

The University of Western Ontario  
Department of Geography

**GEOPOLITICS**  
GEOGRAPHY 2142B  
2013

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Lecture:	Monday	1:30 to 3:30 Room UCC 63
Tutorial:	Wednesday	2:30 to 3:30 Room UCC 63
Office Hours:	Wednesday	2:30 to 4:00 or by appointment

According to the Calendar description, Geography 2142B consists of “**An exploration of the geographical setting in which political decisions are taken.** Hence, we will discuss the rise and fall of centers of power, supranational entities (UN, EU), ethnic wars, and the vulnerability of international boundaries. In this syllabus you will find detailed information about the organization and requirements of this course.

### **Introduction**

The subject matter of geopolitics is the investigation of how political decisions are conditioned by **geographical settings**, and maps are its essential instrument. In spatial terms, geopolitics is the study of boundaries and areas. In conceptual terms, geopolitics comprises the study of international relations and the outcome of power struggles, at local and global scales. It explores **events** such as the emergence of new states, the fragmentation of countries (e.g. the former Czechoslovakia, and the former Yugoslavia), and regional conflicts affecting several countries. The most important and long-lasting **geopolitical event** of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the Cold War (from 1945 to the 1990s). We will analyze the evolution of the Cold War to compare and contrast it to the so-called “war on terror.”

### **Objectives**

You will be acquainted with the history of geopolitics as an academic discipline, and the tenets of the international order. This groundwork will allow us to analyze contemporary aspects of security and conflict, the concept of state sovereignty, and the uneven geopolitics of human rights. We will discuss the West’s sponsorship of capitalist dictatorships during the Cold War years in Latin America and beyond; the globalization of local wars (NATO and UN involvement in local conflicts), and the uses and abuses of the term terrorism by governments and the media. **Emphasis will be placed on the Cold War’s origins and consequences, and the 46 years of military occupation of Palestine and its impact on international relations. Maps are our main tool of investigation.**

## Course content

We will study the history, concepts, and logic of geopolitical investigation illustrated by a series of maps and atlases. As an academic discipline, geopolitics combines the analysis of **ideas, facts and methods**. Hence we will study all these elements (ideas, facts and methods) in order to understand the impact of **geopolitical practice** in the world stage. Throughout the course we will emphasize two aspects of geopolitics: the analysis of statecraft and the theoretical **basis of such practice**.

## Required READING MATERIALS

- Dodds, Klaus, *Geopolitics: A Very Short Introduction*, 2007, Oxford University Press
- *Geopolitics Reader, 2013*, compiled by Dr. Mireya Folch-Serra
- Maps, atlases, readings and statistics on Palestine (in Map Library)

## Recommended: READING MATERIALS

- Agnew, J. 1998 *Geopolitics: re-visioning world politics*. London and New York: Routledge
- Agnew, John & Virginie Mamadouh 2008 (Eds.) *Politics: critical essays in human geography* Aldershot ; Burlington, VT : Ashgate
- Blouet, Brian W. 2001 *Geopolitics and globalization in the twentieth century*. London: Reaktion
- Dittmer, Jason 2010 *Popular culture, geopolitics, and identity*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers
- Dinges, John 2004 *The Condor years: how Pinochet and his allies brought terrorism to three continents*. New York: New Press
- Farish, Matthew 2010 *The contours of America's cold war*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press
- Flint, Colin 2005 *The geography of war and peace: from death camps to diplomats*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press
- Graham, Stephen 2004 *Cities, war, and terrorism: towards an urban geopolitics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing
- Ingram, Alan & Klaus Dodds (Eds.) 2009 *Spaces of security and insecurity: geographies of the War on Terror*. Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate
- Livingstone, Grace 2009 *America's backyard: the United States and Latin America from the Monroe Doctrine to the War on Terror*. London: New York: Zed Books
- Nelson-Pallmeyer, Jack 2001 *School of assassins: guns, greed, and globalization* Rev. and expanded ed. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books
- O'Loughlin, J. 1994 (Ed) *Dictionary of Geopolitics*. Westport, Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press
- O Tuathail, G. Dalby, S. 1998 *Rethinking Geopolitics*. London and New York: Routledge
- Pain, Rachel & Susan J. Smith (Eds.) 2008 *Fear: critical geopolitics and everyday life*. Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate
- Schmitz, David F. 1999 *Thank God they're on our side : the United States and right-wing dictatorships, 1921-1965*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press
- Walberg, Eric 2011 *Postmodern imperialism: geopolitics and the great game* Atlanta, GA: Clarity Press

