World Political Geography

GEO 3471
Tuesday Night Section
Spring 2015

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University of Central Florida
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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 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 Novels

- I Am a Soldier, Too **ISBN-13:** 978-1400077472
- Nervious Conditions **ISBN-13:** 978-0954702335

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 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: 10%
Individual Assignments, Quizzes, & Projects: 20%
Novel Analysis: 20%
Mid-Term & Final Exam: 50%

- ***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 10% 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 online 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 20% 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.

- ***Novel Analysis***
  Throughout the semester you are encouraged to read two (2) novels that put a face on some of the issues that we will discuss. I Am a Soldier, Too puts a face on war and shows how it effects more than just the soldiers fighting abroad. Nervous Conditions is a complex read that shows the impact of gender inequality, colonialism, and the 1st World/3rd World divide that can still be seen today. Students are asked to read **BOTH** novels and complete a minimum of six (6) page novel analysis, highlighting the themes and topics from the books and the class. More detailed information about this assignment will post when we discuss the themes and topics. The novel analysis is due April 26, 2016 (at the time of the final class, NO EXCEPTIONS).

- ***Mid-Term & Final Exam***
  There are two (2) exams throughout the semester. One is a Mid-Term that focuses on World Regional Geography and the other is a non-comprehensive Final Exam that focuses on World Political Geography, which is scheduled for Tuesday, May 3 at 7:00 PM. The exams will be worth 25% of your final grade each.

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.