

Geography 4712
Fall Semester 2022

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

Instructor:

Professor John O'Loughlin

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Office Hours: MW 4:00-5:00p Guggenheim 201h

(email me before if you prefer a Zoom link for a remote meeting during office hours) or by appt. (make Zoom appt. by email)

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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 and 9-11 world. As such, the course has an integrative character and requires basic knowledge about international affairs. Frequent reading of a substantive newspaper or magazine, such as *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Economist* or the *BBC News* webpage (news.bbc.co.uk) would help significantly to acquire (or develop) knowledge of global locations and current events.

The course is 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 the former Soviet Union, the Middle East and Africa) are used to illustrate the concepts from the lectures and readings.

All students are expected to come to the classes with questions based on their reading of the materials. The website will have a list of key concepts/terms from the lectures and readings and the instructor will organize discussion around them on every second Thursday. Further details will be provided in the first meeting. The electronic readings are available on the course link in Canvas and we will read various text-like chapters as well as research articles on electronic reserve. Information on the electronic files and other class material are given on the course Canvas page.

There is one course text: Colin Flint *Introduction to Geopolitics* 4th ed. London: Routledge, 2021. Make sure you have it by the 2nd week of class; 4th edition only.

PDF files of the class materials (text-only and key diagrams/maps) used in lecture are also available a day or two before the respective lecture via Canvas for pre-lecture note-taking

Success in this course is a function of the well-proven formula (class 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. The instructor will take attendance and you will be expected to have the recitation sheet completed before the respective discussion class. The instructor may give small quizzes in order to assess students'

comprehension of reading material especially if it's clear that the readings are being ignored.

The exams are evenly divided between lecture and readings material by a format to be finalized later – but most probably short-answer format. A supplemental review sheet of important concepts will be posted on Canvas about a week prior to exams. For the course paper, students are required to follow a specific framework by using a theory covered in class to explain/interpret a contemporary case study they have selected in consultation with the instructor. A list of possible topics will be posted by the end of September. Because of this format, students will find that the research paper is different than papers they have submitted to other courses. I strongly recommend that students carefully adhere to the paper guidelines, which will be posted on the course webpage.

Students are required to submit a paper proposal and the proposal must be approved before students continue with their research. Details about the format and requirements of the research paper will also be given about early October.

Grades are assigned on the basis of 30% midterm; 30% final examination; 20% paper; 20% class attendance/performance.

Attendance will be taken randomly during the semester – probably about 12-14 times.

NOTA BENE - KEY DATES FALL SEMESTER 2022:

Midterm examination (Unit 1 material) will be held on **Monday 24 October**

Proposals for the paper are due to the Canvas dropbox on **Monday October 31 by 5pm**

The *paper* must be submitted to the Canvas dropbox by **5pm on Friday 24 November**

The *final examination* will be held on **December 12, 7:30p-10pm**. (The final will cover the material in Unit 2).

There MAY be a couple of asynchronous recorded online lectures – probably in the week after the midterm – October 24-31. More details as we get closer to those dates.

Course Overview:

In this course, we emphasize relative (and sometimes abstract) understandings of the geographic context within which life unfolds. Major concepts and theories from the field of international relations are included in our analysis of world politics alongside topics that anchor the discipline of political geography. The course is not purely theoretical, however, and our explicit goal is to tie theory to contemporary issues and case studies. This is especially true in weekly recitation sections. The course material also does not center on a single world region. Instead, we follow a thematic approach with topics such as U.S. foreign policy/geopolitics, civil war and conflict in African states, political transformations in the former Soviet Union, nationalist mobilizations and violence, and international political economy are all examples in this course.

Placing the order of topics in the course for practical (many students write papers on nationalist topics) and pedagogical (more accessible and familiar material first) reasons,

after some introductory material, we begin by analyzing the reasons why “nationalisms” and civil wars seem to be booming, both literally and figuratively. Then, we examine the “Third Wave of Democracy” and examine the recent developments in Russia, the Middle East and Africa. After the midterm, we begin with a short review of “geopolitics” particularly as the field developed in the U.S. before and after the Cold War before we turn to a comprehensive framework for understanding contemporary global economic and political changes, “world-systems theory” and we then use this theory to understand contemporary changes in the world regions.

