



**University of Victoria
Department of Geography**

**Contemporary Geopolitics
GEOG 386, A01
Fall 2017**

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Class Location: MacLaurin Building, Room D110
Class Time: Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Fridays, 11:30am-12:20am
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 10:30am-11:20am

Course Description

Political geography is concerned with examining the spatial dimensions of power, particularly in relation to state competition for control and dominance over territories, resources and populations. Since the mid-20th century, the world political map has undergone considerable transformations. We have witnessed events of major geopolitical significance, such as the process of decolonization and the formal breakup of European empires, the growing importance of China as a global economic power, the emergence of the European Union and its potential disintegration following Brexit, the US-led War on Terrorism, the rise of right-wing populism, and cyber-security. This course provides an introduction to global geopolitics by situating contemporary geopolitical events within a broad historical context while also exploring key geographical concepts that help us better understand current geopolitical conflicts. As we explore such geopolitical dynamics and themes in relation to power, we will be able to see how the spaces of political power shape our everyday lives and geopolitical imaginations.

Course Objectives

- Introduce students to various historical and contemporary geopolitical issues that have led to transformations in the world political map.
- Introduce students to a series of regional case studies in order to gain a better understanding of the study of geopolitics.

- Guide students in becoming more critically aware of how and why their own geopolitical imaginations are constructed through world political discourse.
- Gain proficiency of geopolitical concepts and case studies to understand current geopolitical conflicts.

Learning Outcomes

- Ability to use geopolitical concepts to evaluate geopolitical conflicts around the world.
- Ability to assess geopolitical conflicts using a variety of geographic perspectives.
- Describe where and why specific conflicts are taking place across various regions globally.
- Develop critical thinking skills in terms of speaking and writing about geopolitical issues.
- Ability to understand, explain and evaluate geopolitical discourse.

Required Course Text and Readings

- Flint, Colin. (2017). *Introduction to Geopolitics*. 3rd Edition. New York: Routledge.
- Required journal and newspaper articles for the course (all available/accessible on the CourseSpaces page for this class).
 1. Sept. 29th—Steven Zhou. (2017). “Canadian Campuses See an Alarming Rise in Right-Wing Populism,” *CBC News*. p. 1-4.
 2. Sept. 29th—Rose-Redwood, Reuben. & Jonathan Smith. (2016). “Strange Encounters: A Dialogue on Cultural Geography Across the Political Divide,” *Journal of Cultural Geography*. Vol. 33, Issue 3, p.356-378.
 3. Oct. 6th—Reyes, Danilo Andres. (2016). “The Spectacle of Violence in Duterte’s ‘War on Drugs,’” *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*. Vol. 35, Issue 3, p 111-137.
 4. Oct. 13th—Khalili, Laleh. (2017). “After Brexit: Reckoning with Britain’s Racism and Xenophobia,” *POEM International English Language Quarterly*. Vol. 5 Issue 2-3, p. 253-265.
 5. Oct. 20th—AlSayyad, Nezar. & Muna Guvenc. (2015). “Virtual Uprisings: On the Interaction of New Social Media, Traditional Media Coverage and Urban Space During the ‘Arab Spring,’” *Urban Studies*. Vol. 52, Issue 11, p. 2018-2034.
 6. Oct. 27th—Chatterjee, Debangana. (2016). “Gendering ISIS and Mapping the Role of Women,” *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*. Vol. 3, Issue 2, p. 201-218.
 7. Nov. 3rd—Muzaffar, Chandra. (2017). “Trump, Public Imagination, and Islamophobia,” *Global Research*. p. 1-5.
 8. Nov. 3rd—Beydoun, Khaled. (2017). “How Muslim Ban Incites Vigilante Islamophobc Violence,” *Aljazeera*. p. 1-4.
 9. Nov. 3rd—Henderson, Emma. (2017). “Two Stabbed to Death Protecting Muslim Women in Portland,” *Daily Beast*. P. 1-3.
 10. Nov. 10th—Gordon, Todd & Jeffery Webber. (2007). “Imperialism and Resistance: Canadian Mining Companies in Latin America,” *Third World Quarterly*. Vol. 29, Issue 1, p. 63-87.

11. Nov. 24th—Warf, Barney & Emily Fekete. (2015). “Relational Geographies of Cyberterrorism and Cyberwar,” *Space and Polity*, Vol. 30, Issue 2, p. 143-157.

