



GEOG 607 SEMINAR: GEOPOLITICS

Instructor: Alexander B. Murphy

Fall 2012

Mondays, 14:00-16:50

Condon 207

This graduate geography seminar explores the concept of geopolitics—a term with widely varying connotations and a notably checkered past. The goals of the seminar are to understand the nature of geopolitics as a conceptual construct, the different ways it is deployed, and the ways in which research in geography can contribute to geopolitical understanding.

Seminars offer the opportunity for in-depth exploration of a particular topic. Exploration will proceed through common reading, discussion, and debate. Students will also conduct independent research on a geopolitical issue or topic. Students will also conduct independent research on a topic of interest to them—showing how geopolitical ideas or circumstances shape outcomes on the ground. Portions of a number of sessions will be devoted to the presentation and discussion of student research.

Student contributions will be in both written and oral form. There are four critical components to student participation in the seminar: (1) digesting assigned readings and coming to class prepared to discuss them; (2) regularly serving as a discussion leader for readings during the term; (3) conducting independent research and preparing a paper of 15-20 pages that could take the form of a term paper, article, dissertation chapter, or series of shorter papers; and (4) giving an oral presentation of the research undertaken during the term. Grades for the seminar will be on a pass/no pass basis; acceptable performance in each of the categories of student participation is necessary to receive a passing grade.

Sept. 25 Introduction to the subject area
 Differing understandings of geopolitics
 Discussion of seminar structure and student research topics

Readings: John Agnew, *Geopolitics: Re-visioning World Politics*, 2nd ed (Routledge, 1998), pp. 1-10.

Saul Cohen, *Geopolitics of the World System* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), chapter 2.

Colin Flint, *Introduction to Geopolitics* (Routledge, 2006), pp. 13, 16-17, 27-29.

Alexander B. Murphy, Mark Bassin, David Newman, Paul Reuber, and John Agnew, “Is There a Politics to Geopolitics?” *Progress in Human Geography*, 28(5), 2004, pp. 619-640.

Oct. 2 Classical geopolitics (early 1900s)
Discussion of possible paper topics

Readings: Michael Heffernan, "Fin de Siècle, Fin dd Monde? On the Origins of European Geopolitics, 1890-1920, in *Geopolitical Traditions*, K. Dodds and D. Atkinson, eds. (Routledge, 2000), pp. 27-51.

Frederich Ratzel, "The Laws of the Spatial Growth of States," R. Bolin translation of "Die Gesetze des räumlichen Wachstums der Staaten," *Petermanns Mitteilungen*, 42, 1896, pp. 97-107.

A. T. Mahan, "The United States Looking Outward," *The Atlantic*, December, 1890.

Halford J. Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History," *The Geographical Journal*, 23 (4), 1904, pp. 421-437.

Neil Smith, "Bowman's *New World and the Council on Foreign Relations*," *Geographical Review* 76 (4), 1986, pp. 438-460.

Oct. 9 Geopolitics in the middle of the 20th century
Commitment to student paper topics

Readings: Halford J. Mackinder, "The Round World and the Winning of the Peace," *Foreign Affairs*, 21 (4), 1943, pp. 595-605.

Nicholas J. Spykman, *The Geography of the Peace* (Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1944, chapters 1 & 4.

Isaiah Bowman, "The Strategy of Territorial Decisions," *Foreign Affairs*, 24 (2), 1946, pp. 177-194.

X (George F. Kennan), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs*, July 1947.

Saul Cohen, "Geostrategic and Geopolitical Regions," condensed from *Geography and Politics in a World Divided* (Random House, 1963), chapter 16 in E. Kasperson and J.V. Minghi, *The Structure of Political Geography* (Aldine, 1969).

Oct. 16 The rise of critical geopolitics

Readings: Klaus Dodds and James D. Sidaway, "Locating critical geopolitics," *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space*, 12 (5), 1994, pp. 516-525.

John Agnew and Stuart Corbridge, "The New Geopolitics: The Dynamics of Geopolitical Disorder," in R.J. Johnston and P.J. Taylor, eds, *A World in Crisis?* (Blackwell, 1986), chapter 10.

Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "Postmodern Geopolitics? The Monder Geopolitical Imagination and Beyond," in G.O. Tuathail and Simon Dalby, eds., *Rethinking Geopolitics* (Routledge, 1998), chapter 1.

Simon Dalby, "Recontextualising Violence, Power and Nature: The Next Twenty Years of Critical Geopolitics?" *Political Geography*, 29, 2010, pp. 280-288.

