

Mathew Coleman
Department of Geography, Ohio State

GEOGRAPHY 465 : GLOBAL POLITICS AND THE MODERN GEOPOLITICAL IMAGINATION

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*****PROPOSED NEW COURSE****

Course Rationale

International Relations (IR) is commonly understood as the disciplinary home for research on war and conflict. This was not always the case. In the first half of the 20th century, geographers were at the forefront of peace and conflict studies, albeit under the banner of "geopolitics" rather than "foreign policy studies". This changed dramatically after WWII, as a result of geographers' attempts to distance themselves from Nazi *geopolitik*. Although a small group of scholars maintained an interest in geopolitics during the 1950s and 1960s, it was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s that the discipline returned publicly to geopolitical research and teaching.

In an effort to explore this generally neglected, rich and highly contested tradition of geopolitical research, this course will survey key geopolitical thinkers and theories in Geography over the past 150 years. Several themes will be emphasized, including: a) geopolitics as the strategic visualization of global space, which we will refer to as "the modern geopolitical imagination"; b) the gradual displacement of the state as the basic unit of geopolitical analysis; c) the political, economic and social context of the geopolitics theory industry; d) the general transformation of geopolitics from a handmaiden of the state to a more critical form; and e) similarities and differences between geographical research on geopolitics and past and current research in IR.

We will cover a broad range of geopolitical theories, touching on: social Darwinism, imperial geopolitics, Nazi geopolitics, Cold War geopolitics, core-periphery relations, Marxist geopolitics in France and the US after 1968, dependency theory in Latin America, as well as more recent postmodern, post-colonial, post-Marxist and feminist approaches. As a complement to our exploration of the state-of-the-art field of "critical geopolitics", we will explore a host of contemporary geopolitical issues regarding global environmental security, resource conflict, popular geopolitical media (i.e. film and cartoons), migration, finance, terrorism, urban warfare, oil and US geostrategy, the rise of China on the world stage, and the post-9/11 politics of border control. We will also look in detail at the geopolitical thought of perhaps the two most important contemporary

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counter-geopolitical movements, of very different origin but similarly conceived in opposition to US grand strategy: the Zapatistas and *al-Qaeda*.

In addition to students majoring in Geography, Political Science, History and Comparative Studies, this course will be of central interest to students enrolled in the Security and Intelligence, International Relations and Diplomacy, and World Economy and Business specializations of the International Studies major. No background in Geography is expected or required.

General Education Curriculum requirements

GEC Rationale:

Category 7: Courses in social science help students understand human behavior and cognition, and the structures of human societies, cultures and institutions.

GEC Learning objective:

Section 3: Students develop abilities to comprehend and assess individual and social values, and recognize their importance in social problem solving and policy making.

A central point of this course is to introduce students to a generally neglected history of geopolitical thought in Geography across the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. This will be done by approaching geopolitics as an organized and systematized way of “stating the truth” about world politics grounded in the messy world of political debate and social contest. Indeed, a central aim of this course is to provide students with an account of the political, economic and socio-cultural contexts of formal geopolitical research. Students will be prompted to think about geopolitical knowledge as mediated by time- and place- specific social and institutional contexts. Students will also be encouraged to consider how geopolitical research feeds back into these contexts through the foreign policy practices it authorizes as well as through the popular knowledges that it legitimates. This will provide students with a quite different outlook on what is typically presented as the hard-nosed, scientific basis of geopolitical theory-building. Rather than an objective “nuts and bolts” account of interests in a conflict-prone world economy, students will learn that geopolitical research is best understood as a socio-cultural phenomenon mediated by social values and in turn productive of them.

Course website

The course syllabus, announcements, readings, lecture notes, exam review guides and other useful resources will be available at www.carmen.osu.edu. Log in using your OSU Internet User Name and Password and then select *Geography 465* from the list of courses for which you are currently enrolled. It is recommended that you *regularly* check the web site for updates and news.

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If you have problems logging in, check with me as soon as possible to determine whether or not you are officially enrolled. In the event that I am unable to get you logged in, you are responsible for contacting Carmen and gaining access to the class website.

Course time and location

Two 1 hr 48 min lectures per week.

