

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
GEOGRAPHY 2142B “GEOPOLITICS”

Course Outline

Winter 2015

specifics are subject to change

Instructor Information

Name and title: Dr. D. Armstrong
Contact: Email: darmst43@uwo.ca
Office Hours: SSC 2221: Wednesday – 1:00-2:00 (or by appointment)

Teaching assistant: TBA
Office hours: TBA

Course Information

Lecture Room: SSC 3010
Lecture: Monday – 11:30-1:30

Tutorial Room: SSC 3010
Tutorial: Wednesday – 11:30-12:30

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Description:

Geopolitics is a widely used term with various meanings and a decidedly chequered past. Sometimes the term is used as a synonym for political geography or the spatial dimensions of politics. In other uses it refers to international great power rivalries, the geographical factors in a state's foreign policy and, sometimes more specifically, to violent struggles for strategic control over specific areas of the earth's surface. The word geopolitical has also been used as an adjectival synonym for international politics, which emphasizes high politics, diplomacy and military matters in specific contexts. In political debate the slippage between these meanings has sometimes been a very useful rhetorical device suggesting, simultaneously, intellectual acumen and political gravitas.

The use of geopolitical reasoning is common in many parts of the world but most notable in the capital cities of what is still often called "the West"; geographical concepts are repeatedly invoked in policy discourse, political speeches, popular discussion of contemporary events and especially in justifications for the use of military force. There is little widespread agreement as to what the appropriate geographical designations of the contemporary global political order are, or

which geopolitical entities are now most important. Thus attempts by scholars, political pundits and politicians to make recent global changes meaningful provide a rich field for contemporary geopolitical study. How the world is designated, how political spaces are constituted, how political actions are justified, and the descriptions that are used, are the subject matter of contemporary geopolitical scholarship and hence this course.

Please note that attendance at lectures and tutorials is essential for success in this course. Lecture material is not placed online. It is important to attend class, take notes, and ask for clarification when you are unclear about the material. Should you miss a lecture, you will have to borrow the notes from someone who attended the lecture.

Course Objectives

In this course, through lectures and readings, we will examine how geopolitical discourses have shaped understanding of the political ordering of the planet at the largest scales. The course will look first to the history of geopolitical reasoning, and then investigate a range of contemporary geopolitical issues. An important aspect of the course is to consider how commonly taken for granted concepts work to shape geopolitical reasoning in the age of globalization. By the end of the course you will have insight into some of the problems currently facing the world and, as well, a better sense of how to think about them.

Pre-requisite Checking – the student’s responsibility

Antirequisite: The former Geography 341a/b ('Systemic Political Geography')

Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Required Text

Jason Dittmer and Joanne Sharp (eds). Geopolitics: an introductory reader (London: Routledge, 2014). Available in the Western University bookstore.

Additional material for the weekly readings online and I have provided the relevant URL in the weekly schedule of required readings.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF LECTURE TOPICS AND REQUIRED READINGS

Week 1. (January 5) Introduction: The Geopolitical Imagination

[Tutorial – January 7]

Week 2. (January 12) Critical Geopolitics: culture, (D)iscourse and representation

Jason Dittmer and Joanne Sharp, "General Introduction", Reader pp. 1-9.

Gearoid O'Tuathail and John Agnew, "Geopolitics and Discourse: practical geopolitical reasoning in American foreign policy", Reader pp. 129-137.

Arash Norouzi, " 'Wiped off the Map' – the rumour of the century".

(<http://www.mohammadmossadegh.com/news/rumor-of-the-century/>)

Richard Warnica "Canada's Media at odds over the term 'terrorism'" The UBC Thunderbird, 2005, 4 pages.

[Tutorial – January 14]

Week 3. (January 19) Imperial Geopolitics

Jason Dittmer "Introduction to Part One" Reader pp. 13-23.

Halford J. Mackinder "The Geographical Pivot of History" Reader pp. 32-36.