Oct. 23 Academic commentaries on popular geopolitical formulations

Readings: Virginie Mamadouh "Reclaiming Geopolitics: The Geographers Strike Back," in Nurit Kliot and David Newman (eds) *Geopolitics at the End of the Twentieth Century* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), pp 118-138.

Mark Basin, "Civilisations and Their Discontents: Political Geography and Geopolitics in the Huntington Thesis," *Geopolitics*, 12 (3), 2007, pp. 351-374.

Simon Dalby, "Regions, Strategies and Empire in the Global War on Terror," *Geopolitics* 12, 2007, pp. 586-606.

Colin Flint and Steven M. Radil, "Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism: Situating al-Qaeda and the Global War on Terror within Geopolitical Trends and Structures," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 50 (2), 2009, pp. 150-171. [And commentary by Ralph Clem]

Oct. 30 Academic perspectives on recent geopolitical issues

Readings: Simon Dalby, "Geopolitics and Global Security: Culture, Identity, and the 'Pogo' Syndrome," in *Rethinking Geopolitics*, Gearóid Ó Tuathail and Simon Dalby, eds. (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 295-313.

Susan Roberts, Anna Secor and Matthew Sparke, "Neoliberal Geopolitics," *Antipode* 35. 2003. pp. 886-897.

Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), chapters 1-2.

Alexander B. Murphy, "Trapped in the Logic of the Modern State System? European Integration in the Wake of the Financial Crisis," *Geopolitics*, forthcoming.

Nov. 6 Reports on recent influential books you have chosen to read

Nov. 13 Feminist geopolitics

Readings: Lorraine Dowler and Joanne Sharp, "A Feminist Geopolitics?" *Space & Polity*, 5 (3), 2001, pp. 165-176.

Jennifer Hyndman "Towards a Feminist Geopolitics," *The Canadian Geographer*, 45 (2), 2001, pp. 210-222.

Joanne Sharpe, Indigestible Geopolitics: The Many Readings of the Digest," *Geopolitics*, 8 (2), 2003, pp. 197-206.

Jennifer Hyndman, "The Question of "the Political" in Critical Geopolitics: Querying the "Child Soldier" in the "War on Terror," *Political Geography* 29 (5), 2010, pp. 247-255.

Nov. 20 Geopolitics and the environment

Readings: Simon Dalby, "Ecopolitical Discourse: 'Environmental Security' and Political Geography," *Progress in Human Geography*, 16(4), 1992, pp. 503-22.

Daniel Deudney, "Environmental Security: A Critique," in Daniel Deudney and Richard Matthew, eds., *Contested Grounds: Security and Conflict in the New Environmental Politics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 187-219.

Noel Castree, "The Geopolitics of Nature," in John Agnew, Katharyne Mitchell and Gearóid Ó Tuathail, eds., *A Companion to Political Geography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 423-439.

Nancy Lee Peluso and Peter Vandergeest, "Political Ecologies of War and Forests: Counterinsurgencies and the Making of National Natures," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 101 (3), 2011, pp. 587-608.

Nov. 27 Presentation of student research projects

*****Final written projects for the seminar are due at 5 pm on xxxxx*****

Other possible readings of potential interest (in no particular order):

Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "Samuel Huntington and the 'Civilizing' of Global Space," in *The Geopolitics Reader*, G. O Tuathail, S. Dalby, and P. Routledge, eds. (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 170-176.

David Newman, "Geopolitics Renaissant: Territory, Sovereignty and the World Political Map," *Geopolitics*, Vol 3 (1), 1999, pp. 1-16.

David Newman, "The Geopolitics of Peacemaking in Israel-Palestine," *Political Geography*, 21, 2002, pp. 629-646.

Robert McNamara, "Global Security in the Twenty First Century with Particular Reference to the Role of the USA," *Geopolitics* 5(1), 2000, pp. 145-164.

Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "Geopolitical Structures and Geopolitical Cultures: Towards Conceptual Clarity in the Critical Study of Geopolitics," in *Geopolitical Perspectives on World Politics*, Lasha Tchantouridze, ed., Bison Paper 4, Winnipeg: Centre for Defence and Security Studies, November 2003 [http://www.toal.net/Publish/Papers/Toal2003GeopoliticalCultures.pdf.]

Dodds, K. (2011). Gender, Geopolitics, and Geosurveillance in the Bourne Ultimatum. *Geographical Review*, 101(1), 88-105.

Dittmer, J., Moasio, S., Ingram, A., & Dodds, K. (2011). Have you heard the one about the disappearing ice? Recasting Arctic geopolitics. *Political Geography*, 30(4), 202-214.