

GEOG 4712: POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

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Course Introduction

This course focuses on international and global perspectives within political geography, not 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 globalization and its outcomes. 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 sub-Saharan Africa) are used to illustrate ideas from lectures and readings. Conceptually, the course includes attention to conventional issues like geopolitics and conflict while also addressing theoretical questions about the 'hyphen' between 'nations' and 'states'. The course seeks to develop critical thinking about such explicitly spatial themes as these while challenging 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 archives; cartographic artifacts and novel geographic visualizations are also key components in the course.

In Part I, the class considers imperialism and geopolitics using classical and critical perspectives. This 'History and Theory' portion provides essential background on keywords and big ideas. Accordingly, the course surveys grand chessboard and great game geopolitics before considering other forms of power. So, keywords including state, scale as well as "geopolitics" itself and notions of strategic value are the prime areas of study initially. Empirically, cases including Germany, Ghana, Great Britain, India, Russia, the Soviet Union, Sudan, and the United States are used to illustrate competing geopolitical perspectives and strategic assumptions. Next, critical questions about the Cold War and ideas about containment strategies are presented in terms of their geographic components and territorial designs. In Part II, a shift to particular problems including: ethno-nationalism, uneven development, civil war, resource conflict, state failure, food security, transboundary disputes, world-systems analyses, and neoliberal urbanization are the focus. Overall, readings, lectures, and recitations aim to introduce, conceptualize, and criticize big ideas and durable processes affecting global affairs and local outcomes at multiple scales.

Recitation and Performance

In response to requests, this course was restructured in 1996 into two-lectures/one-recitation per week. This plan is successful when all students come to discussion sections having read the material, completed the 'key terms and concepts' worksheet, and prepared questions or 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 23. Details about the format and requirements of the research paper will also be given in recitation and we will take attendance and give regular quizzes. Success in this course is a function of the well-proven formula: attendance, staying current with readings, and asking for help when needed. Use of lecture notes from the website is no substitute for attendance.

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. *The 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_s12/geog4712_S12/homepage.html 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.

Grades, Exams, Deadlines

Grades are assigned on the basis of 25% midterm examination; 25% final examination; 25% term paper; 25% recitation performance. It is imperative all students come prepared to recitations with readings completed. The same readings will be the basis for the questions on over half of the examinations, with the emphasis on key terms and core concepts. The midterm will be **Monday, March 05 @ 19:00**. Written paper proposals for the term paper are due **Friday, March 16 @ 17:00**. Final term papers must be submitted by **Friday, April 13 @ 17:00**. The final exam will be **Wednesday, May 09 @ 19:30**.

Course Description

First, “political geography” and its approaches to boundaries, states, and territories are defined. Next, a brief history of “geopolitics”, particularly as it emerged in ‘the West’ alongside colonization is outlined. Here, arguments from the Social Darwinist school, including environmental determinism and organic states, are introduced to contextualize traditional thinking and geopolitical reasoning. Such arguments are also considered using modern critical frameworks and are introduced alongside debates about U.S. power relative to German *geopolitik* and subsequent geostrategy during the Cold War. Looking at the post-Cold War world, we then examine uneven outcomes associated with conflict, displacement, and food. Here, we consider how various experts understand recent actions around the Black Sea shores, where the EU, former Soviet states, and NATO still struggle despite the “end of history” and the rise of geoeconomics. Such questions about Europe’s limits and Turkey’s place in the world are used as illustrations in this section about the past, present, and future study of geopolitics.

After the midterm, the focus shifts to ‘topics and themes’ to illustrate the geography of global change. This portion pays particular to how macro-level political processes affect micro-level population outcomes. Using different datasets and research methods, the aim is to sharpen understandings about challenges within particular world regions and networks of opportunities across spatial scales. This approach to the production, consumption, and circulation of ideas, goods, and people asks how market rules and development schemes affect livelihoods and landscapes in different places. Next, analyses of reasons why nationalisms and conflicts seem to be booming, literally and figuratively, despite decrees about globalization’s “flatteners”, the “end of the nation-state”, and the “revenge of geography” are presented. Finally, the material re-considers 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 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* helps dramatically to acquire (or develop) knowledge of global conflicts and current events. *The International Crisis Group*, *World Press Review*, *ReliefWeb*, *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, and *International Relations and Security Network* provide up-to-date, nuanced, transparent sources of background material and localized analysis of conflict and displacement worldwide.

fine print:

Honor Code and Plagiarism

The *College of Arts and Sciences* has an Honor Code. All students of the *University of Colorado at Boulder* are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the *Honor Code Council* (honor@colorado.edu). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion) <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode>.

