

Geography 405/505: Political Geography

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Office hours: M 11-11:50, 3-3:50, W 11-11:50, Th 3-3:50, F 11-11:50,
and by appointment

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Objectives: To introduce students to political geography and geopolitics including the basic concepts, features, patterns, and ideologies of the world, both past and present.

University Mission Statement: Approved by MU Board of Governors on May 12, 2004

“Marshall University will educate a citizenry capable of living and working effectively in a global environment.”

This Course meets General Education Core Outcome 6: International Studies. Students will learn to:

1. Describe, explain, and analyze diplomatic, political, social, economic, and technological interaction among nations, peoples, cultures: including (but not limited to) ethnic tensions, multinational corporations, international structures and liberation movements of the 20th and 21st centuries.
2. Utilize historical, political, geographical, sociological and anthropological concepts
3. Describe, explain and analyze the cultural, economic geographical, political, religious, and social dimensions of major world religions and /or nations of global significance in the 20th and 21st century
4. Describe, explain, and analyze the major issues, concerns and problems of a global scope (e.g., environmental degradations, maintenance of peace and underdevelopment, population growth, human rights, etc.

Text: Peter Taylor and Colin Flint, *Political Geography: World-Economy, Nation-State, and Locality*, 4th ed. 2000.

Additional readings will be handed out in class.

Evaluation: Your final course grade will be based on a total of 100 points comprised of the following:

Exam 1: 25 points

Exam 2: 25 points

Exam 3: 25 points

Class participation/attendance: 25 points

Final grades are determined by the following scale:

100-90=A; 89-80=B; 79-70=C; 69-60=D; 59 or less=F.

There will be no extra credit assignments.

Graduate students please see me about additional course requirements.

Computer Requirements: Students will need to be able to log on to the Marshall University campus computer system and WebCT Vista at www.marshall.edu. The course syllabus, newspaper readings, tests, and test scores are all available with Vista.

Late Policy and Attendance: Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class periods. Late arrivals may be counted as absent. More than 2 unexcused absences will result in one letter grade reduction. If unavoidable circumstances arise, such as illness or family emergency, you are expected to contact me before missing class. Even if excused ahead of time, you are still responsible for the material covered during your absence. Make-up exams will only be allowed if the student has a university-approved excuse. For inclement weather, see the MU policies in *Undergraduate Catalog*.

Academic Honesty: All exams are to be completed individually, without assistance for any other person whether they are enrolled in the course or not. Plagiarism, whether one sentence or the entire exam, is unacceptable. At Marshall, plagiarism is defined as “submitting as one’s own work or creation any material or an idea wholly or in part created by another” (see the *MU Undergraduate Catalog*). If you have questions whether you may be plagiarizing something or how to correctly cite a source, you can contact me before you turn in the assignment without penalty. Any student violating these policies will receive a zero for that exam and will be reported to Academic Affairs.

Students with disabilities should contact me within the first two weeks of class.

Tentative Schedule

Week 1 – Introduction to course

Week 2 – The importance of geography in politics

Week 3 – World systems theory Chapter 1, p. 6-48

Week 4 – Geography of colonialism/imperialism Chapter 3, Chapter 4 p. 145-188

Week 5 – Electoral geography/gerrymandering Chapter 6 and 7

Week 5 – **Exam 1**

Week 7 – Geopolitical thought before WWII Chapter 2 p. 49-74, and Hackinder “The Geographical Pivot of History”

Week 8 – Cold War geopolitical thought Chapter 2 p. 74-104

Week 9 – Post-Cold War geopolitical thought Cohen, “Geopolitics in the New World Era” and O Tuathail, “Post-Cold War Geopolitics”

Week 10 – **Exam 2**

Week 11 – no class

Week 12 – Territoriality and nationalism Chapter 5 and Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 136-185

Week 13 – Territoriality and nationalism

Week 14 – Boundaries, states, and globalization Chapter 1, p. 1-6, Chapter 4, 188-191, Paasi, “Boundaries in a Globalizing World”

Week 15 – Environmental security Dalby, *Environmental Security*, 21-40

Week 16 – **Exam 3**

Writing assignments will be handed in three times, each worth 15 points. For each assignment, you are required to find at least one newspaper or magazine article published in the last two years that illustrates the assigned topic. You are to write no more than 5 pages (single-spaced, 1 inch margins) explaining the relevance of that article to class. You will be graded on your ability to demonstrate that you understand the material covered in class and can apply this to analyze current events. You must hand in a copy of the article with the assignment.

