

PSCI 4396 - Fall 2011
Political Geography

Instructor: Adam Yeeles

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Class: MW 11:30 a.m. -12:45 p.m. in ECSN 2.120

Office Hours: MW 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

or by appointment

Course Description

This course explores how geography and geographical knowledge mediates political processes at local, national, regional, and global scales. Selected issues in the field of political geography are covered, including territory and sovereignty, borders, geopolitics, the geography of conflict, state formation and failure, resource conflicts, electoral geographies, geography and social movements, urbanization.

The subfield of Political Geography is naturally interdisciplinary, drawing from geography, political science, sociology and anthropology. Traditionally, political geography has taken the state as the primary unit of analysis, focusing on either its internal organization or its relations with other states. More recently, work has concerned the relationship between geography and politics at other levels including the region, the city and even the individual. The course covers many of these perspectives.

Broadly speaking, the discipline is concerned with (1) how geography, both physical and human, informs politics and policy, and (3) how politics influences patterns of social behavior. The course is divided into 10 Thematic Modules that engage different topics, some classic and others contemporary. They are intended to ask and answer the above questions of various political and social phenomena.

Student Learning Objectives

Participants in the course will be introduced to the field of political geography. After completing the course, you should:

- have a broad understanding of the field of political geography, including the key scholars, themes, and terminology used in the discipline.
- be able to the apply a spatial perspective and key concepts in political geography to understanding of the social and political world.
- have developed improved research and writing skills and be better able to address topics of contemporary importance from multiple perspectives.

Textbooks and Materials

Required:

The selected articles and chapters listed below are required reading for the course. They are available through library databases or on Course Reserves (identified by CR).

Recommended:

Glassner, Martin Ira, and Chuch Fahrner. 2004. Political Geography, 3rd edition. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

This is an introductory textbook that takes a similar topical approach to the subject (with some slightly different topics than this class). Any edition of this text is suitable as a conceptual reference and is recommended as such.

As Reference:

Gregory, Derek (Ed.) 2009. The Dictionary of Human Geography, 5th Edition. Blackwell Publishing.

This is a good resource to familiarize yourself with some of the concepts and ideas in human geography. One of the benefits of this book is that it provides you with some recommended readings and references, which will help start your research. The instructor's copy of the 4th Edition will be placed on Reserve at McDermott library for your use.

Grading and Course Policies

Course grades will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Paper Topic	5%
Annotated Bibliography	25%
Research Paper	35%
Presentation	15%
Quizzes	20%

Grades are based on the standard grading scale: A= 100-90, B=89-80, C=79-70, etc., with pluses/minuses at the instructors discretion.

Topic, Annotated Bibliography, Research Paper, and Presentation: Students will be asked to complete a *research paper* that applies the concepts discussed in the course to a specific historical or contemporary case. To make sure progress is timely, you will be expected to turn in two additional assignments: a *research topic* and an *annotated bibliography*. At the end of the course, students will also be asked to give a (3) *presentation* of their paper to the class. Further expectations regarding these assignments will be discussed throughout the course.

Attendance, Readings and Quizzes: Students are expected to attend all classes. Attendance will not be graded, but it is absolutely necessary to achieve a passing grade. The discussions and reading will be complementary, but sometimes different in content. In particular, we will view films and other multimedia material during class time. You are expected to complete the readings before each course. Quizzes on the material will be given periodically. Generally, these will be announced in advance, but if it is felt that students are not completing the reading or attending classes, the quizzes will become unannounced. Intentionally, the assigned reading load is low. Students are expected to find and consume additional materials outside of the class time in order to complete their research project.

University Policies and Procedures

All University policies and procedures also apply to this course. They may be found at: <http://provost.utdallas.edu/home/syllabus-policies-and-procedures-text>

Course Schedule

These descriptions and timeline are subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor.

Week Beginning	Modules Covered	Assignments Due
August 24	Introduction	
August 29	Module 1	
September 5	– Reading –	
September 12	Module 2	Paper Topic
September 19	Module 3	
September 26	Module 4	
October 3	Module 4, 5	
October 10	Module 5	
October 17	– –	Annotated Bibliography
October 24	Module 6	
October 31	Module 7	
November 7	Module 8	
November 14	Module 9	
November 21	Module 10	
November 28	– –	Presentations
December 5	Last Day of Class	Research Paper

Topic	Readings	Videos
Introduction: What is political geography?	None	
Module 1: States, Territory and Sovereignty	Taylor (1994) Biersteker (2002) (CR)	
Module 2: Borders and Boundaries	Minghi (1963) Newman (2006)	9 Star Hotel
Module 3: Geopolitics	Mackinder (2004)/1904 Spykman (1969) (CR) Barnett (2003)	WWF - WWII
Module 4: State Formation and Failure		
<i>Formation</i>	Tilly (1990) (CR) Herbst (2000a) (CR) Branch (2011)	
<i>Failure</i>	Goldstone (2008) Herbst (2000b) (CR)	
Module 5: Geographic Imperatives of Development	Woods (2003) Gallup & Sachs (1999) Acemoglu et al. (2001)	G,G,St - Part III
Module 6: Geographies of Conflict		
<i>Civil Wars and Violence</i>	Buhaug & Rød (2006) Mesev et al. (2009)	
<i>Resource Wars</i>	Le Billon (2001) Holden & Jacobson (2007)	Diamonds of War
Module 7: Diffusion Processes	Beissinger (2007) Charlesworth (1983) O'Loughlin et al. (1998)	
Module 8: Place and Political Behavior		
<i>Elections</i>	Agnew (1996) Burbank (1997)	
<i>Social Movements</i>	Nicholls (2008) Zhao (1998)	Burma VJ
Module 9: Urbanization		
<i>History and Trends</i>	Sjoberg (1965) Clark (2003) (CR)	
<i>Modern Consequences</i>	Brugmann (2009a) (CR) Brugmann (2009b) (CR) UN-Habitat(2001), Ch. 1&2	
Module 10: Urban Violence		
<i>Conflict</i>	Beall et al. (2010)	
<i>Terror</i>	Savitch & Ardashev (2001)	
<i>Urbicide</i>	Coward (2006)	

References

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