Karl Haushofer "Why Geopolitik?" Reader pp. 54-56.

Adolf Hitler "Eastern Orientation or Eastern Policy?" Reader pp. 57-60.

[Tutorial – January 21]

Week 4. (January 26) Cold War Geopolitics

Jason Dittmer "Introduction to Part Two" Reader pp. 91-102

George Kennan "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" Reader pp. 103-107.

Dwight D. Eisenhower "The Domino Theory Principal" Reader pp. 108.

Leonid Brezhnev "The Brezhnev Doctrine" Reader pp. 116-118.

Committee on the Present Danger "Common Sense and the Common Danger" Reader pp. 138-140.

[Tutorial – January 28]

Week 5. (February 2) Geopolitics After the Cold War

Joanne Sharp "Introduction to Part Three" Reader Only pages 169-173.

Robert D. Kaplan "The Coming Anarchy" Reader 195-202.

Simon Dalby "Reading Robert Kaplan's 'Coming Anarchy'" Reader pp. 203-208.

Thomas P.M. Barnett "The Pentagon's New Map" Reader pp. 209-212.

Roberts, Secor, and Sparke "Neoliberal Geopolitics" Reader pp. 213-217.

[Tutorial – February 4]

Week 6. (February 9) Mid-term Exam – two hours in class.

[No tutorial on February 11]

February 16-20 – Winter Break = NO CLASS/NO Tutorial!

Week 7. (February 23) Contemporary Dangers: 911, War, Ebola etc.

Samuel P. Huntington "The Clash of Civilizations" Reader pp. 181-190.

Edward W. Said "The Clash of Ignorance" Reader pp. 191-194.

Alan Ingram "The New Geopolitics of Disease" Reader pp. 259-270.

[Tutorial February 25]

Week 8. (March 2) Middle East Security: the Arab Spring etc.

Peter Kropotkin "What Geography Ought to Be" Reader pp. 49-51.

Edward Said "Orientalism" Reader pp. 75-79.

Caroline R. Nagel "Geopolitics by Another Name: immigration and the politics of assimilation" Reader pp. 223-229.

Robert D. Kaplan "The Revenge of Geography" Reader pp. 291-295.

[Tutorial March 4]

Week 9. (March 9) Missile Defence, Russia, and the Ukraine

Michael Ignatieff "Isaiah Berlin, The Soviet Union and the Captive Nations".

(<http://berlin.wolf.ox.ac.uk/lists/onib/ignatieff/Mllecture2012.pdf>).

John J. Mearsheimer "Why the Ukrainian Crisis is the West's Fault".

(<http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/Ukraine%20Article%20in%20Foreign%20Affairs.pdf>)

Luiza Bialasiewicz "The Uncertain State(s) of Europe" Reader pp. 237-246.

[Tutorial March 11]

Week 10 (March 16) Resource War: Glocal Energy, Pipelines etc.

Philippe le Billon "The Geopolitical Economy of 'Resource Wars' " Reader pp. 253-258.

Michael Renner "Oil and Blood".

(<http://www.worldwatch.org/node/528>)

Simon Dalby "Anthropocene Geopolitics: globalization, empire, environment and critique" Reader pp. 351-355.

[Tutorial March 18]

Week 11. (March 23) Perspectives on the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Christopher Harker "Geopolitics and Family in Palestine" Reader pp. 312-318.

John Agnew "Religion and Geopolitics" Reader pp. 332-337.

Nick Megoran "Militarism, Realism, Just War, or Nonviolence" Reader pp. 338-345.

[Tutorial March 25]

Week 12. (March 30) Geopolitics of Cyberspace

John Agnew "Emerging China and Critical Geopolitics: between world politics and Chinese particularity" Reader pp. 230-236.

Rachel Pain "Globalized Fear? Towards an Emotional Geopolitics" Reader pp. 303-311.