Grading scale

A 93-100	C- 70-72.9
A- 90-92.9	D+ 67-69.9
B+ 87-89.9	D 60-66.9
B 83-86.9	E 0-59.9
B- 80-82.9	EN Too many absences to permit a passing grade
C+ 77-79.9	
C 73-76.9	

Course grade

Midterm exam 1 40%
Final exam 40%
Written assignment 1 10% (due Week 5)
Written assignment 2 10% (due Week 9)

The exams will consist of a mix of ID questions, short answer questions and longer essay questions. Examples of each will be discussed in detail in class.

Class protocols

This will be a rewarding and engaging class, but before we get started please read the following protocols which hold, without exception, for all students enrolled in this course. These are designed to make your learning experience more enjoyable. I take teaching very seriously, and I want you to take learning equally so.

Collegiality in the classroom requires that you **turn off your cell phone**.

Regular and **punctual attendance** is required.

I will post a condensed version of the **lecture slides** at the end of every week. This does not mean that you are free to miss class. I will present examples and details in class that will *not appear* on the lecture slides. If you miss a class, it is highly recommended that you get a full set of notes from one of your colleagues. The exams are designed explicitly for students who attend class regularly.

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Come and see me in **office hours**. I will be more than happy to answer questions and go over class material. If you cannot make posted hours, arrange an alternative appointment by email.

There are **two exams** for this course. You must successfully complete both exams in order to pass the course (i.e. miss one exam, fail the class). If you miss an exam and wish to write a make-up, you must have an original doctor's note demonstrating that you sought medical attention for an unavoidable reason. The note must include the doctor's name and a telephone number where I can contact her/him. If you miss an exam due to a medical emergency, the make-up exam must be written within one week (seven days) of the originally scheduled exam. If you miss the final exam and do not write the make-up prior to grades being posted (this may be sooner than a week), you will be awarded an "INC" grade which I will later change based on your final exam grade. *An absence related to either the midterm or final must be explained directly in person to me, not communicated via email.*

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should contact me as soon as possible in the quarter to discuss your requirements. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

Academic integrity

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research and other educational and scholarly activities. The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expects that all students have read and understand the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's *Code of Student Conduct* and in this syllabus may constitute "Academic Misconduct."

The Ohio State University's *Code of Student Conduct* (Section 3335-23-04) (oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of

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another student and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's *Code of Student Conduct* is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the COAM. If COAM determines that you have violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct* (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal. If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

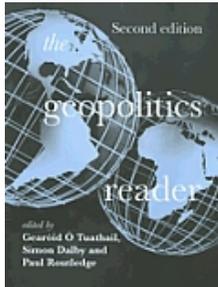
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Weekly lectures

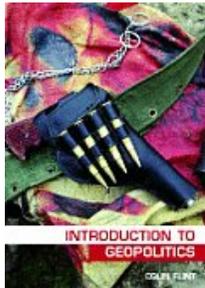
1. International Relations and Political Geographic Thought in the 20th Century: An Introduction
2. Halford Mackinder, Imperial Anxiety and the Geopolitics of Global Closure
3. Variations on a Theme: Alfred Mahan, Nicholas Spykman, Karl Haushofer
4. German *Geopolitik* and the Crisis in Political Geography
5. Spatial Scientific Geopolitics: Shatterbelts, Compression Zones and the Heartland Revisited
6. *La Géopolitique de la Gauche*, French Geopolitics after 1968
7. Immanuel Wallerstein and World Systems Theory
8. The Geopolitics of Capitalism 1: Theories of Imperialism
9. The Geopolitics of Capitalism 2: Capitalism's Contradictions
10. Midterm
11. The "New Geopolitics": States and Statecraft Through the Ages
12. Critical Geopolitics
13. Postmodern Geopolitics
14. Environmental Geopolitics
15. Feminist Geopolitics
16. The War on Terrorism and Urban Geopolitics in the 21st Century
17. The Geopolitics of Capitalism 3: Is the US an Imperial Power? the Logic of "Accumulation by Dispossession" and the War(s) in Iraq
18. Barriers, Bodies, Business: The Geopolitics of Borders
19. Law, Geopolitics and "States of Exception"
20. Anti-geopolitics

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In addition to weekly assigned articles, I have singled out two texts for the course:



Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby and Paul Routledge (eds.) *The Geopolitics Reader* (London: Routledge, 2006).



Colin Flint. *Introduction to Geopolitics* (London: Routledge, 2007).