Political Geography Lectures

World Systems Theory

Ties together politics, economics, and international relations.

Immanuel Wallerstein: instead of viewing world as composed of distinct countries, we should understand countries as part of global process. world as system of interdependent places. Connections shaped by uneven economic and political competition between private companies and nation-states, but there is no central control. Social/economic change in one country must be understood within context of world system.

Three basic elements of world-economy: single market, multiple states, three tiered hierarchy. World economy based upon competition, so advantages go to the most efficient. The operation of the world economy is based on rules that reward efficiency, ie the core.

Core: dominates world system and is able to forcefully pursue its economic and political objectives, control development and dissemination of advanced technologies, investment, production, and trade, highly developed and diversified economies with high levels of productivity, sets the agenda in international relations, greatest military power.

Periphery: are dominated and unable to pursue their objectives, very limited access to new advanced technology, poorly developed economies often reliant on a single commodity or sector.

Semi-periphery: middle category, sometimes able to pursue their objectives, partial access to advanced technology, moderate economic development.

critique: economic in nature, globalist in perspective, homogenizing tendencies.

Process defines core/periphery status: core processes tend to incorporate relatively high wages, advanced technology, and diversified economic activity; periphery processes tend to low wages, rudimentary technology, and little diversity. Core/periphery status are tied to zones, areas, or states.

Developmentalism: development as a ladder where each country controls its own fate. All places can proceed through 5 stages, but at different rates. All places/countries can become developed. View development as process of "catching-up." Developed vs. underdeveloped.

wst response: all cannot be developed, initial core development required a periphery to exploit.

Conclusion: Relevance of world system theory to creating/maintaining global political/economic system.

wst vs. developmentalism – Consumers in core are linked to periphery, and we have to power to reward or punish TNCs for their behavior in periphery.

Wst vs. globalization: do both provide explanation for uneven economic development? Globalization gives us idea that places are increasingly interconnected and interdependent, but world system idea explains how these connections are formed and maintained. Patterns of uneven development driven by world capitalist economy. Flow and accumulation of wealth from periphery and semi-periphery to core.

Geography still matters b/c development and underdevelopment is not random/accidental, but part of the way the modern world works. This makes geography more important, not less.

Colonialism and Imperialism

Colonialism: formal/direct establishment and maintenance of rule by a sovereign power over a foreign population.

Dominated international relations/geopolitics from 1500 to 1945.

Especially movement by European powers to Africa, South Asia, North America, and South America. Other Russia in Siberia, later Soviet Union in Eastern Europe and Japan in Asia

Treaty of Tordesillas 1494: 50 west will be boundary between Spain and Portugal.

1884-85: Berlin Conference divides Africa between European powers. Africa as the “Dark Continent.” Europeans stick to the coast, but begin to move inland.

Jules Ferry French PM in 1880s.

first, economic justification: Germany and America have trade barriers stopping French business/trade. “the need for outlets (for exports).” Speech in March 28, 1884. colonial policy is matter of economic necessity to be able to compete. Dividing world into large competing blocks. Each great power must have its own block of territory. Raw materials sent from colonies to home country for manufacture into finished goods. Finished goods then sold domestically and back in the colony.

Second, cultural justification: “We must say openly that indeed the higher races have a right over the lower races. I repeat, that the superior races have a right, because they have a duty. They have the duty to civilize the inferior races.”

Third, nationalism: obviously related to first two points.

American Colonialism: Spanish-American War 1898. Cuba, Puerto Rico, Philippines, Guam. Panama Canal.

High phase of colonialism 1800-1914: coincides with peak of Industrial revolution in Europe.

Imperialism: informal/indirect extension of power by one state over another place. Based on unequal relationship of domination and subordination between different states/places. Lenin “the highest stage of capitalism” 1916.

