a	Dictionary II,III: Johnson; T + F Geopolitics I
	06.04	Critical Geopolitics		Dictionary IV; O'Tuathail Introduction + German Geopolitics
	06.05	Cold War Geopolitics	Recitation sheet 1b	Herz; O'Loughlin; Spykman; T + F Geopolitics II
Week 2	06.08	Empire?		Agnew Hegemony; Barnett; Ignatieff; Secor, Sparke + Roberts
	06.09	Whatever Happened to Globalization?		Agnew New Age; Davis Buda's Wagon
	06.10	Critical Geopolitics: Still relevant?	Recitation sheet 2a	Dalby
	06.11	'Geo-graphing Balkan novelties'	<b>Paper Proposal, 5 pm</b>	Film: 'Why We Fight'
	06.12	European Limits and Turkish Accession	Recitation sheet 2b	Dahlman Enlargement; Zielonka
Week 3	06.15	<b>MID-TERM EXAM IN CLASS</b>		
	06.16	Uneven Geographic Development		Grant + Nijman; Harvey; Sachs et al; Taylor Commentary
	06.17	Migration + Urbanization	Recitation sheet 3a	Davis Slums; Portes + Roberts
	06.18	World Systems Theorists		Flint + Taylor World-Systems, 1-65
	06.19	World Systems Critiques	Recitation sheet 3b	Friedman; Watts
Week 4	06.22	Theories of Nationalism		Anderson; T+ F Nationalism
	06.23	Applications of Nationalism		Hobsbawm; Secor
	06.24	Ethno-territorial conflicts	Recitation sheet 4a	Dahlman Kurdistan; Le Billon
	06.25	Civil war	<b>Term Paper, 5pm</b>	Collier
	06.26	Other socio-spatial conflicts	Recitation sheet 4b	Harris
Week 5	06.29	Borders		Newman; Tesfahuney
	06.30	Pseudo-States + Quasi-states	Recitation sheet 5	Kolsto; Leeson
	07.01	Conclusion: Revenge?		O'Loughlin + Murphy; O'Tuathail
	07.02	<b>FINAL EXAM IN CLASS</b>		

Date	Reading Shorthand	Details
06.01	Dictionary I; Kaplan	Kaplan, "Revenge of Geography" Keywords: "Boundaries; <i>Geopolitik</i> "
06.02	Agnew Ages; Bassin; Taylor Container	Agnew, "The Three Ages of Geopolitics" Bassin, "Politics from Nature" Taylor, "The State as Container"
06.03	Dictionary II, III: Johnson; T + F Geopolitics I	Johnson, "Roots of American Militarism" Keywords: "Great Powers; Organic State Theory" Keywords: "Imperialism; Mahan; Monroe Doctrine" Taylor and Flint pp. 48-63, (TF_GEOPOLITICS)
06.04	Dictionary IV; O'Tuathail Introduction + German Geopolitics	Keywords: "Am. Century; Isolationism" O'Tuathail "Thinking Critically: An introduction" Ó Tuathail, "German Geopolitics "
06.05	Herz; O'Loughlin; Spykman; T + F Geopolitics II	Herz, "Rise and Demise of the Territorial State" O'Loughlin, "Ordering the Crush Zone" Spykman, "Geography and Foreign Policy" Taylor and Flint, pp. 74-96 (TF_GEOPOLITICS_2)
06.08	Agnew Hegemony; Barnett; Ignatieff; Secor, Sparke + Roberts	Agnew, "American Hegemony?" Barnett, "The Pentagon's New Map" Ignatieff, "The American Empire: The burden." Roberts, Secor, and Sparke, "Neoliberal Geopolitics"
06.09	Agnew New Age; Davis Buda's Wagon	Agnew, "A New Age of Global Geopolitics" Davis, "selections from Buda's Wagon"
06.10	Dalby	Dalby, "Is Critical Geopolitics Still Relevant?"
06.12	Dahlman Enlargement; Zielonka	Dahlman, "Turkey and EU Enlargement" Zielonka, "How New Enlarged Borders will Shape the EU"
06.16	Grant + Nijman; Harvey; Sachs et al; Taylor Commentary	Grant /Nijman, "Re-Scaling of Uneven Development in Ghana + India" Harvey, "Notes on the Theory of Uneven Development" Sachs, et al, "Geography of Poverty" Taylor, "Monstrous Hybrids"
06.17	Davis Slums; Portes + Roberts	Davis, "Planet of Slums" Portes and Roberts, "The Free Market City"
06.18	Flint + Taylor	Flint and Taylor, pp. 1-65 (WORLD SYSTEMS)
06.19	Friedman; Watts	Friedman, "It's a flat world, after all" Watts, "Conjunctures and Crisis, pt. I"
06.22	Anderson; T+ F Nationalism	Anderson, "selections from Imagined Communities" Taylor and Flint, pp.192-234 (TF_NATIONALISM)
06.23	Hobsbawm; Secor	Hobsbawm, "Invented Traditions" Secor, "Islamism, Democracy, and the Headscarf"
06.24	Dahlman; Le Billon	Dahlman, "Political Geography of Kurdistan" Le Billon, "The Geopolitical Economy of Resource Wars"
06.25	Collier	Collier, "What Fuels Civil War?"
06.26	Harris	Harris, "Navigating Uncertain Waters"
06.29	Newman; Tesfahuney	Newman, "Borders in a Borderless World" Tefahuney, "Mobility, Racism, and Geopolitics"
06.30	Kolsto; Leeson	Kolstø, "The Sustainability + Future of Unrecognized Quasi-States" Leeson, "Better Off Stateless?"
07.01	O'Loughlin + Murphy; O'Tuathail	O'Loughlin + Murphy, "New Horizons" O'Tuathail, "Masterpiece Geopolitics"

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