

45-561 (01)

International Relations Theory

Dr. Jamey Essex / Fall 2012 / Wed2:30-5:20 pm / Chrysler Hall North 1137

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Course description

This graduate course provides a survey of recent literature on theories and methods in the study of international politics and international relations. This allows for unique content and approaches each time the course is taught. This semester, we will explore theories and practices associated with geopolitics, as understood from a primarily geographical and critical perspective. Assigned readings provide both general historical and conceptual overview of geopolitics as well as in-depth analyses on specific themes such as gender and identity, environmental governance, and shifting logics of territory, state power, and warfare. We will approach geopolitics not just as a form of strategy and statecraft, but also as an uneven and highly contested form of geographical framing and representation, rooted in and acting not just through traditional high-level political actors and institutions, but also popular culture, mass media, and everyday forms of power.

Course goals and learning outcomes

The goals of this course are:

- To provide students a thematic overview of major themes, debates, and concepts related to the critical study of geopolitics in relation to international relations.
- To help students develop skills in critical thinking, writing, and analysis, and to improve and sharpen students' academic research skills.
- To facilitate self-directed learning and political literacy beyond the classroom.

At the conclusion of this course, successful students will be able to:

- Identify and explain major themes, debates, concepts, and arguments associated with the critical study of geopolitics.
- Recognize, discuss, and contribute to arguments about geopolitics and international relations with consideration of critical and geographical approaches to the topic.
- Demonstrate improved ability to read, understand, and discuss complex material orally and in writing, and to carry out academic research.
- Demonstrate increased political literacy and engage more effectively in the political, economic, and social life of their communities.

Required reading

Required reading for this course consists of **six books**, available at the university bookstore or through Amazon, Chapters, and other online retailers:

- Dalby, Simon. (2009) *Security and Environmental Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Dittmer, Jason. (2010) *Popular Culture, Geopolitics, and Identity*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Elden, Stuart. (2009) *Terror and Territory: The Spatial Extent of Sovereignty*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Enloe, Cynthia. (2000) *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Relations (updated edition)*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Flint, Colin. (2011) *Introduction to Geopolitics (2nd edition)*. London: Routledge.
- Gregory, Derek. (2004) *The Colonial Present*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Assignments and grades

Your grade in this course will be based on several components, but all require your attendance in class each week and your active participation in all facets of the course.

- Participation (20%): Participation marks are based on the frequency and (especially) quality of your contribution to class discussion (half of the participation mark), and on weekly submission of reading questions and commentaries via the course CLEW site (the other half of the grade). There are 12 weeks in the term – for the first week (September 12) it is not necessary to submit questions and comments via CLEW; you also get one “freebie” during the term, meaning you must submit questions and/or comments on the readings 10 times to get full credit for that portion of your participation mark.
- Summary literature reviews (40% total, 20% each): The course content is divided across five themes, centered around each of the books we will read, while Flint’s introductory volume provides a course-long backbone to structure our reading. You should choose two of these themes (narrowing it as necessary) and construct a summary review of contemporary research on this theme, 7 to 10 pages in length and relying on at least 10 academic sources for each review. In this way, you will explore published research in the selected theme in more detail than what we can cover in class alone, and you will gain valuable experience in the process and art of constructing a literature review, which you will need to do for 45-500 and in your master’s paper or thesis. The first of these is due no later than **October 17**; the second is due no later than **November 14**.

- Final research paper (40%): An initial research question and outline are due in class on **October 24** (no marks, just for feedback); the final research papers (16-20 pages) are due no later than **12 noon on December 14**.

Participation

As this is a seminar course, your active engagement and participation are crucial to the success of the class – no one wants to sit in our seminar room and listen to me lecture for three hours a week while you stare at me and at each other. So I expect you will attend class **every week**, and that you will arrive **prepared** and ready to discuss the materials. Please note that the 20% mark outlined above is for participation and submission of discussion questions, and **not** for attendance. If you are not in class, of course, you cannot participate, but simply being here is not sufficient to ensure full marks in this portion of your grade. Neither, however, do I mark participation based solely on how much you talk. Rather, the mark you receive will reflect both the frequency and the quality of your contribution to the class discussion.