Weekly lectures (in detail)

*Bring the texts and any additional readings with you to class *every week* so that you can consult them during lecture.

Lecture 1: International Relations and Political Geographic Thought in the 20th Century: An Introduction

Lecture theme:

There have been several attempts by political scientists to bridge the disciplinary divide between IR and Political Geography, but these attempts have been met with limited success. The goal of this lecture is to quickly survey the rich and highly contested tradition of geopolitical research in Political Geography, with the aim of highlighting similarities and differences with past and current research in International Relations.

We will start by defining “geopolitics” as a) understandings about and visualizations of geographical scale (representation) by practitioners of statecraft and b) policies underwritten by these representations (practices), usually to do explicitly with states and statecraft. Insofar as geopolitical knowledge and practice grasps the world as an interrelated whole – a “global” stage which conditions the relations of states with respect to one another – geopolitics will be presented as a quintessentially modern invention.

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We will also broach the problem of “units of analysis”, which will be a key organizing theme to the course. Early and middle 20th century geopolitical research took for granted the state as a key unit of geopolitical analysis. Late 20th century and early 21st century research has embraced a much more nuanced multi-scalar approach to world conflict, in which states are no longer the only or the primary units of analysis.

Readings:

Flint, Chapter 1

Lecture 2: Halford Mackinder, Imperial Anxiety and the Geopolitics of Global Closure

Lecture theme:

Although not the first geopolitical thinker (Swedish scholar Johan Kjellén coined the term in 1899), Halford Mackinder is perhaps the most important. Indeed, his daring theory of global geopolitics – based on the “geographical closure of global space”, the “post-Columbian epoch” and the “heartland” – conditioned the study of geopolitics in Political Geography for the remainder of the 20th century. In this class we will review the major elements of Mackinder’s thought and take a detailed look at his “Natural Seats of Power” map. We will also explore the general culture and political economic context of his research, focusing in particular on the Scramble for Africa, debate over the imperial tariff and British imperial anxiety at the turn of the century. His engagement with John Hobson on the question of imperialism will also be broached, in order to prepare the ground for lecture 8.

Readings: Mackinder, “The Geographical Pivot of History” (1904) in Ó Tuathail *et al.*

Colin Gray (1998). “Sir Halford Mackinder and Geopolitics” in The Geopolitics of Super Power (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press).

Lecture 3: Variations on a Theme: the “Globalizing” Visions of Alfred Mahan, Nicholas Spykman and Karl Haushofer

Lecture theme:

Mackinder’s theory of the heartland proved extremely persuasive for his generation of geopolitical thinkers. This class will refine the concept of heartland geopolitics by looking to some of Mackinder’s peers. In particular, we will examine Mahan’s theory of sea-power, Spykman’s early theorization of containment, as well as Haushofer’s melding of Mackinder with Ratzel on the question of lebensraum. Attention will be paid to how this scholarship was

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conditioned by Social Darwinism and how these thinkers saw geography through the lens of environmental determinism.

Readings:

Gerry Kearns (2003). "Imperial Geopolitics: Geopolitical Visions at the Dawn of the American Century" in John A. Agnew, Katharine Mitchell and Gearóid Ó Tuathail (eds.) A Companion to Political Geography (Oxford: Blackwell), pp. 173-186.

Lecture 4: German *Geopolitik* and the Crisis in Political Geography

Lecture theme:

In the aftermath of World War Two, by virtue of geopolitics' association with the Third Reich, there was significant disagreement in Political Geography over what "proper" research should look like in the field. Two basic approaches surfaced. In the immediate post-war context, one group led by regional geographers supported an idiographic or "encyclopedic" approach. We will examine how this played out in terms of Hartshorne's functionalist and areal differentiation approach to geopolitical study. Beginning in the 1960s, nomothetic/quantitative geography gained ground and came to eventually displace idiographic research. We will take a brief look at this second school of thought in order to lay the groundwork for Lecture 5 on spatial scientific geopolitics.

This class will also examine the ascendance of International Relations as a discipline after World War Two. In many ways, the end of World War Two and the beginning of the Cold War marked the end of Political Geography's prominence in the field of geopolitics, and the beginning of an era of marginalization.

