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COURSE OUTLINE

## **Contemporary Geopolitics**

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**Office Hours:** Friday 10:30am – 12:00pm

**Office Location:** via Zoom (Link posted on CourseSpaces)

**Contact:** [jmateer@uvic.ca](mailto:jmateer@uvic.ca)

**Lecture:** Cornett Building B111

TWF: 12:30-1:20pm

**We acknowledge and respect the lək'wəḡən peoples on whose traditional and unceded territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course focuses on contemporary geopolitical theories. We examine different and competing ideas and consider how and if geographic logic of the international (or global) political order has changed. Discussion will initially focus on the historical progression of geopolitical reasoning and then will proceed to discuss imperial rivalries, concepts of hegemony and world order and the geopolitics of the Cold War and the post-Cold War eras. The final section of the course will consider theoretical struggles surrounding the geopolitics in the early 21st century and the challenges posed by critical geopolitics, social movements, environmental changes and feminist theory. Throughout, the primary concern is how the effects of scale, space and power in global politics is understood and experienced.

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### **REQUIRED TEXT(S)**

All required texts will be available on BrightSpace. There is no textbook for this course.

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### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Introduce students to various contemporary geopolitical issues that have led to transformations in the world political map.
- Introduce students to a series of regional case studies in order to gain a better understanding of the study of geopolitics.
- Guide students in becoming more critically aware of how and why their own geopolitical imaginations are constructed through world political discourse.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Ability to use geopolitical concepts to evaluate geopolitical conflicts around the world.
- Ability to assess geopolitical conflicts using a variety of geographic perspectives.
- Describe where and why specific conflicts are taking place across various regions globally.
- Develop critical thinking skills in terms of speaking and writing about geopolitical issues.

- Ability to understand, explain and evaluate geopolitical discourse.

## **EVALUATION**

Participation	10%
Midterm Exam	15%
Group-Led Class Presentation	20%
Policy Brief	25%
Final Exam	30%

## **PARTICIPATION**

Please see the rubric posted on BrightSpace.

## **PRESENTATION**

Each student will have an opportunity to lead a class presentation within a group assigned by the instructor. By the second week of class, each student will be assigned into a group by the instructor to work on this assignment. Once I assign students into groups, I will contact each group and its members via email early in the semester to ensure everyone knows each other and has email contact for each group member. Each group will consist of 4-5 students (depending on the number of students registered in the course) and will be assigned a date to do a class presentation over the course of the semester. Beginning in Week 3, the first group will be expected to present and discuss the assigned reading(s) (See Course Schedule for Group-Led Presentation dates). Each group should follow these instructions below in order to effectively present the reading(s) and engage in discussion with the class via Zoom on Fridays.

1. Submit a written handout on Brightspace in the assignment folder titled "Group Presentation Handout" the Monday before your assigned date to present. The handout should be one page in length and include a single-spaced, well-written one-paragraph critical analysis of the reading(s) you are assigned, and any discussion questions your group plans to use to engage in discussion with the class. This will be evaluated as part of your overall group presentation grade for your Group-Led Class Presentation.
2. Your group will also need to submit a copy of the presentation (powerpoint, google slides or similar format) you plan to share with the class Monday on the week you present. I will post the presentation on Brightspace to share with your classmates.
3. Your primary responsibility is to get our classmates to think critically about the issues you are discussing, so you can plan an activity, a lecture, or another type of engaging presentation. Keep in mind that you will have the entire class period (50 minutes) to do your presentation and engage in some discussion with your classmates about the topic you are presenting on.
4. Each group should speak with the instructor at least one week prior to your group presentation in order to go over your ideas, plans, and the structure of your presentation. You can either arrange a Zoom meeting with me or email me and touch base with what you are planning for the presentation and discussion with your classmates.
5. Your grade for this assignment will be evaluated based on the following rubric:
  - a. Ability to carry out the instructions provided here for this assignment
  - b. Quality of the written handout
  - c. Quality of content and critical analysis on the powerpoint presentation in relation to the assigned reading(s) including key concepts, ideas, theories, and arguments
  - d. Organization and structure of presentation
  - e. Ability to engage and stimulate discussion with your classmates via Zoom

## POLICY BRIEF PAPER

A policy brief is a succinctly written document about a particular issue. It consolidates research on the context, causes, stakeholders, and impact of a situation or problem. A policy brief is designed to help decision/policy makers by presenting policy options and recommendations.