<b>DATE</b>	<b>LECTURE TOPIC</b>	<b>Assigned Reading</b>
<b>Jan. 7</b>	<b>Introduction: Course content</b>	<b>Geopolitics</b> Chap. 1
<b>Jan. 14</b>	Geopolitics: an Overview	Reader: “Geopolitics: Histories, Discourses, and Mediation”
<b>Jan. 21</b>	The Three Ages of Geopolitics	<b>Geopolitics</b> Chap. 2 and Chap. 5
<b>Jan. 28</b>	The Cold War	Reader: “Cold War”
<b>Feb. 4</b>	Right-Wing Dictatorships in Latin America	Reader: “Our Sons of Bitches”; “The Condor Years”; “School of the Americas and Terror in El Salvador”
<b>Feb. 11</b>	<b>Mid-term examination (two hours)</b>	
	<b>Feb. 17-23 READING WEEK</b>	
<b>Feb. 25</b>	Geopolitics, Terrorism and Identity	Reader: “Geographies of Terrorism”; <b>Geopolitics</b> Chap 4
<b>March 4</b>	Geopolitics of control in the West Bank	Reader: “Walls as Technologies of Government”
<b>March 11</b>	The Geography of a Palestinian State	Reader: “Middle East”
<b>March 18</b>	Critical Geopolitics	Reader: “Analyzing Newspapers”
<b>March 25</b>	Invasions in the Middle East and the Arab Revolts	Reader: “The Mess They Made”
<b>April 1</b>	Popular Geopolitics	<b>Geopolitics</b> Chap 6; Chap. 3
<b>April 8</b>	Course review	

(Subject to minor changes)

#### **EXAMINATION:**

Mid-term exam (**two hours**) Short answers

The final examination for the course will be given on the date and time determined by the university (**three hours**). It will consist of short and long answers encompassing all course material. No electronic devices will be allowed during tests and examinations.

#### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- 1) Completion of required reading
- 2) Completion of assignment
- 3) Attending tutorials

#### **MARKING SCHEME:**

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|----------------------|-----|
| 1) Midterm           | 30% |
| 2) Assignment        | 35% |
| 3) Final examination | 35% |

## Assignment: Newspaper report

The report should not exceed four typed pages, double-spaced. It consists of a summary and analysis of a **political international** event throughout from two to four weeks. You are allowed one **Canadian** newspaper of your choice (London Free Press, Globe & Mail, Toronto Starr, and National Post) to complete the analysis. Suitable subjects could be the exploits of the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the European Union politics, Latin America's conflicts (Colombia, Argentina, Venezuela, or Mexico), Iran's nuclear ambitions, and so on. **These are examples**; you are **allowed** to choose any of these examples or **any other** subjects that fits the assignment's requirements. You need to consult with me or the TA about your chosen topic if different from the above. (Note: all courses require a written component)

REPORT DUE DATE: March 25

**How will you develop a structured and meaningful report? The following are some guidelines to help you organize the content of your reports:**

- a) Define the historical context in which the events take place. It will help you to develop a framework for your report.
- b) Pinpoint the **dates and location** of the events depicted in the news.
- c) Make a point of marking the **names and ranks** of the principal protagonists named in the news.
- d) Comment on the ideological prejudices (bias) of some columnists or reporters if pertinent.
- e) You are allowed and encouraged to express at the end of the report your own opinion about the news.
- f) All of the above must be written, **not in point form**, but in essay style. You have to use all the information gathered in a meaningful and well expressed narrative.
- g) The last two tutorials will help you understand and polish your newspaper report.

**It is imperative that you collect the articles and hand them together with the report. The REPORT deadline is final. There are no EXTENSIONS**

**A guide to critical reading and review of the articles:**

There are two basic styles of review: **descriptive and critical**. The two review styles are not mutually exclusive. The purely descriptive review or summary of the article/chapter's content tends to be less engaging than the critical review, which offers both information, and is analytical. The critical review typically balances the strengths and weaknesses in light of the author stated aims. It analyses ideas, opinions and judgments, use of evidence to support them, and a consideration of how they fit with our present knowledge of the subject. The better reviews tend to move beyond description.

