

Geography 128
The Geography of International Affairs
Fall 2009
22 Deike
MWF 10:10-11:00AM

Instructor: Thomas Sigler

Office: 215 Walker

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1-3pm and by appointment

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Teaching Assistant Office and Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10AM-Noon in Walker 329.

Required Course Texts:

- *Political Geography*, Colin Flint and Peter Taylor, 5th Edition
- Additional readings will be made available on ANGEL
- The New York Times (Monday-Friday editions)

Course Description: When we think of international affairs, we often think of the United Nations, foreign wars, and world trade summits. Though the geography of international affairs is certainly comprised of these and other such elements, each of these has a historical antecedent and a theoretical frame. In order to understand the realm of international affairs in its contemporary context, it is necessary to understand how we got here. One fundamental part of this is understanding how our global political system came to be and how contemporary systems are based on past iterations. The other fundamental part is understanding the theories that shaped these developments insofar as their influence on global political systems. In this course, we will examine the global political system as it is, as it was, and as it might be in the future.

Course Objectives: This course provides you with conceptual tools, which will enable you to not only understand, analyze, and explain international affairs/geopolitical phenomena for academic purposes, but also to enable you to use these concepts in 'real' life so that you develop critical skills to comprehend, and articulate your reality more comprehensively. I encourage you to think critically; think critically means to delve really deep beneath appearances, superficiality, and manifestations to understand the mechanisms, the nuts and bolts, systemic imperatives, and the hidden power structures guiding events and phenomena. You will be introduced to the World of Geography, and demonstrate the use of spatial perspectives (like territory, resources, raw material, place-based specialized labor) in understanding and explaining global and local events.

Learning Outcomes: By taking this course, students will 1) become familiar with the major approaches in political geography for examining territorial forms, structures and change and 2) develop critical reading and analytical skills.

Requirements

Readings. All assigned readings are listed in the Syllabus Schedule below. You are expected to have read the assigned material prior to attending the corresponding lecture. The majority of the assigned readings will be from the textbook, *Political Geography*, FIFTH edition, by Flint and Taylor, which is available in the Penn State Bookstore.

During certain weeks, there will also be supplementary readings from other sources. These will be posted under the ‘lessons’ tab on ANGEL. The lectures will draw on major themes from the readings as well as material not discussed explicitly in the readings. The exams will cover material from both the lectures as well as the readings. You will also be responsible for the material covered in films shown in class.

In addition, you will be required to read *The New York Times* on a daily basis (M-F). *The New York Times* is available on the web at www.nytimes.com as well as throughout campus for free. Why just one newspaper and why the *NYT*? Fair questions and I hope I can give fair answers. I feel that it is an important part of your college education to engage a “quality” newspaper on a daily basis. A college education means knowing what is going on in the world beyond the classroom walls, the campus, and Happy Valley. In this class we will not simply read the newspaper and summarize articles. Instead, we will become informed readers of the newspaper by applying our political geography perspective to an interpretation of the current events being reported. But why the *NYT*? The cost of focusing on just one newspaper is that we are exposed to just one editorial perspective. But like it or not, the *NYT* is a “paper of record”, and what is (and is not) reported and discussed in the *NYT* plays a key role in defining the content of the “news.” So, love it or hate it the *NYT* is a key media source and one you should be familiar with.

Examinations. There will be three exams over the course of the semester (see Schedule below for dates). The exams will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay, and they will cover material from the lectures, readings, and films. Each exam will only include material covered since the previous exam. The last exam will be given during finals week.

Research Assignments. There will be three short research assignments. Specific details of the assignments will be provided in class at least two weeks prior to their due date. If you need assistance with research techniques beyond that which is provided in class, please see the assistant before the due date. Late assignments will be penalized 10 points (out of 100) for each day over due.

All direct quotations must be properly cited in the body of the text (providing the author’s last name, the date, and page number) as well as in the bibliography using APA or other standard formats. If you are not familiar with proper formatting please see me during my office hours. Additionally, if you present specific information that is not common knowledge (*e.g.* statistics), you are required to include an in-text citation (including the author’s last name, date, page number, etc.) to document the source of such information.

Attendance and Participation. All students are required to attend the course lectures. There will be material discussed in lectures and films that is not covered in the course readings, which will be tested on the exams. In order to do well on exams, therefore, attending lectures is crucial. Attendance will be monitored through four “pop” quizzes, and absences may be excused only for family or medical emergencies with proper documentation. Make-up quizzes and exams will only be permitted with documentation of family or medical emergencies. All make-up exams will be in the form of essay questions based on the materials covered in class and the readings.