Turnitin.com

A key element of this code is that CU students will not plagiarize (using the words and thoughts of others as your own). As part of efforts to control plagiarism and ensure submitted works from students are fully their own, the University has subscribed to TurnItIn.com. It is the instructor's intent to submit student papers in GEOG 4712 to TurnItIn.com and to give a grade of F in the course to any student in violation of the CU Honor Code. Note that you cannot submit the same paper or part of a paper for two different classes without the express permission of both instructors. If a student has any questions about this procedure or about any matter regarding proper citation and the Honor Code, s/he should talk to a TA or the instructor.

Disability Accommodations

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.

Religious Accommodation

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. If you believe that you might have such a conflict, please see the instructor or a TA.

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 AND ALL UNRELATED COMPUTER PROGRAMS

Course Bibliography

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Course Summary

Date	Lecture Topic	Assignment Due	Reading Due
01.18	Course Introduction, Materials, Overview	--	----
01.23	Keywords I: 'Political Geography'	Recitation Sheet I	Kaplan + Critics; The Economist
01.25	Keywords II: Nature, Frontier, Territory		Paasi; Myth of Continents
01.30	Keywords III: Nation, State, Sovereignty	Recitation Sheet II	Kuus + Agnew
02.01	Classical Geopolitics I: The Eurasian Pivot		Agnew 3 Ages; TF Geopolitics I
02.06	Classical Geopolitics II: US, 1898-1945	Recitation Sheet III	Johnson; TF Geopolitics II
02.08	Critical Geopolitics I: Nazi Germany		O'Tuathail Intro + Germans
02.13	Classical Geopolitics III: Cold War	Recitation Sheet IV	Agnew 'New Age'; O'Loughlin
02.15	Critical Geopolitics II: Empire?		Barnett; Ignatieff
02.20	Critical Geopolitics III: Still Relevant?	Recitation Sheet V	Why We Fight; Neoliberal Geopolitics
02.22	Case Study I: EU Geopolitics		Tesfahuney; Zielonka
02.27	Case Study II: Turkey	Recitation Sheet VI	Secor
02.29	Case Study III: Food, Famine, Land Grabs		Essex; Grain.org
03.05		MIDTERM EXAM	
03.07	Globalization I: Hot, Flat, and Crowded?	Recitation Sheet VII	Friedman; Sachs
03.12	Globalization II: Theorizing Unevenness	Recitation Sheet VIII	Grant + Nijman; Harvey
03.14	Globalization III: World Systems Theory		TF World-Systems: 1-65
03.19	Globalization IV: World Systems Critiques	Recitation Sheet IX	Taylor 'Monstrous Hybrid'; Watts
03.21	Globalization V: Neoliberal Urbanization		Davis "Slums"; Portes + Roberts
04.02	Groupism I: Theories of Nationalism	Recitation Sheet X	T+ F Nationalism
04.04	Groupism II: Applications of Nationalism		Anderson
04.09	Groupism III: Ethno-national Conflicts	Recitation Sheet XI	Davis "Buda's Wagon"
04.11	Groupism IV: Geography of Conflicts		Human Security Report
04.16	Governance I: Civil Wars + Failed States	Recitation Sheet XII	FP Failed States Index
04.18	Governance II: Resource Wars		Le Billon; UNEP
04.23	Governance III: Water Wars	Recitation Sheet XIII	Harris
04.25	Governance IV: Borders + Conflict		Newman
04.30	Governance V: 'Places that Don't Exist'	Recitation Sheet XIV	Kolsto
05.02	Conclusion: Revenge?		Kaplan (redux) + Critics
05.09		FINAL EXAM	