Cowen and Smith "After Geopolitics? From the Geopolitical Social to Geoeconomics" Reader pp. 325-331.

Gordon M. Goldstein "The End of the Internet".

(<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/07/the-end-of-the-internet/372301/>)

[Tutorial April 1]

Week 13. (April 6) Course Summary, Wrap Up and Evaluation

Several short articles may be assigned in advance, to be read for the exam.

[No tutorial April 8]

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Course Evaluation

Weekly commentaries 35%; tutorial participation 5%; mid-term exam 25%; and final exam (held during exam period) 35%. The final exam will be based on the material from all the lectures and readings. Weekly commentaries must be handed in at the beginning of each tutorial. There are ten tutorials, your mark will be based on your best nine weekly hand-ins.

Weekly commentaries:	35%
Tutorial Participation:	5%
Mid-term Exam (February 9):	25%
Final Exam (as scheduled):	35%

Weekly Participation: Commentaries on the Readings

In so far as student numbers allow, discussions of the weekly readings will be an integral part of the weekly tutorial. Additional lecture material, articles, and video will also be presented during tutorials, as required, in order to amplify the weekly lectures.

To make this work it is necessary that all students keep up to date with the readings. To facilitate this, all students are required to submit, each week, a single, typed sheet of commentary on the required readings. This exercise is designed to **focus attention on the key issues in the week's readings** and to provide a vehicle for **clarifying questions and comments** for the discussion. It may be written as a series of comments, meditations or personal reflections on the readings. It must engage with the arguments and claims made in **each and every one** of the readings assigned each week. The idea is to synthesis and critique the various ideas presented in the readings. The suggested format involves building a summary/in-depth analysis to support your own critical analysis. It will be graded A, B, C, D or F and **must be submitted at the beginning of each tutorial**. Style and content will be part of the assessment. It is important for students to bring along a second copy of their hand-in as an aide-memoire to facilitate their participation in the ensuing discussion.

If you know you are going to miss a tutorial for a legitimate reason, you must both notify the instructor well in advance, and submit the assignment by the due date. In this instance, any assignment submitted after 11:30 AM on the due date will be considered late, and a late penalty of 10% per day will be applied. Once that week's assignments are handed back to the class, any outstanding assignments will receive a grade of zero. Furthermore, as the readings will be discussed in class, it is not possible to attend the discussion and then hand in the assignment after the fact. There is no 'make-up' activity should you fail to hand in your weekly assignment. At the same time, remember you are only being graded on your best 9 of 10 assignments.

Examinations

There will be two exams, both a mid-term and a final. The mid-term exam (two hours) will be conducted in class, and will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and long answer questions.

The final exam (three hours) will be conducted during the university exam period, and will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and long answer questions. Any material covered during the lectures, tutorials (readings), and discussions may appear on the mid-term and final.

Please note that such things as sleeping in, misreading the timetable, and flight arrangements are not considered grounds for accommodation:

<http://www.uwo.ca/arts/counselling/procedures/examinations.html>

As such, if you miss an exam, you will have to pursue medical accommodation, see below.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

Accommodation

Students with special needs should promptly consult the relevant guidelines and procedures:

<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2013/pg118.html>

Accommodation for Medical Illness

For UWO policy on accommodation for medical illness, and a downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC), please see:

http://www.uwo.ca/arts/counselling/procedures/medical_accomodation.html

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counseling Office of their home faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

No electronic devices will be allowed during tests and examinations. During class your cell phone should be turned off. Audio/video recording of the classroom (lectures, tutorials, classmates) is not allowed for reasons of privacy, and to avoid disturbing the class. In similar fashion, should you arrive late, or have to leave early, please do so with as little disturbance as possible.

Statement on Academic Offenses

Scholastic offenses are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offense, at the following website: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textural similarity review to commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the university for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Mental Health

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit the site below for more information on mental health resources:

http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/

Western's Commitment to Accessibility

The University of Western Ontario is committed to achieving barrier free accessibility for persons studying, visiting, and working at Western.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternative format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111, x 82417 for any specific questions regarding an accommodation.