Lecture Outline

Week 1: (Aug. 22) Introduction
What is political geography? Who gets what **where**, and how.

UNIT 1 NATIONALISM AND CONFLICT

Week 2: (Aug. 29) Theories of nationalism – non-geographic approaches
Territorial bases of nationalism

Week 3: (Sep. 5) Who belongs to the nation? De jure and de facto

Week 4: (Sep. 12) Ethno-territorialism and democracy – Scotland and Russia
Citizenship and belonging – Turkey and Russia

Week 5: (Sep. 19) Democracy and challengers (authoritarianism) – a binary world?

Week 6: (Sep. 26) What causes conflicts? Political geography approaches

Week 7: (Oct. 4) The geographical study of conflicts

Week 8: (Oct. 11) Climate change and conflict – is there a connection?

Week 9: (Oct. 17) Global climate change – geopolitical implications

MIDTERM Exam ***October 24 exam on Unit 1***

UNIT 2 GEOPOLITICS AND THE WORLD-SYSTEM

Week 10: (Oct 24) Classical geopolitics – “Family Tree”
Heartland theory and Eurasia

Week 11: (Oct. 31) German (Nazi) geopolitics
U.S. (“Democratic”) geopolitics

Week 12: (Nov. 7) Cold War US geopolitics
Post-911 American geopolitics

Week 13: (Nov. 14) Critical geopolitics - contemporary geopolitical orientations

Fall Break November 20-26

Week 14: (Nov 28) World-systems Theory – Wallerstein and Modelski

Week 15: (Dec 5). Critiques of world-systems theory and wrap-up

Monday December 12 FINAL Exam on Unit 2 - 7:30-10pm. (note the date and time)

Geography 4712

Fall 2021

Discussion Sections and Readings

Every 4th class – i.e. every second Wednesday class – will be devoted to discussion. Students will be assigned to lead in one discussion class. These classes are highlighted in yellow

NOTE: The keyword in ALL CAPS after the title is the title of the electronic reserve on Canvas

UNIT 1 NATIONALISM AND CONFLICTS

Week 1 (Aug. 22) Introduction

Reading: “War in Bosnia-Herzegovina” (DAHLMAN-TOAL)

Week 2 (August 28 discussion) Nationalism

Reading: Taylor and Flint 192-234 (TF_NATIONALISM)

Week 3: (Sep. 5)_Territory and Nationalism

Reading: Flint *Introduction to Geopolitics*. Prologue, Introduction (ch.1) & Chapter 5

Week 4 (Sep. 14 discussion) Citizenship and identity

Reading: Secor “Islamism, democracy, and the headscarf ”(HEADSCARF)
Anderson – “Imagined Communities” (IMAGINED COMMUNITIES)

Week 5 (Sep. 19) Democracy -definitions and debates

Reading: O’Loughlin “Global democratization” (GLOBAL DEMOCRATIZATION)
Zakaria “Illiberal democracy” (ILLIBERAL DEMOCRACY)

Week 6 (Sep. 28 discussion) Geography of conflicts

Reading: O’Loughlin “The political geography of conflict” (GEOGRAPHY CONFLICT)

Week 7 (Oct. 3) Nationalism and conflicts

Reading: Flint *Introduction to Geopolitics*. Chapter 5 (again)

Week 8 (Oct 10 discussion) Conflicts in the Post Cold War world

Reading: Flint *Introduction to Geopolitics*. Chapter 6

Week 9 (Oct. 17) Climate change and conflict

Reading: Flint *Introduction to Geopolitics*. Chapter 9

Midterm October 24 – in-class exam format

Unit 2 GEOPOLITICS AND THE WORLD_SYSTEM

Week 10 (Oct. 26-28 asynchronous class lectures) Classical Geopolitics

Reading: Taylor and Flint, pp. 49-62 (TF_GEOPOLITICS_1)