Readings:

Haushofer, "Why Geopolitik?" (1942) in Ó Tuathail *et al.*
Hitler, "Eastern Orientation or Eastern Policy?" (1942) in Ó Tuathail *et al.*
Bowman, "Geography versus Geopolitics" (1942) in Ó Tuathail *et al.*
Haushofer, "Defense of German Geopolitics" (1948) in Ó Tuathail *et al.*

Geoffrey Parker (1998). "War and the Fall of *Geopolitik*" in Geopolitics: Past, Present and Future (London: Pinter), pp. 26-45.

Lecture 5: Spatial Scientific Geopolitics: Shatterbelts, Compression Zones and the Heartland Revisited

Lecture theme:

Whereas pre-WW2 political geographers had largely approached geopolitics through the lens of environmental determinism and a global-scale geography of natural resources, post-war IR scholars re-mapped the globe in terms of a bipolar geography of threat centered primarily on states. In this class we will explore the main points of difference between an “imperial” and a “Cold War” geopolitics, focusing explicitly on the question of the state as a basic unit of analysis.

One major exception, albeit still within the marginalized field of Political Geography, was Cohen’s spatial scientific analysis of world conflict. Eschewing a simple state centered mapping of world politics, he resuscitated Mackinder’s heartland map and sought to explain conflict and war in terms of overarching global geography of natural resources and seats of power. We will look in detail at Cohen’s “shatterbelt” mapping of the globe and compare it with Mackinder’s “Natural Seats of Power” map from lectures 1 and 2. We will also look at Henrikson’s distance-decay model of power in order to get a handle on spatial science geopolitics.

Readings:

Choice of either

Alan K. Henrikson (2002). Distance and Foreign Policy: A Political Geography Approach. International Political Science Review 23(4), pp. 437-466.

or

Saul Cohen (2003). Geopolitical Realities and United States Foreign Policy. Political Geography 22(1), pp. 1-33.

Gearóid Ó Tuathail, “A Geopolitical Discourse with Robert McNamara” (2000) in Ó Tuathail *et al.*

Lecture 6: Immanuel Wallerstein and World Systems Theory

Lecture theme:

Starting in the 1970s, Anglo-American political geographers began to find fault with the then dominant spatial science paradigm. Working largely on the basis of Marxist political economy, political geographers criticized spatial science for its blasé attitude toward questions of power as well as its questionable assumption that all spaces and places could be analyzed through like quantitative

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measurements. We will review this debate in relation to the research discussed in lecture 5. In addition, we will introduce the basics of Wallerstein's "world systems" approach to world geopolitics, and in particular his exchange-based core—periphery—semi-periphery mapping of global power. We will pay particular attention to political geographers' development of the concept of scale to talk about world geopolitics, and how this compared with the then dominant focus on the state in International Relations.

Readings:

Flint, Chapter 2

Peter Taylor (1982). A Materialist Framework for Political Geography. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 7(1), 15-34.

Lecture 7: <i>La Géopolitique de la Gauche</i>, French Geopolitics after 1968
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Lecture theme:

<<La géographie, ca sert, d'abord, à faire la guerre.>> Yves Lacoste's provocatively titled 1976 book – which translates as "The Purpose of Geography is, Above All, to Make War" – marked the return of geopolitics to France in the post-World War Two era, and more specifically, in the aftermath of the May 1968 protests. It was also, and more importantly, a major indictment of Political Geography. In it he claimed that geographers, and particularly geopoliticians, had too readily put themselves at the service of practitioners of statecraft, and in so doing had gutted geography of its critical edge. Helping to form the journal Hérodote, Lacoste and others reinvigorated a "radical geopolitics" which built on the earlier work of French geographer Paul Vidal de la Blache. The so-called <<l'esprit vidalienne>> focused on anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggle, and took to heart anarchist and ecological critiques of the state and war. This class will look at Lacoste's notion of geopolitics, and in particular to the way in which he shifted geopolitics from the study of state struggle to an analysis of territory and territoriality. We will also review Lacoste's enlargement of geopolitics beyond foreign policy studies proper, as well as criticisms of the later work published in Hérodote. We will also open up the question of whether or not geopolitical study should be in service to the state or an independent force. Lacoste himself spoke of the difference as one between a <<discipline asservie>> (servile research) and a <<discipline engagé>> (objective research). We will compare this turn in French geopolitics to the Anglo-American revolt against spatial science discussed in the previous lecture.