Readers are typically policy makers from fields such as education, environment, politics, public health, or social work. Those who read policy briefs are invested in the issue but may not have in-depth knowledge of the topic. They are interested in getting the writer's insights and recommendations that are based on current evidence.

The brief will be a bit longer than a traditional policy brief and should be 8-10 pages, double spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, 2.54 cm margins with proper in-text citations. You should also include a separate reference page for external sources cited in the paper (APA style is required).

Please draw upon books, journal articles, and online news articles to help you research your paper topic. In writing your brief, you may draw on and reference material covered in the course as well if they are relevant to your topic. Try to use a variety of sources to explain why you think the issue is an important geopolitical issue and/or why you think more attention needs to be drawn to the topic. Please do not use Wikipedia or similar as sources (points will be deducted for these types of citations, as it is not a scholarly reference).

A more specific rubric will be posted on BrightSpace; however, you will be graded on the following:

- Quality of content
- Critique and analysis
- Structure and organization
- Grammar and spelling
- Proper in-text citations and references

## EXAMS

Your midterm and final exam will consist of short answer and essay questions with some choice of which questions you'd like to answer involved.

As per the Academic Calendar:

Grade	Grade point value	Grade scale	Description
A+	9	90-100%	<b>Exceptional, outstanding</b> and <b>excellent</b> performance. Normally achieved by a minority of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.
A	8	85-89%	
A-	7	80-84%	
B+	6	77-79%	<b>Very good, good</b> and <b>solid</b> performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area.
B	5	73-76%	
B-	4	70-72%	
C+	3	65-69%	<b>Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory.</b> These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.
C	2	60-64%	

<b>D</b>	1	50-59%	<b>Marginal</b> Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.
<b>F</b>	0	0-49%	<b>Unsatisfactory</b> performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.
<b>N</b>	0	0-49%	Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.

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## GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT INFO

- Geography Department website: [uvic.ca/socialsciences/geography/](http://uvic.ca/socialsciences/geography/)
- Undergraduate Advising: [geogadvising@uvic.ca](mailto:geogadvising@uvic.ca)

## BRIGHTSPACE

Articles, assignment details, and course updates will be posted on the Geog310 BrightSpace site.

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## POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS

- Assignments submitted ON TIME will receive my full attention & useful feedback.
- Please speak with me well in advance if you anticipate a delay in submitting your work, particularly when dealing with illness or family conflicts.
- 10% per day penalty for late assignments, including weekend days. For example, 10% will be deducted from the assignment (due in class) even if the assignment is submitted later in the day. If the assignment is submitted the next day, 20% will be deducted from the assigned grade, and so forth.

\*\* All assignments must be done exclusively for this course and should not be posted publicly online unless specified.

## POLICY ON ATTENDANCE

Both attendance and participation in class are essential for a seminar course. When you miss class or neglect to participate, your participation grade will be impacted.

## EMAILS

Send all emails to me using the email address listed on the first page of the syllabus ([jmateer@uvic.ca](mailto:jmateer@uvic.ca)). Please include the course number (GEOG 310) in the email subject title. I will do my best to respond promptly to your questions; however, I do receive a large volume of emails daily, so it may take 48 hours to receive a response.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It is every student's responsibility to be aware of the university's policies on academic integrity, including policies on **cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized use of an editor, multiple submissions, and aiding others to cheat.**

**Policy on Academic Integrity:** [web.uvic.ca/calendar2019-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html](http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2019-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html)

If you have any questions or doubts, talk to me, your course instructor. For more information, see [uvic.ca/learningandteaching/cac/index.php](http://uvic.ca/learningandteaching/cac/index.php).

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a documented disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) as soon as possible (<https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/>). The CAL staff is available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

## **POSITIVITY AND SAFETY**

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive and safe learning and working environment for all its members.