During tutorials we will discuss the required readings. You need to prepare a short summary and pinpoint the principal arguments of each article, as suggested in your Reader. In the tutorials you are encouraged to talk about what you like or dislike. **Tutorials are different from lectures.**

#### TUTORIAL SCHEDULE

<b>Jan. 16</b>	<b>Geopolitics</b> Chap. 1
<b>Jan. 23</b>	<b>Geopolitics</b> Chap. 2 and Chap. 5
<b>Jan. 30</b>	Reader, “Cold War”
<b>Feb. 6</b>	Reader, “Our Sons of Bitches”; “State Terrorism”; The Condor Years”
<b>Feb. 17-23</b>	<b>READING WEEK</b>
<b>Feb. 27</b>	TBA
<b>March 7</b>	Reader, “Middle East”
<b>March 13</b>	Maps and Film
<b>March 20</b>	Reader, “Analyzing Newspapers” ( preparation for assignment)
<b>March 27</b>	Reader, “The Mess They Made”

NOTE: tutorials are not given every week and may be changed

#### NOTE ABOUT EMAILS:

If you have questions about the report or the lectures, I will be available to answer them during my office hours. The use of email is limited to extensions or to make an appointment different from office hours. I will answer emails during office hours, not on weekends. **I do not discuss marks in emails. Please note: any consultation about reports, exams, or content of lectures, readings and the like, have to be done in person after or during class or in office hours.**

#### GRADES

How do I grade? I regard the mark of ‘C’ (60%-69%) indicative of average work, both competent and acceptable. You have completed all of the assignments and readings and demonstrated a general understanding of the course material as evidenced in the essays, labs and final exam. A grade of ‘B’ (70%-79%) reflects evidence of an above average effort and performance. Not only have you fulfilled the assignments in a more meticulous fashion, you have demonstrated a more thorough understanding of the material and gone a few extra steps beyond the average student as evidenced on the test and in your written work. An ‘A’ (80%-89%) is reserved for outstanding effort and achievement. Exceptional diligence, a thorough knowledge of the course material, and

the ability to apply and convey concepts in an effective, logical and literate fashion are clearly evident. Hard labour and exceptional effort are necessary but not, by themselves, sufficient to warrant an 'A.' An 'A+' (90+ %) is extremely rare. An exceptionally outstanding performance on the examination, and essays demonstrating a superb command of English and a critical mind capable of synthesizing complex facts and ideas to arrive at particularly astute conclusions, will earn this prestigious grade.

#### **IMPORTANT REMINDERS:**

**Support Services:** Registrarial Services: <http://www3.registrar.uwo.ca/index.cfm> --  
Student Development Services: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

**Requests for a final mark revision have to be done according to Calendar's rules regulations and timetable. The request has to be in written form, specific and must enumerate the points of contention.**

a) Your course mark is only final when you receive it from the Registrar, and even then it can be changed on receipt by the Registrar of a Marks Revision Form. In all cases the final marks are not final until the department chair has signed off.

b) Make-up dates will only be granted upon receipt of certified medical causes or bereavement. For further details consult the Academic Calendar. Your documents need to be presented at the office of Academic Counselling Student Centre, SSC 2105, and SSC 2114. UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf)

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading.

c) Non-medical absences from midterms, tutorials, laboratory experiments, or late essays or assignments, will only be considered upon receipt of certified bereavement. For further details consult the Academic Calendar. Your documents need to be presented at the office of Academic Counselling Student Centre, SSC 2105, and SSC 2114.

d) Accommodation for medical illness of work worth less than 10% of the total course grade will be granted and no medical documentation for such accommodation will be required.

**APPEALS, PLAGIARISM, DROPS, EXTENSIONS, EXEMPTIONS & LATE PENALTIES:** You are advised to read the course calendar to familiarize yourself with the university's regulations and procedures concerning appeals ('relief'), plagiarism and penalties. Should you feel your final grade in the course is biased, inaccurate or unfair you have the right to appeal your mark. Be aware that marks may be raised--*as well as lowered*--- through an appeal process. Please refer to the *Western Calendar* prior to doing so. Plagiarism in all its forms is, of course, unacceptable and those who tempt fate will be persecuted to the fullest extent allowed under the university's regulations. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>.

***Please Note: Course content and dates may vary due to unforeseen circumstance***

*If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for more information on these resources and on mental health.*