Decolonization: when previously colonized people gain sovereignty over a territory. Peak years from 1945 – 1970. Adam Smith *Wealth of Nations* 1776. Mark Twain, Andrew Carnegie, etc. Smith pointed out that colonial power bore all the costs of colonial government, but the benefits of trade and economic growth in colonies are shared by all trading powers.

Reasons: increasingly expensive, increasingly ungovernable, increasing resistance from nationalists movements.

World Systems Theory: capitalism as an economic system underlies European colonial expansion. Colonialism provides a starting point for development of world system of core-periphery. Decolonialization has not ultimately altered relationship of domination between core and periphery.

In many ways, exploitation through imperialism is more efficient and cheaper.

Imperialism in many ways means playing by the rules. Win political independence, but economic growth remained elusive.

Electoral Geography

Federal Election system:

Census – every 10 yrs.

Apportionment – dividing 435 seats of House among the 50 states to reflect population size.

Redistricting – drawing district boundaries within a state.

Criteria: districts must be contiguous; roughly equal in population; relatively compact.

Gerrymandering – redistricting with the intent to favor one group or another; enhance their chances of electoral success. Elbridge Gerry, MA governor in 1812.

Voting Rights Act of 1965: landmark federal civil rights legislation that said racial minorities shall not have “less opportunity than other members of the electorate ... to elect representatives of their choice.” Around 1990, several state legislatures redistricted trying to comply with law. North Carolina had 20% African American population, but none elected to Congress in about 100 years. Justice Department ordered NC to create two AA districts. Two new districts each had 53% AA. Effect of redistricting in 1990 had effect of 26 AA representatives in 1990 to 39 in 1992. Legal challenges. In 1995, 1996, 1997 various Supreme Court ruled “race cannot be the predominant factor.” One factor, but not sole.

Texas: 2002 congressional election: Rep: 53% and 15 seats; Dem: 44% and 17 seats. 1971 only 10 Reps in Texas 150 member house.

Dems blocked redistricting, so federal panel of judges redistricted for 2002 election. New districts could produce a 23-9 Rep advantage, one Dem is going to switch. Reps redrew maps after gaining control of house in 2002. Dems had controlled it for nearly 100 years before. Federal judge panel refused to intervene because politics, not racial discrimination, was motivation, therefore not a violation of Voting Rights Act. Those Dem majority districts remaining in state will have Hispanic or AA majority.

Alternative: Party List Elections, At-Large Representation, and Proportional Representation. Unitary state: state/local governments have no real power.

Electoral College and Presidential Elections: 538 votes.

Original purposes: impossible to truly count all votes in 13 colonies; part of federal system (states have power to decide how to award their presidential electors); check on voters from electing dictator; winner-take-all format normally exaggerates margin of victory creating clear winner.

Current purposes? part of federal system (states have power to decide how to award their presidential electors, small states have some say); impossible to truly count 100 million votes (electoral college as a way to break a tie).

US Regions by Electoral Votes 538 votes, 270 to win

2000

South	155 (TX, OK, AK, LA, MS, AL, GA, TN, VA, NC, SC, WV, KY, MO)
Midwest	101 (MN, IA, WI, IL, IN, OH, MI)
Northeast	114 (ME, NH, VT, MA, CT, RI, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD)
Rocky Mts/Plains	57 (ND, SD, NE, KS, CO, AR, NM, UT, ID, NV, MT, WY)
West Coast	79 (CA, OR, WA, HI, AK)

Bush states from 2000: 271 votes: same states in 2004 have 278.

Losses in NY and PA each lost 2, MI, IL, CT, and WI lost 1 (Gore states). Also losses in IN, MS, OH, and OK (Bush states)

Gains in CA (Gore); FL, TX, GA, AR got 2, NC, NV, CO got 1.

Battleground states: OR, NV, AR, NM, IA, WI, MI, MO, OH, PE, WV, NH, ME, FL.
153 votes

Gore had 500,000 more votes than Bush out of nearly 100 million total votes
Difference on 0.5%.

Pre-WWI Geopolitics

geopolitics: using state's power to influence international relations – economic, military, diplomatic.

emphasis on state's organic nature and expansion, natural boundaries/regions, and economic nationalism (autarky).

Friedrich Ratzel – “Organic State Theory” German. Late 1800s. previous ideas of states as legal entities, but R. begins to see them as organic. Size of state varied over time depending on its strength or vitality. Justifies imperial expansion by European powers. Ideas mix together biological evolutionary thinking expressed in cultural terms, colonial expansion, and economic nationalism. Strong relationship between territory and state's power and prospects for continued survival. States like plants that compete for space, resources, and population growth.

Nazis picked up on R's biological metaphors and looked to expand into Eastern Europe, but R argued that Germany should expand outside of Europe. Idea of **Lebensraum**. Provide a buffer between land-based communists power to the east and oceanic sea powers to the west.

Mackinder – “Geographical Pivot of History”.

1. **land power** as decisive for 20th century. Looking at colonial period tendency to expand to cover all land.

2. **new sea technological innovation** no longer possible, so land power most important; steel railroad.

3. **Geography** - geostrategic location with open grass plain internally but rimmed by mountains and frozen seas, river flow north, so inaccessible to British sea power. History - nomadic invasions of Europe from the East.

4. **Current events** – trans-Siberian railroad and rise of Russian empire.

Policy recommendations: to maintain UK dominance, it must **contain** the pivot, using India to keep Pivot power (Russia initially) out of **inner/marginal crescent**.

Interwar period – renames Pivot as **Heartland** and includes Eastern Europe. whoever controls eastern Europe will control the Heartland; whoever controls the Heartland will control the World Island; whoever controls the World Island commands the world. Perhaps more worrisome is rise of Germany to challenge UK, and possibility of Germany gaining control of geographical pivot.

Problems:

1. **no mention of US.**

2. **new sea technology still possible.**

3. **no air power even in later writings**

4. **too optimistic** about economic/military potential of Siberia – physical geography constrained development and was strategic barrier.

Idea never popular in UK, but Cold War.

Compared to Ratzel, Mackinder more focused on economic-political aspects rather than biological, more complicated relationship between geography and state power.

Cold War Geopolitics: Mackinder revived and fit well with US geopolitical desires for cold war. construct USSR as world menace. Idea of popular resonance, like Churchill's **Iron Curtain** speech and Regan's **Evil Empire**.

Origins: Soviets want buffer zone; US belief in universal values, confident, dominant. Both react to other powers moves.

Kennan's Long Telegram: Feb 1946: Soviet Union in inherently expansionist.

Iron Curtain: March 1946, Churchill delivered speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri. "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in many cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow."

The Novikov Telegram: Soviet ambassador in Washington, Nikolai Novikov, telegram in September 1946 stressing the dangers of possible U.S. economic and military domination worldwide.

Truman doctrine: Containment; freedom vs. totalitarianism, US as global protector.

Containment in the Core: MAD for Canada, Western Europe, Japan, including First Use (of nuclear weapons to counter attack). NATO.

Truman, Greece, and Turkey: March 12, 1947: called for \$400 million in aid to stop communist insurgency. UK has just stopped sending aid because it was broke.

Marshall Plan: U.S. aid to nearly all European countries. From 1948 to mid-1952, more than \$13 billion (\$88.2 billion in constant 1997 dollars) in direct aid, loan guarantees, grants and necessities from medicine to mules. harvest of 1946 is poor, and the winter of '46-47 is one of the worst in memory. The strife leads many in Western Europe to consider communism as an end to the hard life and injustices they suffer.

1948: Fears Italian communists would win election.

Soviet Response: COMECON. Fears US is trying to build block against Soviet Union. Fear of encirclement.

Berlin Airlift: Thursday, June 24, 1948, West Berlin under a Soviet blockade; similar short-term Soviet blockade two months earlier; airlift using air corridors set up in 1945 agreement with Soviets. Ends May 12, 1949.

Containment in the Periphery: Domino Theory (Contagion) in early Cold War: use surrogates in crescent, but direct confrontation in Korea and Vietnam. USSR seen as source of all unrest in third world. US tries to shore up the dominoes, dictators, etc in states bordering infected states.

Containment goes global in late Cold War: fall of Cuba, Nicaragua, Africa, Middle East. US tries to set up new containment circles around these states. Détente in 1970s but ended with Afghan invasion. Reagan's Evil Empire.