Support Services

Registrarial Services: <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>

Student Development Services: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Administrative Details

Email

Email should be considered a formal means of communication, and is to be used for administrative issues regarding such things as attendance or making an appointment to discuss a problem outside of regular office hours. Complicated questions concerning the course material usually do not lend themselves to Email, and are better resolved in person. Please use the regular office hours/tutorials for those types of questions. Note: I am not logged in 24/7,

and so an email may not receive an immediate response, but will be returned within a day or two.

FASCINATING WEBSITE

A website devoted to all things geopolitical. Includes interviews with many of the authors that are featured in your textbook: <http://www.exploringgeopolitics.org/index.html>

BACKGROUND READING

The journal Geopolitics not surprisingly publishes material directly relevant for this course! A most useful source for keeping up with the literature in the broader field of human geography is the annual "progress reports" in the journal Progress in Human Geography. Political Geography as well as Society and Space and Space and Polity are especially relevant but many other geography journals carry articles on geopolitical subjects. A useful reference work for all of human geography is R.J. Johnston et.al., (eds) The Dictionary of Human Geography (Oxford: Blackwell, various editions).

Classic and recent works that are directly relevant to the overall course themes include the following:

- Agnew, J. Hegemony: The New Shape of Global Power (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005)
- Agnew, J. Geopolitics: Revisioning World Politics 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 2003).
- Agnew, J., Mitchell, K., and Ó Tuathail, G. (eds), A Companion Guide to Political Geography (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003).
- Agnew, J. and Mamadouh, V. Politics: Critical Essays in Human Geography (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing, 2008).
- Blouet, B. (ed.). Global geostrategy: Mackinder and the defence of the West. London: Frank Cass, 2005).
- Cohen, S.B. Geopolitics of the World System (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003).
- Cohen, S.B. Geopolitics: the geography of international relations (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008).
- Cowen, D. and Gilbert E. (eds) War, Citizenship, Territory (London: Routledge, 2007).
- Cox, K. The SAGE Handbook of Political Geography (London, SAGE Publications, 2008).
- Dittmer, J. Popular Culture, Geopolitics, and Identity (Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010).
- Dodds, K. Geopolitics: a very short introduction (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- Dodds, K. Global Geopolitics: A Critical Introduction (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2005).
- Dodds, K. and Sidaway, J. (eds). Halford J. Mackinder centennial retrospective. special issue Geographical Journal 170(4), (2004). pp. 291-384.
- Dodds, K., Kuus, M. and Sharp J. (eds) The Ashgate Research Companion to Critical Geopolitics (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).
- Farrish, M. The Contours of America's Cold War (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2010).
- Flint, C. Introduction to Geopolitics (New York: Routledge, 2012).
- Graham, S. (ed.) Cities, War and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics (Malden, MA: Blackwell 2004).

- Gregory, D. The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004)
- Gregory, D. and Pred A. (eds). Violent Geographies: Fear Terror and Political Violence (London: Routledge, 2006).
- Harvey, D. The New Imperialism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
- Ingram, A. and Dodds, K. Spaces of Security and Insecurity: Geographies of the War on Terror (Farnham, Ashgate Publishing, 2009).
- Le Billon, P. Fuelling War: Natural Resources and Armed Conflict. (Oxford: Routledge, 2005).
- Ó Tuathail, G. Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
- Ó Tuathail, G. and Dalby, S. (eds), Rethinking Geopolitics (London: Routledge, 1998).
- Pain, R. and Smith, S.J. Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing, 2008).
- Parker, G. Geopolitics: Past, Present and Future (London: Pinter, 1998).
- Reynolds, J. Postmodern Imperialism: Geopolitics and the Great Games (Atlanta, Clarity Press, 2011).
- Woodward, R. Military Geographies (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004)