Readings:

Yves Lacoste (1973). An Illustration of Geographical Warfare: Bombing of the Dikes on the Red River, North Vietnam. Antipode 5(2), pp.1-13.

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Yves Lacoste (1984). Geopolitics and Foreign Policy. *SAIS Review* 4(2), pp. 213-227.

Written assignment 1 – DUE IN CLASS AT THE BEGINNING OF LECTURE 8

So far in the class we have discussed various geopolitical thinkers' strategic visualization of global space in terms of a gradually unfolding "modern geopolitical imagination". Does the phrase "modern geopolitical imagination" overstate the similarities and underplay the differences in the geopolitical literatures we have reviewed so far? Or is there something relatively consistent across these approaches that deserve their typification as "modern"? Answer this question with respect to 2 or more geopolitical thinkers/theorists.

Write in clear and complete sentences. Organize your thoughts into clearly differentiated paragraphs. **500 word response required. This essay must be typed and stapled.** Put the exact word count at the bottom of your document. This is not a lot of space so you must be specific in your argument and avoid repeating points.

Lecture 8: The Geopolitics of Capitalism 1: Theories of Imperialism

Lecture theme:

Imperialism was a major interest for the French Hérodote school of geopolitics, as discussed in the previous lecture. In this class, we will examine major Marxist-Leninist theories of imperialism with the aim of interrogating their "geopolitical imagination" – or how they imagine the operation of power as a spatial problematic. Rudolf Hilferding, Rosa Luxemburg, Nikolai Bukharin and V. I. Lenin will be at the center of our attention. We will also examine a variety of dependency theorists such as André Gunder Frank on the "development of underdevelopment" and Samir Amin on "unequal development".

Readings:

No reading

Lecture 9: The Geopolitics of Capitalism 2: The Geopolitics of Uneven Development and Finance

Lecture theme:

Does it make sense to talk about different realms of "geopolitics" and "geoeconomics"? By looking to the work of Marxist political geographers, we will

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explore the possibility that treating wars as “geopolitical” and trade-related issues as “geoeconomic” is an unhelpful parsing of politics and economics into different fields of research. In our review of David Harvey’s work on the contradictions of capitalism and its “spatial fixes”, we will outline a model of state geopolitics based on uneven development. Topics to be covered include: the core features of the capitalist mode of production, the overaccumulation/underconsumption crisis, and state-based attempts to temporally and spatially displace capitalist economic and political crisis. We will also briefly review “imperial” interpretations of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis and the US role in perpetuating uneven development in the region.

Readings:

David Harvey (1985). “The Geopolitics of Capitalism” in D. Gregory and J. Urry (eds.) Social Relations and Spatial Structures (London: Macmillan), pp.128–163.

Robert Wade (2003). The Invisible Hand of the American Empire. *Ethics and International Affairs* 17(2), pp.77-88.

Lecture 10: Midterm Exam

Lecture 11: The “New Geopolitics”: States and Statecraft Through the Ages

Lecture theme:

How can we think about states and statecraft in the world economy? Are states incontrovertible and never-changing “containers of power”, as often presupposed in mainstream research on world politics? Is statecraft a coherent project? In this class, rather than assuming the state as a given, we will attempt to historicize it. We will also attempt to “unbundle” the concept of state power. Focusing on Agnew’s “Three Ages of Geopolitics” argument, as well as Mann’s “network” approach to state power, we will examine how the “state”, too often taken-for-granted as an unproblematic unit of analysis for world politics, is not a static organization, and moreover, undergoes constant change in terms of its territoriality or ability to exercise power over space. We will look in detail at 4 swaths of geopolitical time: the 1815-1875 Concert of Europe, the 1875-1945 period of imperial geopolitics, the 1945-1989 Cold War, as well as contemporary “postmodern” geopolitics. In each period we will disclose a dominant scale of economic accumulation and political regulation, with the aim of destabilizing the territorial behemoth called the “state” as well as what counts as “sovereignty”. We will also pose the question of whether or not the state is still relevant to world politics – a question which will guide much of the coming lectures.

Readings:

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John Agnew (2003). "Visualizing Global Space" in Geopolitics – Re-visioning World Politics (London: Routledge), pp.15-34.