Taylor and Flint, pp. 74-104 (TF_GEOPOLITICS_2)

Week 11 (Oct 31) German Geopolitics

Reading: Flint *Introduction to Geopolitics*. Chapters 2 and 3

Ó Tuathail (from *Critical Geopolitics*) pp. 111-136 (GERMAN GEOPOLITICS)

Week 12 (Nov. 9 discussion) U.S. (“Democratic”) Geopolitics

Reading: O’Loughlin “Ordering the Crush Zone. (CRUSH ZONE)

Flint *Introduction to Geopolitics*. Chapter 4

Week 13 (Nov. 14) Critical Geopolitics

Reading: Flint and Taylor 65-77 (CRITICAL GEOPOLITICS)

Roberts, Secor, and Sparke, “Neoliberal Geopolitics” (NEOLIBERAL GEOPOLITICS)

Fall Break - November 18-27.

Week 14 (Nov.30 discussion) World-system theories and its critiques

Reading: Flint and Taylor, 1-65 (WORLD SYSTEMS)

Flint *Introduction to Geopolitics*. Chapter 8

Week 15 (Dec. 5) Flat-worlders versus geographers

Reading: Flint *Introduction to Geopolitics*. Chapters 7 and 10

It is imperative that all students come prepared to the discussion section with the respective reading completed. These weekly readings will be the basis for the questions on half of the examinations and quizzes.

CLASS READINGS

Anderson, B. **Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism.** New York: Verso, 1991.

Barnett, Jon, “The geopolitics of climate change.” **Geography Compass** 1 (6), 2007, 1361-1375.

Barnett, T.J. "The Pentagon's new map: It explains why we are going to war and why we will keep going to war." **Esquire** (March 2003) 174-179, 227-228.

Dahlman, C. and G Ó Tuathail "Broken Bosnia: The Localized Geopolitics of Displacement and Return in Two Bosnian Places" **Annals, Association of American Geographers** 95 (2005) 644-662.

Flint, C. **Introduction to Geopolitics** 3rd edition. London: Routledge, 2017.

Flint, C. and P.J. Taylor **Political Geography: World-system, nation-state and locality**. 5th ed. New York: Pearson, 2007.

Friedman, T. "It's a Flat World, After All" **The New York Times Magazine**, (April 3, 2005).

Kaplan, R. "The revenge of geography" **Foreign Policy** 172: May-June 2009, pp. 96-105, and responses by political geographers "Revenge of geographers" at *Foreign Policy* online

Kolstoe, P. "The sustainability and future of unrecognized quasi-states" **Journal of Peace Research** 43, 2006, 723-740.

O'Loughlin, J "Global democratization: Measuring and explaining the diffusion of democracy" In C. Barnett and M. Low (eds) **Spaces of Democracy**. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004, 23-46.

O'Loughlin, J "The political geography of conflict: Civil wars in the hegemonic shadow" in C. Flint (ed) **The Geography of War and Peace: From Death Camps to Diplomats**. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, 85-110

Ó Tuathail, G **Critical Geopolitics**. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Ó Tuathail, G "Thinking critically about geopolitics" in G. Ó Tuathail, S. Dalby and P. Routledge (eds) **The Geopolitics Reader**. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2006, pp. 1-14.

Secor, A. "Islamism, democracy, and the political production of the headscarf issue in Turkey", In G. Falah and C. Nagel (eds) **Geographies of Muslim Women**. New York: Guilford Press, 2005

Taylor, P.J. and C. Flint **Political Geography: World-system, nation-state and locality**. 4th ed. London: Longman, 2000.

Zakaria, F. "The rise of illiberal democracy." **Foreign Affairs** 76 (6), 1997, 22-43.

Exam Conflicts:

Midterm or Final examination conflicts: if **you have 3 final exams on the same day**, you can reschedule one. See the university policy on this procedure. Please don't schedule a departure from Boulder before December 12 late (day of our final 7:30pm-10pm). If you have a conflict with the midterm on October 24, please talk to the instructor.