## **SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE AT UVIC**

UVic takes sexualized violence seriously and has raised the bar for what is considered acceptable behaviour. We encourage students to learn more about how the university defines sexualized violence and its overall approach by visiting [uvic.ca/svp](http://uvic.ca/svp). If you or someone you know has been impacted by sexualized violence and needs information, advice, and/or support, please contact the sexualized violence resource office in Equity and Human Rights (EQHR). Whether or not you have been directly impacted, if you want to take part in the important prevention work taking place on campus, you can also reach out:

Where: Sexualized violence resource office in EQHR; Sedgewick C119

Phone: 250.721.8021

Email: [svpcoordinator@uvic.ca](mailto:svpcoordinator@uvic.ca)

Web: [uvic.ca/svp](http://uvic.ca/svp)

## **POLICY ON CHILDREN IN CLASS**

It is my belief that if we want women and parents in academia, we should also expect children to be present in some form. Currently, the university does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described here is, thus, a reflection of my own beliefs and commitments to students, staff, and faculty parents.

1) All exclusively breastfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as is necessary to support the breastfeeding relationship. Because not all women or people can pump sufficient milk, and not all babies will take a bottle reliably, I never want students to feel like they have to choose between feeding their baby and continuing their education. You and your nursing baby are welcome in my class anytime.

2) For older children and babies, I understand that minor illnesses and unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of having to choose between missing class to stay home with a child and leaving him or her with someone you or the child does not feel comfortable with. While this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable.

3) I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status.

4) In all cases where babies and children come to class, I ask that you sit close to the door so that if your little one needs special attention and is disrupting learning for other students, you may step outside until their need has been met. Non-parents in the class, please reserve seats near the door for your parenting classmates.

### **POLICY ON RECORDING LECTURES**

According to the university's Intellectual Property Policy (GV0215), professors and instructors are the authors of their original course materials, lecture notes, and lecture presentations. Accordingly, they own the copyright in these materials. A lecture constitutes an instructor's intellectual property. A student must get permission to record the lecture from their instructor. Any material for the course (e.g., lecture notes, PowerPoints, syllabus, including a recording of a lecture) is made solely for the use of the student registered in the course for research and private study only. These materials must not be posted online or shared with other students without the instructor's permission. In some cases, a student with a perceptual disability will be eligible for an academic accommodation to record a lecture. Please visit the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) website for more information. You should be aware that there are policies and legislation regarding academic accommodation. Should you have any questions, please contact the Copyright Office

### **COURSE EXPERIENCE SURVEY (CES)**

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed via MyPage and can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time, but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.

### **WEEKLY CALENDAR**

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>Topic and Readings</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>September 7 &amp; 9</b>	Welcome and Introduction to the Course
<b>2</b>	<b>September 13, 14 &amp; 16</b>	The Geopolitical Imaginary
<b>3</b>	<b>September 20, 21 &amp; 23</b>	Geopolitics of Migration **Last day for 100% reduction of tuition fees for courses on the 20 <sup>th</sup>
<b>4</b>	<b>September 27 &amp; 28</b>	Popular Geopolitics **No class on the 30 <sup>th</sup> in observance of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

5	October 4, 5 & 7	Critical Geopolitics
6	October 11, 12 & 14	Critical Geopolitics continued & Midterm
7	October 18, 19 & 21	Feminist Geopolitics
8	October 25, 26 & 28	Cyber/Space
9	November 1, 2 & 4	Neocolonialism, Imperialism, and Resistance
10	November 8th	Imperialism, and Resistance Continued ** Reading Break Wednesday, November 9th - Friday, November 11 <sup>th</sup>
11	November 15, 16 & 18	Terror and Territory
12	November 22, 23 & 25	Anti-Geopolitics
13	November 29, 30 & December 2nd	Anti-Geopolitics and Review

#### DISCLAIMER

The above schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change, especially when needed for guest speakers.

#### NOTE:

A note to remind you to take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone.

Counselling Services - *Counselling Services can help you make the most of your university experience. They offer free professional, confidential, inclusive support to currently registered UVic students.* [uvic.ca/services/counselling/](http://uvic.ca/services/counselling/)

Health Services - *University Health Services (UHS) provides a full-service primary health clinic for students, and coordinates healthy student and campus initiatives.* [uvic.ca/services/health/](http://uvic.ca/services/health/)

Centre for Accessible Learning - *The CAL staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations* [uvic.ca/services/cal/](http://uvic.ca/services/cal/). *The sooner you let us*

*know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.*

*Elders' Voices - The Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement (IACE) has the privilege of assembling a group of Elders from local communities to guide students, staff, faculty and administration in Indigenous ways of knowing and being.*

[uvic.ca/services/indigenous/students/programming/elders/index.php](http://uvic.ca/services/indigenous/students/programming/elders/index.php)