Lecture 12: Critical Geopolitics

Lecture theme:

Critical geopolitics as a research field emerged during the re-militarization of superpower relations in the early 1980s. At least in the Anglo-American world, it marked a new period of sustained inter-disciplinary research and writing between political geographers and "critical security studies" scholars in IR. Critical geopolitics' concern for the "social production" of geopolitical knowledge and practice spurred a very important reformulation of the stuff of geopolitics. In particular, that the exercise of foreign policy might be a power rooted in a specific (and contestable) knowledge about the world – and not merely an objective, strategic response to an already conflict prone world economy – allowed the hard-nosed, no-nonsense *realpolitik* of practitioners and academics of statecraft to be rethought as a mode of political theorizing about the spatial and temporal horizons of political community and identity. In this class we will explore the basic issues tackled by critical geopoliticians, and situate it within the 1990s postmodern turn in academia. Particular attention will be paid to the centrality of "orientalism" to modern geopolitical practice and to the cartoon industry's role in "translating" geopolitical practice for the masses.

Case study:

The US covert war in Central America, the "Second Cold War" of the 1980s

Readings:

Flint, Chapters 3 and 4

Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "Thinking Critically About Geopolitics" in Ó Tuathail *et al.*

Gearóid Ó Tuathail and John Agnew, "Geopolitics and Discourse" (1992), in Ó Tuathail *et al.*

Lecture 13: Postmodern Geopolitics

Lecture theme:

Building off the argument in lecture 11, we will examine in detail what some authors have called a new period of unruly "postmodern" geopolitics. Characterized in various ways as fractured, unpredictable, borderless, disorderly and turbulent, "postmodern" geopolitics concerns a world of "failed states",

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uncontrolled migrations, global flows of production and finance (in which corporations are at least as important as states), terrorist groups with little or no territorial ambitions or affiliations, supranational institutions, fundamentalisms, ethnic and linguistic separatisms, as well as World Bank and IMF discipline. Although “postmodern” geopolitics is typically said to herald the general dismantlement of state-based structures of governance, we will examine the ongoing relevance of states and statecraft to world politics. We will also look at the Revolution in Military Affairs at the heart of current US geostrategy, and the difference between so-called “new” and “old” wars.

Readings:

Tim Luke and Gearóid Ó Tuathail (1998). “Global Flowmations, Local Fundamentalisms, and Fast Geopolitics – America in an Accelerating World Order” in Andrew Herod, Gearóid Ó Tuathail and Susan Roberts (eds.) Unruly World – Globalization, Governance and Geography (London: Routledge), pp. 72-94.

Mary Kaldor (2002). “Beyond Militarism, Arms Races and Arms Control”. Essay on the Social Science Research Council “After September 11” website @ <http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/kaldor.htm>

Dorothy Denning (2002). “Is Cyber Terror Next?” Essay on the Social Science Research Council “After September 11” website @ <http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/denning.htm>

See maps in Thomas Barnett. (2005). The Pentagon’s New Map (New York: Berkley Books).

Lecture 14: Environmental Geopolitics

Lecture theme:

After the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, geopolitics scholars in political geography and IR began to look beyond the battlefield of superpower conflict for other sources of geopolitical conflict. As a result, environmental degradation – in terms of its possible contribution to political unrest, economic collapse, urban conflict, genocide and migration – took a prominent place in the geopolitics literature. In addition to a quick look at popular representations of environmental threat (see Kaplan’s article in Atlantic Monthly), we will examine scholarship from two major research centers established in the mid-1990s on the topic of ecological security – the Woodrow Wilson Environmental Change and Security Program and the University of Toronto’s Project on Environment, Population and Security. We will pay specific attention to the geographical assumptions underpinning the so-called “conflict-scarcity” thesis, which underwrote much of this research.

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Case study:

Chiapas, Sierra Leone

Readings:

Simon Dalby, "Introduction to Part Four", in Ó Tuathail *et al.*
Robert D. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy" (1994), in Ó Tuathail *et al.*
Simon Dalby, "Reading Robert Kaplan's Coming Anarchy" (1996), in Ó Tuathail *et al.*

Please also visit and peruse the University of Toronto's Project on Environment, Population and Security at <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/pes/eps.htm> and the Woodrow Wilson Environmental Change and Security Program, at http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=topics.home&topic_id=1413

TURN INTO TWO LECTURES: FIRST LECTURE ON MIGRATION, SECOND LECTURE ON POLAR ICE MELT AND COMEMRCIAL ROUTES

ON MIGRATION: Myers 2001 on Environmental Refugees
Climate Changes and International Security: Paper from the High Representative and the European Commission to the EC. March 2008. Javier Solana and Benita Ferrero-Waldner

ON GLOBAL WARMING AND ICE ROUTES: see sources forwarded by EMT
May 2008.

Lecture 15: Feminist Geopolitics

Lecture theme:

What counts as geopolitics and where are we likely to find it? Recent work by feminist political geographers suggests that in mainstream and critical research alike it is typically macro-scale conflict which registers as "geopolitical". The result is that a whole slew of household-scale "messy, fleshy" issues are neglected, including among other things the politics of reproduction and rape. We will review feminist geopolitics scholars insistence that geopolitics is an embodied practice, that "state security" and "human security" are not analogous, and that geopolitics oftentimes boils down to violent and unequal relationships between people at a local scale. These insights will be contrasted to the typically "globalizing" and "abstracted" visions of conflict and strategy forwarded by most geopolitics scholars. We will also review the gendering of geopolitical conflict by practitioners of statecraft.

Readings:

Mathew Coleman
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Jennifer Hyndman, "Beyond Either/Or – A Feminist Analysis of September 11", in Ó Tuathail *et al.*

Cindi Katz (2001). The State Goes Home: Local Hyper-Vigilance of Children and the Global Retreat from Social Reproduction. Social Justice 28(3), pp. 47-56.

Flint, Chapter 8

Lecture 16: The War on Terrorism and Urban Geopolitics in the 21st Century

Lecture theme:

Building on the emphasis in lecture 15 on expanding what counts as geopolitics, we will examine the urban context of contemporary geopolitical practice. Our starting point will be that geopolitical conflict takes place somewhere, and that geopolitical thinkers tend to ignore the specific qualities of where conflict occurs through recourse to an abridged and vague notion of the "battlefield". In other words, although geopolitics obviously takes place at various "subnational" sites, it is invariably referred to by mainstream geopolitics thinkers as a "national" scale problematic. Our examples will include the militarization of urban American life after 9/11, refugee camps in Lebanon, the Yugoslav wars, as well as the "politics of unbuilding" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Case study:

Israel-Palestine, Lebanon, the Yugoslav wars

Readings:

Flint, Chapter 7

Derek Gregory (2004). "Defiled Cities" in The Colonial Present (Oxford: Blackwell), pp. 107-143.

Stephen Graham (2004). "Constructing Urbicide by Bulldozer in the Occupied Territories" or "Cities as Strategic Sites" in Stephen Graham (ed.) Cities, War and Terrorism (Oxford: Blackwell), pp. 31-53 or pp. 192-213.

See also maps in Dominique Vidal and Philippe Rekacewicz (2007). "(Urban Planning) Jerusalem: Whose Very Own and Golden City?" in Le Monde Diplomatique (February).

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Lecture 17: The Geopolitics of Capitalism 3: Is the US an Imperial Power? the Logic of “Accumulation by Dispossession” and the War(s) in Iraq

Lecture theme:

Is the US an imperial power? How do we explain the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, given the failure to locate weapons of mass destruction? This class will seek to answer both questions by reviewing current scholarship in political geography on the “global oil spigot” thesis. Reviewing the rise of China as a superpower, we will explore how the relocation of capital from the US to China and Asia signals a shift in economic power and how the current war in Iraq can be considered an attempt to stave off American hegemonic decline through control of the Middle East oil fields. We will also consider the possible unintended consequences of this action, such as America’s alienation on the world stage.

Case study:

1990 Gulf War, current war in Iraq and Afghanistan

Reading:

Arundhati Roy, “Instant Mix Imperial Democracy”, in Ó Tuathail *et al.*
Michael Klare, “No Escape from Dependency” (2004), in Ó Tuathail *et al.*
Michael Renner, “Oil and Blood, The Way to Take Over the World”, in Ó Tuathail *et al.*

James Fallows (2007). China Makes, the World Takes. Atlantic Monthly (July/August), available on-line at <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200707>

John Bellamy Foster (2006). The Geopolitics of American Empire. Monthly Review 57(8), available on-line at <http://monthlyreview.org/0106jbf.htm>