Pop Quizzes. Over the course over the semester, there will be four “pop” quizzes. These quizzes will test information from that day’s assigned reading, The New York Times, and/or information covered in the previous lecture. The purpose of these quizzes is a) to encourage students to keep up with the readings and b) to monitor attendance. Pop quizzes will consist of 2 questions. However, each quiz will be worth 3 percentage points, as students will receive one point just for taking the quiz. For example, students scoring 1/2 will receive 2 points and students scoring 2/2 will receive all three 3 points. If you take all four quizzes and answer all of the questions correctly, you will receive 12% (out of 10%) for the quiz component of your grade.

Videos. On several occasions, we will watch videos on relevant topics, such as the PBS series *Commanding Heights*. The purpose of these videos is to foster connections between theoretical material and real-world issues. You will be responsible for material presented in these films as well as material from subsequent classroom discussion. This material will be tested on exams and you may be asked to call upon these videos in your research assignments.

Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following calculation:

1 st exam:	15%
2 nd exam:	15%
3 rd exam:	15%
1 st research assignment:	15%
2 nd research assignment:	15%
3 rd research assignment:	15%
Pop Quizzes:	10%

Final grades will not be curved. The following ranking system will be used to determine final grades for the course:

A:	93-100
A-:	90-92
B+:	87-89
B:	83-86
B-:	80-82
C+:	77-79
C:	70-76

D: 60-69
F: <60

Note: Final grades will not be rounded up to the nearest whole number, or letter grade. For instance, if you have a total of 92.75, you still get an A-, rather than an A (see above). In order to get an A, you must have a 93 or higher. There will be no extra-credit opportunities in the course.

Class Schedule. The course schedule for lectures and important dates (*e.g.* exams, paper due dates) is listed below. I shall do my best to stick to the syllabus schedule, although I reserve the right to modify it if something unexpected comes up during the semester.

Policies

Office Hours. I strongly encourage you to come to my office hours. As the course instructor, my main goal is to help you learn, so if you have any questions about the material, or the class in general, you are more than welcome to come speak with me during office hours. If you are not available during that time, email me to set up an appointment.

Teaching Assistant. Teaching assistants provide academic support for students just as instructors do. In particular, your teaching assistant will be doing the majority of the grading for this course. If you have a question about the course material, do not hesitate to contact your teaching assistant for help or clarification. Questions about grades should also generally be directed to your teaching assistant. If you feel that you would like to speak directly with the instructor, I am happy to field questions about anything during my office hours or by email. Please remember to be courteous in all correspondence. ☺

Note to Students with Disabilities. Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services, ODS located in room 116 Boucke Building at 814-863-1807(V/TTY). For further information regarding ODS, please visit their web site at www.equity.psu.edu/ods/. Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable academic adjustments.

Email and ANGEL: Send all email to me using the email address listed on the first page of the syllabus (tjs316@psu.edu) or via the ANGEL web page for the course. I will do my best to respond promptly to your questions. ANGEL can be accessed by typing the following into a web browser: cms.psu.edu. You will then be prompted to type your Penn State User ID and Password. Next, click on the course GEOG 128.

To make sure that you will receive Angel emails, please do the following in Angel: Click on the "Communicate" tab, and then click on "View Inbox". Click on "Preferences" and fill in your forwarding address (*i.e.* write your Webmail address and if you prefer you can also write another email address that you normally use). Make sure that the "Forwarding mode" is set to "Forward mail and keep as new" and make sure to save your settings! If you send an email through Angel,

please make sure to check "Send a copy to each recipients' internet email". NOTE: ANGEL ONLY WORKS WITH MOZILLA FIREFOX.

Deadlines. The first two exams will be given during the regularly scheduled lecture times on the dates listed in the syllabus schedule (see below). The 3rd exam, which is not cumulative, will be given during finals week. Students cannot re-take exams. Make-up exams can only be taken if the student has official, written documentation of a death in the family or a personal medical emergency. Late assignments will be marked down one letter grade per day. Late submissions will be accepted for partial credit until the next-to-last week of class.

Academic Dishonesty. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic 'F' for the course grade, as well as possible disciplinary action by the university. This consists of cheating on exams or plagiarism on the papers. Plagiarism includes using another author's work as your own or fabricating information or citations in your paper. Properly citing sources is absolutely fundamental to academic writing, so if you have any questions about whether you are adequately citing your sources, please discuss them with me during office hours. For further information on the EMS College's academic dishonesty policy, see the following website: <http://www.ems.psu.edu/students/integrity/index.html>

SCHEDULE

Day	Date	Topic	Assignment
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Week 1

Mon	8/24	Introduction and Overview	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Wed	8/26	Geopolitical Imaginations	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Fri	8/28	Origins of the Inter-State System, Part I	Flint and Taylor 1-39

Week 2

Mon	8/31	Origins of the Inter-State System, Part II	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Wed	9/2	World Systems: Defining the Core, Periphery, and Semi-Periphery	Flint and Taylor 41-78
Fri	9/4	Guest Lecture: The Kyoto Protocol and the Geopolitics of Climate Change	Barrett: Climate Change Summit (ANGEL)

