Course Syllabus
GGS 301-001: Political Geography
Fall 2018

Instructor:
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Course Basics:
Meeting times: Tuesdays, 4:30-7:10pm
Location: Robinson Hall B113
Web Location: Blackboard
Office hours: By appointment only

Required Text:

Course Overview:
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.

Each week we will examine a different concept, such as the nation-state, territory, neoliberalism, or hegemony. This will be discussed in relation to concrete case studies to illustrate these concepts at play. Students are expected to have read the assigned readings before coming to class. This is an upper level class and there will be a high reading load, for which you should be prepared. Apart from the main text book (see above), there will be additional readings found on Blackboard.

Course Objectives:
Based upon the readings, lecture notes, and independent study, students will be able to:
1) To identify geopolitical, social, economic, cultural and historical trends (issues) in major world political regions, as well as underlying reasons of selected inter-state conflict.
2) To understand through assessment and research the geostrategic value of these regions to U.S. national interests and foreign policy.
3) To examine major global and transnational issues that present major threats to U.S. national security, and political and economic stability of the world family of nation-states.
4) To develop the ability to effectively and authoritatively research and present executive summaries of geopolitical trends and issues in the world arena.
5) Be able to apply key concepts in political geography to understanding the political world around you.

I am always open to feedback, or calls for assistance or advice. Please make arrangements to meet in my office if there is anything about the course you would like to discuss.

Student Requirements:
To successfully complete this course, students must complete all assigned readings and exercises as well as attend class; neither the textbook nor lecture notes alone will suffice. Students are encouraged to participate in class discussion, but may also be called upon at any time to offer their comments and views on class topics. **NOTE: assigned readings are to be completed prior to class.**

Updated 10 August 2018
## Course Schedule (subject to change):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Homework and Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>28 AUG</td>
<td>Intro/Course Overview Understanding Globalization</td>
<td>Review Syllabus Friedman</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 SEP</td>
<td>IR Theories</td>
<td>Baylis Flint &amp; Taylor</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>World Systems Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11 SEP</td>
<td>Territorial States</td>
<td>Flint &amp; Taylor Huntington</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nation, nationalism and citizenship</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>18 SEP</td>
<td>Frozen Conflicts</td>
<td>Melvin</td>
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<td><strong>Role Playing Exercise #1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>25 SEP</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Ikenberry Walt</td>
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<td></td>
<td>International &amp; Regional Institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2 OCT</td>
<td>Global Patterns/Trends in Conflict</td>
<td>NIC; Mearsheimer; Beckley; Jervis,</td>
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<td><strong>Mid-Term Assigned</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>9 OCT</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>16 OCT</td>
<td>Political Geography of Democracy</td>
<td>Flint &amp; Taylor</td>
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<td><strong>Mid-Term Due</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>23 OCT</td>
<td>Competition for Critical Natural Resources</td>
<td>NIC; Jones; Pearce; Xu</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>30 OCT</td>
<td>International Political Economy</td>
<td>Gilpin; Halper</td>
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<td><strong>Role Playing Exercise #2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>6 NOV</td>
<td>Geographies of War and Peace</td>
<td>Hardin; Perkins; FSI;</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>13 NOV</td>
<td>Place and Identity Politics</td>
<td>Flint &amp; Taylor</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>20 NOV</td>
<td>Cities as Localities</td>
<td>Flint &amp; Taylor Lubin</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>27 NOV</td>
<td>Imperialism</td>
<td>Flint &amp; Taylor</td>
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<td><strong>Research Paper Due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>4 DEC</td>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>18 DEC</td>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td><strong>EXAM PERIOD</strong></td>
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Detailed Weekly Readings:

**Week 1:**
Friedman, Thomas. *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*, Chapter 1 (While I Was Sleeping).

**Week 2:**
Baylis, John. *The Globalization of World Politics*, Chapter 6 (Realism), Chapter 7 (Liberalism), and Chapter 9 (Marxist Theories).
Flint & Taylor Chapter 1 (*skim*)

**Week 3:**
Flint & Taylor Chapters 4 and 5


**Week 4:**

**Role Playing Exercise #1 Nagorno Karabakh Conflict**

**Week 5:**


**Week 6:**

**Week 7: NO CLASS**

**Week 8:**
Flint & Taylor Chapter 6

**Week 9:**


Role Playing Exercise #2 Territorial Dispute

Week 11:

Week 12:
Flint & Taylor Chapter 8

Week 13:
Flint & Taylor Chapter 7

Week 14:
Flint & Taylor Chapter 3

Week 15: N/A
Classroom Expectations:
1) NO LAPTOPS or TABLETS or PHONES are to be used by students during lecture.
2) CELL PHONES must be SILENCED before class begins.
3) NO TEXTING, which is obvious given expectation #1. I want your full and undivided attention. This also means that if you need to sleep, stay at home.
4) BE ON TIME - Students are expected to be on time for class. Should circumstances arise that make you late, do not disrupt the class as you enter; take the first isle seat that is available and do not walk across the room.
5) CHIT-CHAT IS UNACCEPTABLE during lecture. If you have a question or comment, raise your hand and let me know.
6) KEEP THE ROOM CLEAN. If you pack it in, pack it out; leave your seat better than you found it.
7) COMPLETE THE READING. Do all readings prior to the class that it is assigned and be prepared to discuss during class.