Lecture 18: Barriers, Bodies, Business: The Geopolitics of Borders

Lecture theme:

Borders between states are at once economic “bridges” and security “barriers”. In other words, borders serve to both deregulate and increasingly scrutinize crossborder movements of people, goods, money, *etc.* How do these two projects work alongside one another? Are they contradictory or compatible? This class will explore these and other aspects of contemporary border geopolitics through an account of the paradoxical militarization and opening of the Mexico-US border since the mid-1990s. Specific attention will be paid to the tussle between trade and security at the border after 9/11. Topics covered include the origins and development of Operation Gatekeeper, NAFTA and the “neoliberalization” of the border, the maquiladora economy, vigilante groups, as

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well as crossborder migration as a security issue after 9/11. We will also review the state of thinking in Political Geography on borders and security.

Case study:

Mexico-US border militarization

Reading: Flint, Chapter 6

Joseph Nevins (2002). "Searching for Security in an Age of Intensifying Globalization" in Operation Gatekeeper (London: Routledge), pp. 165-188.

Melissa Wright (2006). "Introduction" in Disposable Women and Other Myths of the Capitalism (London: Routledge), pp. 1-23.

See also maps on border deaths at <http://www.uh.edu/cir/death.htm> and at <http://www.stopgatekeeper.org/English/maps.htm>

Lecture 19: Law, Geopolitics and "States of Exception"

Lecture theme:

In mainstream Political Geography and IR theory, geopolitics is typically discussed as the antithesis of the orderly and non-violent realm of law. Among other things, this distinction allows foreign policy politics to be kept apart from domestic policy politics, and for domestic policy spaces to be treated as an exception to the anarchic qualities of world politics. A brief lecture will investigate the exceptionality of law to geopolitics, by looking to how theories of geopolitics have consistently discounted the geopolitical qualities of law.

The lecture will be followed by a break-out group discussion. (Smaller classes will be held as a seminar, led by the instructor. Larger classes will be divided into groups with team leaders. Instructor and TA will circulate.) The topic concerns so-called "states of exception", or the suspension of law in the war on terrorism. Via group discussion of Butler's article, students will look at the relation between law and geopolitics through the lenses of Guantánamo Bay, wire taps and surveillance, expedited deportation, military tribunals, *etc.*

Judith Butler (2006). "Indefinite Detention" in Precarious Life (London: Verso), pp. 50-100.

**Written assignment 2 – DUE IN CLASS AT THE BEGINNING OF LECTURE
20**

On the one hand, it has been said that the globalization of production and finance, and thus the dense interpenetration of peoples and places across the globe, has resulted in the “death of geopolitics”. On the other hand, it has been said that the major geopolitical faultlines of the global political economy still very much revolve around Mackinder’s almost 100 year old tripartite mapping of the world. Based on the second half of the course, what do you make of either position? Can we speak of the “death of geopolitics”? Or is the world pretty much the same geostrategic space that Mackinder sought to unravel at the turn of last century? Or, are the terms of this debate themselves misleading in terms of understanding contemporary global geopolitics?

Write in clear and complete sentences. Organize your thoughts into clearly differentiated paragraphs. **500 word response required. This essay must be typed and stapled.** Put the exact word count at the bottom of your document. This is not a lot of space so you must be specific in your argument and avoid repeating points.

Lecture 20: Anti-geopolitics

Lecture theme:

What about resistance to geopolitical power? In this last class we will explore the geopolitical thought of two important contemporary anti-geopolitical movements (the Zapatistas and *al-Qaeda*), as suggested by Paul Routledge in The Geopolitics Reader. The class will briefly sketch out the historical trajectory of both groups in relation to US power. Students will read original texts from each of these groups. Based on these readings we will ask if and how we might distinguish geopolitics from anti-geopolitics. Thought will be given to the ways in which geopolitical counter-movements both challenge and reproduce the “modern geopolitical imagination” as sketched out in lectures 11 and 12. We will close the course with a recap of geopolitical thought and practice across the 20th century, and into the 21st.

Readings:

Paul Routledge, “Introduction to Part Five”, in Ó Tuathail *et al.*

Bruce Lawrence (ed.) (2006). Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden (London: Verso).

Subcommandante Marcos. (2003). Tomorrow Begins Today: An Invitation to an Insurrection” in We Are Everywhere (London: Verso).