Assignments and Grading Scheme

Your final grade will be based on the following calculation:

Attendance	10%
Group-Led Class Discussion	10%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	30%
Research Paper	25%

Grading Scale:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	D	F
90-100%	85-89%	80-84%	77-79%	73-76%	70-72%	65-69%	60-64%	50-59%	49% or Less

Undergraduate GradingAs per stated in the 2017-2018 Calendar**

Details About Assignments

I. Attendance (10%)

Attendance will be taken during each class session. It is your responsibility to ensure you find the attendance sheet circulated during each class meeting and make sure you sign it. Prompt attendance is a professional responsibility and courtesy (see Academic Regulations in the UVic calendar).

II. Group-Led Class Discussion (10%)

Each student will have an opportunity to lead a class discussion within a group assigned by the instructor. By the second week of class, each student will be assigned into a group by the instructor to work on this assignment. Each group will consist of 3-4 students (depending on the number of students registered in the course) and will be assigned a date to lead the class in a discussion over the course of the semester. Beginning on week 4, the first group will be expected to present and discuss the assigned readings (see course schedule for group-led discussion dates).

Each group should follow these instructions in order to effectively present the readings and lead a class discussion:

- Provide a handout to the instructor, which covers the main points and other information you feel is relevant. The handout should be one page in length and include a single-spaced, well-written one-paragraph summary of the readings you are assigned. It should also consist of bullet points of information or questions you will be using in your discussion of the readings that you are

assigned. This will be evaluated as part of your overall group presentation grade for your Group-Led Class Discussion.

- Using a critical approach, discuss the main points from your group's assigned readings. **You should not simply present a summary of the reading as your discussion.** You are expected to come up with thoughtful questions to discuss with the class based on the readings.
- You should add some creativity to your class discussion. Consider using visual aids such as posters, short power-point presentation, short video clips or in-class activities (debate, concept map exercise, etc.) to get your classmates to think critically about the issues you are discussing. Keep in mind that you will have the entire class period to present the readings and to help your classmates to think critically about the reading. Your goal is to stimulate respectful and thoughtful discussion with your classmates.
- It is strongly encouraged that each group speak with the instructor at least one week prior to your group presentation in order to go over your ideas, plans, and the structure of your presentation. I am here to help guide you to do well on this part of your class assignment, so make sure you speak with me about how you plan to present and discuss the assigned readings for that day.
- Your grade for this assignment will be evaluated based on the following rubric:
 - a. Ability to carry out the instructions provided in the syllabus
 - b. Quality of discussion of content from the assigned readings including key concepts/ideas/theories/arguments
 - c. Organization and structure of presentation
 - d. Creativity of presentation
 - e. Ability to engage and stimulate discussion with your classmates

III. Midterm Exam (25%) and Final Exam (30%)

There will be two exams over the course of the semester (see schedule below for dates). The exams will be a combination of multiple choice and short-answer essay questions, and they will cover material from the lectures, readings, and films. The midterm exam will only include material covered from the beginning to the middle of the semester. However, there will also be a cumulative final exam at the end of the semester. For the final exam, you will be responsible for all material covered in the course from the beginning of the semester to the end. The final exam date/time/location will be announced during the semester. All class lectures will be posted by midnight the night before each class meeting on the UVic CourseSpaces website (<http://coursespaces.uvic.ca>). You are expected to attend lectures and take notes because some information relating to concepts, ideas, themes and examples that I will be discussing in the class may not be on the lecture slides. It is important to take notes in order to engage with the content presented in the course. Taking notes is a really important learning tool for studying as well. I highly recommend taking notes, and I also recommend coming to see me during office hours if you want to discuss any aspect of the course content even further to improve your learning. I am always here to assist in your learning of the course material.

IV. Contemporary Geopolitics Research Paper (25%)

You are required to write a research paper for this course. We will be covering a series of topics relating to contemporary geopolitical issues throughout the semester such as the Trump election/administration, the rise in right-wing populism, nationalism and ethnic cleansing, Brexit and the future, neocolonialism, terrorism, the Arab Spring, ISIS and gender, Islamophobia and xenophobia, etc. For your research paper, I would like you to select a topic of interest to you that relates to some geopolitical issue (preferably something within the last 5 years). You should select a topic that you feel strongly about to conduct research on for your research paper. Once you select the topic that you are interested in writing about, please write up **a single-spaced one-page Summary of the Research Topic** that includes your research question. Please submit a hard-copy printout of this to the instructor by **Wednesday September 27th** in class. I will review it and provide feedback the following week so that you can start working on your research paper. You are strongly encouraged to start talking with me early in the semester about what topic you want to write about for the research paper. I enjoy discussing various topics with you, and I can help you focus on a particular topic for the research paper. You should follow these instructions as you write your paper:

- This paper should be a total of 10-15 pages maximum, doubled-spaced, 12 pt font size, 2.54 cm margins with proper in-text citations. You should also include a separate reference page for external sources cited in the paper (APA style is required).
- 1. In order to write your paper, please draw upon books, journal articles, and news articles to help you research the topic of interest to you. You should use a variety of sources to explain why you think the issue is an important geopolitical issue and/or why you think not enough attention has been drawn to the topic. You will use various sources to help you explain your point of view. In writing your term paper, it is expected that you draw on and reference material covered in the course as well as other secondary sources you feel are relevant to build your argument. Please do not use Wikipedia as a source (points will be deducted for this citation, as it is not a scholarly reference).
- 2. Students may choose to write this research paper as a group of two students or individually, but you **MUST** inform the instructor if you decide you want to write it with another classmate. Be aware that if you choose to write the research paper with a partner, you will both receive the same grade for this portion of your final grade.
- 3. The research paper will be due in-class as a printed hard copy (no electronic submission) on **Friday November 10th**. No late papers will be accepted after this date.
- 4. Your paper will be evaluated based upon the following rubric:
 - a. Quality of content in terms of strong critiques and analysis of resources you review for the research paper
 - b. Quality of content and linkages to lectures and the course readings
 - c. Structure and organization of paper
 - d. Grammar and spelling
 - e. Proper in-text citations and references

Course Experience Survey (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of the term you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential course experience survey (CES) regarding your learning experience. The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an email inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an email invitation, you can go directly to <http://ces.uvic.ca>. You will need to use your UVic NetLink ID to access the survey, which can be done on your laptop, tablet or mobile device. I will remind you nearer the time to complete the survey online and I will give you some time in class to complete it as well.

UVic's Academic Integrity Policy

Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. It is expected that students, faculty members and staff at the University of Victoria, as members of an intellectual community, will adhere to these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research and service. Any action that contravenes this standard, including misrepresentation, falsification or deception, undermines the intention and worth of scholarly work and violates the fundamental academic rights of members of our community. This policy is designed to ensure that the university's standards are upheld in a fair and transparent fashion. See website (<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2015-01/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcl.html>).

Plagiarism

All class assignments should be prepared by the student(s) submitting the assignment. Plagiarism, or any other form of academic dishonesty, will not be tolerated in this course. Plagiarism consists of: (a) submitting someone else's work as your own without the use of proper citation or (b) paraphrasing another's ideas without acknowledging the author's work through citation. The use of an editor, whether paid or unpaid, is prohibited unless the instructor grants explicit written authorization. If you have any questions concerning matters of plagiarism, please see the following link: <http://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/plagiarism/index.php>.

UVic's Accessibility Statement for Students with a Disability

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSD) as soon as possible. The RCSD staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations (<http://rcsd.uvic.ca>). The sooner you let me know your needs the quicker I can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

UVic Positivity and Safety Statement

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive and safe learning and working environment for all its members.

Class Schedule

Day	Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
Week 1			
Wed	Sept 6 th	Introduction	Review syllabus and course requirements
Fri	Sept 8 th	History of Geopolitics I	Read Chapter 1 (Flint)
Week 2			
Tues	Sept 12 th	History of Geopolitics II	Read Chapter 1 (Flint)
Wed	Sept 13 th	The World Geopolitical Map	*No Assigned Reading
Fri	Sept 15 th	In Class Activity: Cold War Geopolitics TODAY INSTRUCTOR WILL ASSIGN STUDENTS INTO GROUPS FOR GROUP-LED CLASS DISCUSSION	*No Assigned Reading
Week 3			
Tues	Sept 19 th	The Rise & Fall of: Russia, Europe & the US	*No Assigned Reading
Wed	Sept 20 th	Cycles of World Leadership	Read Chapter 7 (Flint)
Fri	Sept 22 nd	In Class Activity: The Next World Leader?	Read Chapter 7 (Flint)
Week 4			
Tue	Sept 26 th	Geopolitical Codes	Read Chapter 2 (Flint)
Wed	Sept 27 th	Film: Hate Rising ONE-PAGE SUMMARY OF RESEARCH TOPIC DUE IN CLASS TODAY	*No Assigned Reading
Fri	Sept 29 th	Group 1 Lead Class Discussion The Rise of Right-wing Populism & the Potential for Dialogue Across the Politic Divide	Read Articles by Steven Zhou and Rose-Redwood & Smith
Week 5			
Tues	Oct 3 rd	Popular Geopolitics	Read Chapter 3 (Flint)
Wed	Oct 4 th	Nationalism & Ethnic Cleansing: Case Studies on Sudan & Myanmar/Burma	Read Chapter 4 (Flint)
Fri	Oct 6 th	Group 2 Lead Class Discussion Spectacle of Violence & Duterte's War on Drugs	Read Article by Danilo Andres Reyes
Week 6			
Tues	Oct 10 th	Supranationalism & International Law	*No Assigned Reading

Wed	Oct 11 th	REVIEW FOR MIDTERM EXAM	*No Assigned Reading
Fri	Oct 13 th	Group 3 Lead Class Discussion After Brexit: Britain's Racism & Xenophobia	Read Article by Laleh Khalili
		Week 7	
Tues	Oct 17 th	MIDTERM EXAM	*No Assigned Reading
Wed	Oct 18 th	Film: In Whose Interests?	*No Assigned Reading
Fri	Oct 20 th	Group 4 Lead Class Discussion Urban Uprisings & the Arab Spring Protests	Read Article by Nezar AlSayyad and Muna Guvenc
		Week 8	
Tues	Oct 24 th	Boundaries of Conflict I: A Case Study of Northern Ireland, Scotland & Wales Relations with the UK	Read Chapter 5 (Flint)
Wed	Oct 25 th	Boundaries of Conflict II: Short Case Studies on Chechnya, Kashmir, Palestine/Israel, North Korea-South Korea, Syria	Read Chapter 5 (Flint)
Fri	Oct 27 th	Group 5 Lead Class Discussion Gendering ISIS & Mapping the Role of Women	Read Article by Debangana Chatterjee
		Week 9	
Tues	Oct 31 st	Film: The 9/11 Decade	*No Assigned Reading
Wed	Nov 1 st	The Clash of Civilizations?	*No Assigned Reading
Fri	Nov 3 rd	Group 6 Lead Class Discussion Trump, Islamophobia & Muslim Women	Read Articles by Chandra Muzaffar, Khaled Beydoun and Emma Henderson
		Week 10	
Tues	Nov 7 th	Neocolonialism: A Case Study on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)	*No Assigned Reading
Wed	Nov 8 th	Film: Blood Coltan	*No Assigned Reading
Fri	Nov 10 th	Group 7 Lead Class Discussion Imperialism & Resistance: Canadian Mining Companies in Latin America RESEARCH PAPER DUE IN CLASS TODAY	Read Article by Todd Gordon and Jeffery Webber
		Week 11	
Tues	Nov 14 th	<i>Reading Break</i>	*No Class
Wed	Nov 15 th	<i>Reading Break</i>	*No Class
Fri	Nov 17 th	Climate Change & Geopolitics of the Arctic	*No Assigned Reading
		Week 12	

Tues	Nov 21 st	War on Terrorism	Read Chapter 6 (Flint)
Wed	Nov 22 nd	Film: The Mumbai Massacre	*No Assigned Reading
Fri	Nov 24 th	Group 8 Lead Class Discussion Geographies of Cyberterrorism and Cyberwar	Read Article by Barney Warf and Emily Fekete
		Week 13	
Tues	Nov 28 th	Messiness of Geopolitics	Read Chapter 9 (Flint)
Wed	Nov 29 th	Film: The Fog of War	*No Assigned Reading
Fri	Dec 1 st	REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM ***Reminder: Complete CES Evaluation	*No Assigned Reading
Note: I reserve the right to make reasonable changes to the syllabus over the course of the semester.			

***Note: September 22 2017: Last day for adding courses that begin in the first term.

October 31 2017: Last day for withdrawing from first term courses without penalty of failure.