Course expectations

Below I outline very clearly what I expect of you as a student in this course, and what you should expect of me as the instructor. For more information on the rules and regulations that govern student rights and responsibilities, please consult the University Senate bylaws (Bylaws 31, 32, 33, and 51 in particular) and the Academic Integrity Office online at <http://web4.uwindsor.ca/senate> and www.uwindsor.ca/aio.

In this course and in this classroom, I expect that you will:

- Attend class regularly (i.e., every day), arrive on time, and do all required reading;
- Pay attention, turn off your cell phone, refrain from distracting yourself and your classmates, and use your laptop only for class-related activities;
- Approach the course materials with an open mind and a serious attitude;
- Strictly adhere to the student code of conduct and observe the University's policies regarding academic honesty;
- Respect your fellow students' right to learn in a safe and hospitable classroom;
- Respect and take advantage of my office hours, particularly if you are falling behind or having difficulty with the material;
- Understand that grades refer to the quality and precision of the work being graded, *not* to your need for a particular grade or to an open-ended negotiation between you and me.

For my part, you can expect that I will:

- Arrive to class on time and well-prepared to lecture and facilitate discussion;
- Complete the grading of exams and assignments in a timely fashion;
- Reply to emails in a timely fashion, usually within two days;

- Be available during my scheduled office hours, and will re-schedule them if necessary (i.e., I won't cancel them without making them up at some other time);
- Take your questions and ideas seriously, so long as they are relevant to the material;
- Maintain a relaxed but professional classroom space for learning and discussion;
- Treat all students equitably with regard to grading and class discussion.

Classroom etiquette and academic dishonesty

Consistent with University of Windsor policy, cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty are **not tolerated**. Academic dishonesty includes turning in written work that is not your own, purposefully failing to provide adequate or full citations, and feigning illness to avoid turning in work on time. Those caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a **zero** on the assignment and will not be allowed to redo the work. Graduate students caught plagiarizing or cheating **endanger their status in the Graduate Program**

In class, you are expected to respect others' right to learn and discuss course materials in a safe and comfortable environment. You should rely on facts, reason, and evidence to back arguments. Overtly racist, sexist, or otherwise inflammatory remarks will not be tolerated. I am very open about my own political views, and I encourage open debate and exchange of ideas.

Course Schedule

Sept 12: Introductions and assignments

- No reading (but you could get started on Colin Flint's book anyway)

Sept 19: Making sense of geopolitics

- Flint, *Intro to Geopolitics*, ch 1-3

Sept 26: The territory-sovereignty nexus

- Flint, *Intro to Geopolitics*, ch5
- Elden, *Terror and Territory*, Introduction and ch 1-2

Oct 3: The territory-sovereignty nexus

- Elden, *Terror and Territory*, ch 3-5 and Coda

Oct 10: Neo-colonial and imperial relations

- Flint, *Intro to Geopolitics*, ch 6
- Gregory, *The Colonial Present*, ch 1-4

Oct 17: Neo-colonial and imperial relations

- Gregory, *The Colonial Present*, ch 5-9

Oct 24: Environment and 'green geopolitics'

- Flint, *Intro to Geopolitics*, ch 8
- Dalby, *Security and Environmental Change*, ch1-3

Oct 31: Environment and 'green geopolitics'

- Dalby, *Security and Environmental Change*, ch 4-6 and Conclusion

Nov 7: Gender and geopolitics

- Flint, *Intro to Geopolitics*, ch 4 and 9
- Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, ch 1-3

Nov 14: Gender and geopolitics

- Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, ch 4-9

Nov 21: Popular culture and geopolitics

- Dittmer, *Popular Culture, Geopolitics, and Identity*, ch 1-4

Nov 28: Popular culture and geopolitics

- Dittmer, *Popular Culture, Geopolitics, and Identity*, ch 5-8