

# DRAFT

## GEOG 441/541

### Political Geography

Monday/Wednesday – 2:00 – 3:20 pm

16 Pacific Hall

Fall 2015

Instructor: Professor Alexander B. Murphy, 173 Condon Hall, abmurphy@uoregon.edu  
Office hours: TBA

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This course examines political patterns and processes from a geographical perspective. We look at the political organization of territory in different parts of the world and examine the spatial relationships between political patterns and a variety of related phenomena, including resources, militarization, ethnicity, economic development, and policy making. We will also examine ways in which long-standing political-territorial arrangements are being challenged or undermined.

For undergraduates the requirements of the course are a map exercise (15% of the grade), a two-page book review of a novel by George Orwell (15% of the grade), two exams (each worth 20% of the grade), and a five-page paper on a territorial conflict between nations or states (30% of the grade). For graduate students the requirements are participation in a few extra discussion sections (20% of the grade), a late-in-the-term take-home exam (30% of the grade) and a term paper (50% of the grade). Regular class attendance is expected. The readings listed below should be completed before the lectures to which they are assigned. Please note that assignments must be turned in on time. Since you have ample warning of due dates, no extensions will be granted unless the circumstances are exceptional. To ensure a level playing field for everyone, there will be no possibilities for extra-credit work.

Many of the readings for the course are in article form and are available under the Course Documents tab in the Canvas site for the class. Other readings come from two books (available at the UO bookstore): J. Agnew and L. Muscarà, *Making Political Geography*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Rowman & Littlefield, 2012 [hereinafter Agnew and Muscarà], and G. Orwell, *Burmese Days*, Harcourt, Brace, 1974 (required reading only for undergraduates).

Showing respect for your peers is absolutely essential to a good group learning process. This includes openness to differing opinions, listening as well as talking, and refraining from personal attacks. Violations of academic integrity, such as plagiarism and cheating, will not be tolerated (see <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/>). Suspected violations will be reported to the Director of Student Judicial Affairs. If that office finds the student to be guilty of a violation, it may result in a failing grade for the course. Electronic devices such as cell phones and pagers must be turned off during class. Laptops are discouraged, as considerable research shows that old-fashioned note taking tends to lead to better understanding. If you nonetheless decide to use a laptop, the only permissible use is for note taking.

# DRAFT

In addition to the required readings, I encourage you to keep yourself informed of current affairs during the term, as that will help you ground the knowledge you gain through this class.

## **SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND REQUIRED READINGS:**

### **September 28**

Introduction to the subject matter of the course  
Geographical perspectives on politics and political arrangements  
Pre-modern forms of political/territorial organization

Reading: Agnew and Muscarà, Chapter 1

### **Map exercise handed out on September 28**

### **September 30 and October 5**

Foundations of the modern state system  
The rise of the modern state and associated territorial ideas  
(the concepts of sovereignty and the nation-state)

Reading: Chapter 2 in Jones et al. (on Canvas)  
Chapter by Murphy, 1996 (on Canvas)

### **October 7, 12 & 14**

The diffusion of the nation-state idea  
Imperialism and colonialism

Reading: Orwell, *Burmese Days* (entire book)

### **\*Map exercises due October 12**

### **October 19 & 21**

Geographical approaches to the study of the state  
The importance of territory, resources, and internal spatial structure

Reading: Agnew and Muscarà, chapter 2  
Chapter 3 in J. Gottmann, *The Significance of Territory*, 1973 (on Canvas)

### **\*Orwell Review due Oct. 21**

# **DRAFT**

## **October 26 & 28**

Political territory, ethnicity, and nationalism  
Case Study: Belgium

Reading: Article by Mikesell, 1983 (on Canvas)  
Article by Mikesell and Murphy, 1991 (on Canvas)

## **November 2 – EXAM COVERING THE FIRST HALF OF THE CLASS**

## **November 4 & 9**

Introduction to geopolitics  
The nature and significance of international boundaries  
International boundary conflicts  
Ideological bases for the territorial extent of states

Reading: Agnew and Muscarà, chapters 3-4  
Chapter by Murphy, 2004 (on Canvas)

## **Undergraduate short paper assignment handed out on November 4**

## **November 11 & 16**

Globalization and its impact on the state as a territorial entity  
The concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization  
Suprastate patterns of political organization and influence  
The role of international organizations

Reading: Agnew and Muscarà, pp. 162-181 of Chapter 5  
Article by Murphy, 2013 (on Canvas)

## **November 18 & 23**

The political geography of localities  
Political geography and everyday life

Reading: Article by Mitchell, 1991 (on Canvas)  
Article by Painter, 2006 (on Canvas)

**\*Graduate student take-home midterm handed out on Nov. 18 and due in class on Nov. 23**

# **DRAFT**

## **November 25**

No class – Happy Thanksgiving. Work on our short papers.

## **November 30**

The political geography of the environment

Readings: Agnew and Muscarà, pp. 183-199 of Chapter 5  
Article by Dalby (on Canvas)

## **December 2**

The contemporary world in political geographic perspective

Reading: Agnew and Muscarà, Chapters 5 & 6

**\* Undergraduate short paper due in class**

**\* Graduate student paper due in class**

**December 8, 2:45 – 4:15 pm - EXAM COVERING SECOND HALF OF THE CLASS (i.e., not cumulative)**