World Political Geography

GEO 3471
Section 1
Spring 2014

Richard E. Tyre - Instructor
Department of Political Science
University of Central Florida
Office Hours: W 5:00-5:30
Office: 302N Phillips Hall
Email: Richard.Tyre@UCF.edu

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- -analyze the impact of political geography and its concepts on the global issues.
- -appreciate the intersection between political science, international relations, and geography.
- -understand the actors and stakeholders behind major global conflict issues.
- -critically analyze the popular media and print for accuracy and political bias.
- -participate in real-life simulated work in Political Geography.

Course Focus

We think of politics and geography as separate areas of interest; after all we have two separate disciplines, Political Science and Geography, each with their own institutional expressions, their own textbooks, etc. But in many ways they should be looked at as a seamless whole. Human geography is produced and politics is at the center of that production. Likewise politics always has a geography and cannot avoid it; think of the simple distinction between „domestic" and „foreign" policy or the structure of the American state: the idea of a distinction between state and federal governments and their respective, *geographically defined*, jurisdictions. Hence: ***Political Geography*.**

In this course we will develop and apply a framework for looking at the world through this particular lens; making certain things stand out, eliciting attention that previously might not have been forthcoming. Political geography is everywhere: in the city, in the country that we call the United States, in the world, and, yes, in this lecture room. You cannot understand the world without it, though politicians, and geographers for that matter, have often tried to. It will open your eyes.

Required Texts

Student Atlas of World Politics

Media
The course will utilize the BBC World News. Every day, students should stay informed with global issues via the BBC website and World Service bulletin. The World Service bulletin is a daily 5 minute presentation of the global news. It is highly advised to stay current on global issues.
This is easily accessed via: <**news.bbc.co.uk**>, then selecting Video and Audio.

Supplementary Course Materials
Supplementary course materials will include readings from articles, newspapers or websites. Several films may be assigned for viewing, available online and/or at the Strozier Library media center.

Final Grading Scale

A	> 93	B+	87 – 89.99	C+	77 – 79.99	D+	66 – 69.99
A-	90 – 92	B	83 – 86	C	72 - 76	D	62 – 65
		B-	80 – 82	C-	70 - 71	D-	60 – 61
						F	< 59.99

Grading Criteria
Online Blog: 20%
Individual Assignments, Quizzes, & Group Projects: 30%
Debate Analysis: 20%
Final Exam: 30%

- ***Reflection Papers & Debate Blog (through Blogspot.com)***
  Throughout the semester, personal reflection posts will be assigned based on the readings from the class and based on the debates that will take place throughout the semester. These blog posts will be graded on their ability to synthesize the material and apply the major points from the readings and debates on their own personal research or interest in Political Geography. Each post should be at least one to one and a half pages of typed, double-spaced text. Collectively, these blog posts will be worth 20% of the overall grade for the course. Blog posts will be graded at the end of the semester. Due dates for the blog posts appear in the course schedule and you should try to stay on task.

  A Blogspot.com blog must be created within the first 2 weeks of the semester
  .
- ***Individual Assignments, Quizzes, & Group Projects***
  Throughout the semester, many individual assignments will be posted online. There will also be two mini-group work projects assigned throughout the semester. The first group project will be based on an analysis of a given country and the second will be a Qualitative Research Project designed by your group. Each project, quiz and assignment will be worth 2-5% of your final grade. Collectively, these assignments and projects will be worth 30% of the overall grade for the course. Late assignments will be accepted for a 50% reduction in the grade after one class. Assignments more than 1 week late will not be accepted.

- ***Debate Analysis***
  Throughout the semester, debate topics will post. Students are asked to examine **BOTH** sides of these debate topics and arrive to class prepared to discuss the merits of **BOTH** sides.

  Debate Topics:
  1: Supranationalism
  2: Electoral Geography
  3: Colonialism
  4 The Role of the United States in the World
  5: War & International Conflict

- ***Final Exam***
  A comprehensive take-home, final exam will be handed out on Wednesday, April 15. This exam is due by **7:00 pm, Wednesday, April 29** in my office (302N Howard Phillips Hall). Late exams will not be accepted. This exam is a mini-project, in which you must answer and defend your answer to specific questions that relate to this class and your personal world views. The final exam will be worth 30% of your final grade.

Attendance Policy:

I do not hold a formal attendance policy. Attendance, however, will help each student understand the materials from the course and analyze the readings for their value to the course. This is a 3000 level course. We will simulate real-life work in Political Geography. Treat this course as a career. Throughout the semester, I will randomly take attendance and for each time you are not present, I will deduct 5% from your final grade.

In-Class Communication

The style of learning in this class requires open communication and respect for all other opinions. It is not my goal to force you to think as I think, but rather, to form your own global ideas and defend them. Throughout the class, you may be called out to defend your ideas. Do your best and just know that your inability to believe the same things I believe will NOT negatively affect your final grade, rather, I welcome healthy and constructive debate, but I do demand respect for differing opinions.

*All elements of this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor during the course with due notice. An effort will be made to avoid any changes but circumstances may necessitate potential alterations, particularly those related to course format, scheduling and content.