Week 3

Mon	9/7	NO CLASS: UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Wed	9/9	FIRST PAPER ASSIGNED Nationalism	Flint and Taylor 157-193
Fri	9/11	Video: <i>Freedom Now: Colonial Rule is Overthrown in India and Africa</i>	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>

Week 4

Mon	9/14	Nations, States, and Countries	Flint and Taylor 117-155
Wed	9/16	The Rise of Colonialism and Imperialism	Flint and Taylor 79-116
Fri	9/18	Colonies, Commonwealths, and Countries: The Political Geography of the Caribbean	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>

Week 5

Mon	9/21	Video: <i>Commanding Heights: The Battle of Ideas</i>	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Wed	9/23	Video: <i>Commanding Heights: The Battle of Ideas (continued)</i>	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Fri	9/25	FIRST PAPER DUE Decolonization	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>

Week 6

Mon	9/28	Exam Review	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Wed	9/30	EXAM 1	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Fri	10/2	Hegemonic Power and the Cycle of World Leadership	Ogborn: Historical Geographies of Globalization, c.1500-1800 (ANGEL)

Week 7

Mon	10/5	SECOND PAPER ASSIGNED Globalization	Read entry on “Globalization,” accessible at: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/globalization/
Wed	10/7	The Geography of the North/South Gap	Gramsci: Hegemony (ANGEL)
Fri	10/9	The Geography of International Law	Read “UN Millennium Declaration,” at: http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/millennium.htm and “UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” at http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html

Week 8

Mon	10/12	Case Study: Scramble for the Sea	Suddenly, a wider world below the waterline; The scramble for the seabed. <i>The Economist</i> , May 16, 2009, 391 (8631), p29. (ANGEL)
Wed	10/14	Case Study: The EU and Supranationalism	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Fri	10/16	Case Study: Pirates!	Dangerous Straits, from <i>National Geographic</i> (Oct. 2007), available at http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2007/10/malacca-strait-pirates/pirates-text ; Boot, Max (2009). Pirates, Then and Now, 88(4), 94. (ANGEL)

Week 9

Mon	10/19	A Clash of Civilizations?	Huntington: Clash of Civilizations, excerpts (on ANGEL)
Wed	10/21	The Making of the “Middle East”	Tariq: <i>Recolonizing Iraq</i> and Ahmad: <i>Imperial Sunset</i> (ANGEL)
Fri	10/23	SECOND PAPER DUE Case Study: Sudan and Darfur	Natsios, Andrew (2008). Beyond Darfur; Sudan’s Slide Toward Civil War. <i>Foreign Affairs</i> , 87(3), 77 (ANGEL)

Week 10

Mon	10/26	Case Study: Israel and Palestine	Mead, Walter Russell (2009). Change they can believe in: to make Israel safe, give Palestinians their due. <i>Foreign Affairs</i> 88(1), 59. (ANGEL)
Wed	10/28	THIRD PAPER ASSIGNED Exam Review	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Fri	10/30	EXAM 2	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>

Week 11

Mon	11/2	Video: <i>Brave New World: The Cold War Begins</i>	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Wed	11/4	Cold War Geopolitics	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Fri	11/6	Guest Lecture: The Geopolitics of Oil	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>

Week 12

Mon	11/9	The Berlin Wall, 20 Years Later	Browse through the <i>CNN Cold War Interactive Map</i> website accessible at: http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/kbank/maps/
Wed	11/11	Video: <i>Commanding Heights: The Agony of Reform</i>	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Fri	11/13	Video: <i>Commanding Heights: The Agony of Reform (continued)</i>	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>

Week 13

Mon	11/16	THIRD PAPER DUE The Geography of International Aid	Peet: Unholy Trinity, excerpts (on ANGEL)
Wed	11/18	Case Study: Conflict in the Congo	Autesserre, Severine (2008). The Trouble With Congo; How local disputes fuel regional conflict. <i>Foreign Affairs</i> , 87(3), 94 (ANGEL)
Fri	11/20	Guest Lecture: Economic Globalization	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>

Week 14

Mon	11/23	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Wed	11/25	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Fri	11/27	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>

Week 15

Mon	11/30	The State is Dead! Long Live the State?	Dicken: Global Shift, excerpt (ANGEL)
Wed	12/2	Video: <i>Commanding Heights: New Rules of the Game</i>	Flint and Taylor 242-273
Fri	12/4	Video: <i>Commanding Heights: New Rules of the Game (continued)</i>	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>

Week 16

Mon	12/7	Urban Governance	City as Spectacle: Culture and the Reimagining of Cities (ANGEL)
Wed	12/9	The Future of International Relations	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Fri	12/11	Exam Review	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>