Deliverables:
Role Playing Exercise (15%)
Students will formulate and represent the decisions of a state as part of a multilateral role-playing exercise. These scenarios will attempt to integrate some aspect of geopolitical events with course content and key learning objectives. The instructor will provide students with context and background information prior to the exercise. Students will be expected to conduct independent research to identify national interests and policy positions. Following the exercise, students will have the opportunity to discuss the decision-making process and actions taken during the exercise, and review those in the context of key theories and core concepts learned in the course.

Take home mid-term exam (20%)
Students will be given a set of take-home mid-term exam essay questions 2 October, with the mid-term responses due no later than 1200 EST, 16 October. Students will select three out of five essay questions, with each response being 1.5 – 2.5 pages in length not including citations (12-point Times New Roman font, 1.5 spacing). Although the mid-term exam is open-book, students must respond to the questions on their own (and not as a group effort).

Group Presentation (20%)
Students will be divided into small groups at the beginning of the course and will assemble a briefing appropriate for a senior policy maker (10 minutes in length) on an issue covered in the Lecture Topics. Each group will be expected to define the problem and its sub-components; to briefly explain its relevance to U.S. strategic interests; to demonstrate how the geography is utilized to understand the issue; and make policy recommendations for the near future. Each group will submit a copy of briefing slides/materials to the instructor via email prior to 3 December. Presentations will be given in class 4 December.

Analytical Paper on a Geopolitical topic (reference the Lecture Topics). (30%)
Students will prepare an academic research paper on a geostrategic issue. Students will submit the topic for the writing requirement no later than 25 September. On no more than 1 page, the student will describe the topic and a short description on the relevance of the topic to the course of study. The instructor must approve the topic.

Papers will be graded on the following qualities:

1. Well-defined thesis or problem/issue statement.
2. Clarity of the paper’s logic in making a reasonable argument and drawing a conclusion or recommendation for policy.
3. Use of appropriate evidence to support the analysis, to include the quality of the sources of evidence.
4. Application of a theory or concept learned during the course, such as an international relations theory.
5. Present one or more countering points of view.
6. Use of appropriate citations and endnotes, using formats consistent with APA.
7. Absence of mechanical issues (grammar, punctuation, spelling/typos, within page limit constraints).

The research paper will be 5 to 7 pages in length, 1.5 spacing. Papers will be written in 12-point Times New Roman font, with 1” margins on the top/bottom and sides. Students will use APA Style and a cover page. A bibliography is required. Title page and bibliography do not count towards the page count.

Late Policy on Assignments:
A maximum of a one week extension with a minimum of a two letter-grade deduction beginning at the start of class the day it is due. To receive the highest credit possible, assignments must be turned-in on-time (at the beginning of class the day it is due). It is best to begin work on assignments as soon as possible to allow yourself plenty of time to prepare a well-researched product. These exercises are not meant to be difficult, but they do require a bit of thought, time, and effort.

Class Participation (15%):
Student participation is a critical component of this course. Students bring a wealth of knowledge and individual experiences that will help fellow students in shaping their mental framework for assessing global issues and constructing their own viewpoints. Students are responsible for reading the assigned “required” chapters and articles before class. In order to receive maximum credit for participation, students must demonstrate mastery of the concepts in the “required” readings.

Attendance at Academic Conference/Think Tank/Cultural Event (Extra Credit)
Students may attend up to three conferences, cultural activities or think tank events related to Political Geography during the course of the semester and receive extra credit. The instructor must approve the event prior to attendance. Students will not be excused from any class to attend an event for the purpose of receiving extra credit. Students must prepare and submit a 1-page (12pt font, single spaced) summary of the key discussion points within 1 week of the event to receive the extra credit. Each 1-page summary will add 1 percent credit towards the final class grade (up to a maximum of 3 percent).

Grading Scheme and Policy:
| Participation | 150 |
| Role Playing Exercise | 150 |
| Mid-term Exam | 200 |
| Group Presentation | 200 |
| Analytical Paper | 300 |

Point Translation:
980 - 1000 = A+  
920 - 979 = A  
900 - 919 = A-  
880 - 899 = B+  
820 - 879 = B  
800 - 819 = B-  
780 - 799 = C+  
720 - 779 = C  
700 - 719 = C-  
600 - 699 = D  
0 - 599 = F
**Academic Integrity:**
GMU has an Honor Code (see http://oai.gmu.edu/) with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification.

**Office of Disability Services:**
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, http://ods.gmu.edu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

**Resources:**
The Writing Center: http://writingcenter.gmu.edu
University Libraries, Ask a Librarian: http://library.gmu.edu/ask
Counseling and Psychological Services: http://caps.gmu.edu
University Catalog: http://catalog.gmu.edu
University Policies: http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu