POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

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This course focuses on the international and cross-national perspectives of political geography. It deals with political, economic and social aspects of international relations from a geographical perspective and examines societies in transition in the post Cold War world. As such, the course has an integrative character and requires basic knowledge about international affairs. It also helps significantly to acquire (or develop) knowledge of global locations and current events through frequent reading of a substantive newspaper or magazine, such as The New York Times, Christian Science Monitor, or the Economist. Or visit http://www.stratfor.com for weekly updates and alerts on events of international importance.

The course is clearly designed for the upper-division level. It surveys some important aspects of the discipline of political geography but does not engage in a systematic survey of regional issues and conflicts. Instead, contemporary developments in the world’s regions (especially Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the Middle East and Africa) are used to illustrate the concepts from the lectures and readings.

In response to student requests, we have restructured the course as a two-lecture-one-discussion period per week. (Formerly we had 3 lectures per week). This experiment is successful when all students come to the discussion sections having already read the material. Each student will be given responsibility for passing out a couple of discussion questions at the beginning of a discussion period and helping to lead that discussion; further details in the discussion section. Details about the format and requirements of the research paper will also be given in the discussion sections.

The readings on reserve are in the Earth Sciences library (ground floor in the new Benson Geology Building, on Colorado Avenue south of the Stadium). Two copies are available; you may wish to photocopy all the reserve readings for your convenience. The text is Peter J. Taylor and Colin Flint, Political Geography 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 2000).

We begin with a short review of “geopolitics” particularly as the field developed in the U.S. before and after the Cold War and then turn to a comprehensive framework for understanding contemporary global economic and political changes, “world-systems theory”. After these two short theoretical exegeses, we then use the theories to understand contemporary changes in the world regions. 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. Then we turn to the “Third Wave of Democracy” and examine the recent developments in Eastern Europe, Russia and Africa. Finally, we analyze the reasons why “nationalism” seem to be booming, both literally and figuratively.

Grades are assigned on the basis of 30% midterm; 30% final examination; 30% term paper and 10% discussion section performance. The midterm will be held about 15 October. The final examination will be held on Friday 15th December at 4:30pm. Please plan your travel accordingly.
Lecture Outline

Week 1: (Aug. 28)  
Introduction  
The New Geopolitics

Week 2: (Sept. 4)  
Labor Day (no class)  
Classical Geopolitics

Week 3: (Sept. 11)  
German Geopolitik  
Cold War U.S. Geopolitics

Week 4: (Sept. 18)  
Post Cold War U.S. Geopolitics  
Critical Geopolitics

Week 5: (Sept. 25)  
Geopolitics and the Promotion of Democracy  
World-Systems Theory - Wallerstein

Week 6: (Oct. 2)  
World-Systems Theory - Modelski  
Hegemonic Cycles

Week 7: (Oct. 9)  
Kosovo: Aberration or Model for the Future  
Clash of Civilizations Thesis Revisited

Week 8: (Oct. 16)  
Midterm Examination  
Globalization and its Effects

Week 9: (Oct. 23)  
Challenging Globalization  
Restructuring in the Third World

Week 10: (Oct. 30)  
Democratization and its Discontents  
Islamist Politics and Globalization

Week 11: (Nov. 6)  
Crises of the State in Capitalist Societies  
The Politics of Failure in the Third World

Week 12: (Nov. 13)  
Political Transition in Eastern Europe  
Democrats, Stalinists, Socialists and Patriots in Eastern Europe

Week 13: (Nov. 20)  
Transition to Democracy: The case of Russia  
Transition to Democracy: The case of Ukraine

Week 14: (Nov. 27)  
Theories of Nationalism
Applications of Theories of Nationalism

Week 15: (Dec. 4) Ethno-territorial conflict in Eastern Europe
The nature of conflicts in the future – The world of 2050

Week 16: (Dec. 11) Political Geography - The New World Disorder
Review-

Geography 4712
Fall 2000

Discussion Sections and Readings

NOTE: DISCUSSION SECTIONS BEGIN ON AUGUST 28TH.

Week 1 (Aug.28) Introduction

Week 2 (Sep. 4) Classical Geopolitics
Reading: Taylor and Flint Political Geography, 4th ed, pp. 49-62
        O'Tuathail (Critical Geopolitics) pp. 111-140

Week 3 (Sep. 11) U.S. Geopolitics
Reading: Taylor and Flint, pp. 62-102
        O'Tuathail (Geopolitics Reader), pp. 1-12

Week 4 (Sep. 18) Alternative Geopolitics
Reading: Taylor and Flint, pp. 102-105
        O'Tuathail (Critical Geopolitics), pp. 187-223
        O'Loughlin (web page) “Ordering the Crush Zone.”

Week 5 (Sep. 25) World Systems Theory
Reading: Taylor and Flint, pp. 1-48

Week 6 (Oct. 2) Hegemonic Cycles
Reading: Taylor and Flint, 105-144

Week 7 (Oct. 9) Contemporary World (Dis)Order
Reading: Taylor and Flint, pp. 144-191

Week 8 (Oct. 16) Globalization
Reading: K. Ohmae (reserve), pp. 7-57

Week 9 (Oct. 23) Localities in the Globalized World
Readings: M. Watts (reserve) “Conjunctures and crisis”
           Economist (reserve) “Globalisation: Expelled from Eden”

Week 10 (Oct. 30) Islamism and Democracy
Reading: Kramer (reserve) “Islamist notions of democracy”

Week 11 (Nov. 6) Politics of Failure in the Third World
Reading: Taylor and Flint, pp. 235-285
Week 12 (Nov. 13) Post-Communist Crises in Eastern Europe
Reading: M. Specter (Reserve) “Moscow on the make”

Week 13 (Nov. 20) Transitions to Democracy in Eastern Europe and Russia
Reading: Taylor and Flint, pp. 286-325
(note: STUDENTS IN SECTION R013 ATTEND ANOTHER SECTION THIS WEEK)

Week 14 (Nov. 27) Nationalism Theories
Reading: Taylor and Flint, pp. 192-234

Week 15 (Dec. 4) Conflicts in Eastern Europe
Reading: Taylor and Flint, 325-367
O'Loughlin and Kolossov (web page) “Pomeranian grenadier”.

Week 16 (Dec. 11) Review for Final Examination.
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.

Economist “A survey of the new geopolitics: The road to 2050” 31st July 1999. 16 pps