Critique of containment:

1. not all unrest caused by USSR. Communism was popular alternative to capitalism after decolonialization.
2. States in periphery not inanimate dominoes, but active. USSR did try to capitalize on anti-capitalist sentiment, of course, but not root cause.

Post Cold War:

US triumphal with Gulf War and Bush senior's New World Order.

Searching for New Enemy: Japan in late 1980s, Russia, China (1990s).

Rogue States: Bush Sr. and conflict in Gulf War I. Clinton and Bosnia / Kosovo. Both worked to contain Rogue states, argued that although conflicts were small, they could spread into larger war.

Clinton in 1995 letter to Gingrich: "there is the very real risk that it could spread beyond Bosnia, and involve Europe's new democracies as well as our NATO allies. Twice this century, we paid a heavy price for turning our backs to conflict in Europe."

1995 press conference: Bosnia "at the heart of Europe;" "the kind of conflict that has drawn Americans into two European wars in this century." **Domino Theory revived**

James Steinberg at State Department 1996: "we would face the imminent danger of a widening war that could embroil our allies, undermine NATO's credibility, destabilize nearby democracies, and drive a wedge between the United States and Russia."

Bush Jr.: Axis of Evil: same as Rogue States, but now linked to **terrorism**. Initial Bush approach to contain axis of evil, but ...

Gulf War II: Domino Theory in reverse?

Paul Wolfowitz Defense Department 2003: "first Arab democracy" would "cast a very large shadow, starting with Syria and Iran, across the whole Arab world."

Bush 2003 Speech: invokes Greece in 1947 and a Berlin airlift as test of democracies like tests from insurgents in Iraq. "The failure of Iraqi democracy would embolden terrorists around the world and increase dangers to the American people and extinguish the hopes of millions in the region. Iraqi democracy will succeed, and that success will send forth the news from Damascus to Tehran that freedom can be the future of every nation."

Bush 2003 speech at UN: Iraq, as a dictatorship, had great power to destabilize the Middle East. Iraq, as a democracy, will have great power to inspire the Middle East. The Advance of democratic institutions is setting an example that other,..., would be wise to follow."

Cohen's world of Shatterbelts and Gateways:

Clash of Civilizations (with Islamic World): Samuel Huntington: conflict will not be based on ideology or economics, but on cultural differences. Idea refocused on clash between West and Islam after 9/11.

North vs. South perspectives: haves vs. have nots.

Nationalism

state: set of people, institutions, and organizations that exercise binding rule-making authority within a territorially demarcated area. monopoly of violence. **Sovereignty.**

nation: group of people who believe they share a common history, culture, etc. (willing to die).

nationalism: feeling of belonging to a nation and that nation has a natural right to determine its own affairs. Perhaps strongest belief system of modernity, undoubtedly stronger than communism, religion, etc.

nation-state: ideal political form with homogenous group of people governed by their own state (the right of national self-determination).

territoriality: means of controlling people and things by control area, dividing space. Social / political power expressed geographically or spatially.

Nationalism's power and ferocity come from its link to territory. Unlike communism, for example. Or democrats vs. republicans.

Theories of Nationalism: Where do nations come from? How do nations develop?

Primordial: nations developed in ancient times.

Modernist: nations developed as products of modernity.

Post-Modernist:

Benedict Anderson: nations as Imagined Communities

Strategies for Peacefully Resolving Nationalist Conflict:

Succession / Separation: creating a new state, but likely to create new minorities in new state.

Federation: granting local / regional autonomy based on ethnic divisions.

Divorcing economic well-being (resources, available jobs, profits from corruption) from state control:

Political Geography

Test #1

Name:

(worth 1 point)

Choose 4 questions to answer. Each is worth 6 points.

1. Describe the major features of World Systems Theory. What are the advantages of this theory for understanding world affairs? What are the theory's weaknesses?
2. Compare and contrast World Systems Theory and Developmentalism. How are they similar? How are they different? What role does geography play in each?
3. Describe the role of colonialism in world affairs up to 1945. Discuss colonialism's underlying motivations.
4. Provide an interpretation of colonialism and decolonization from the perspective of World Systems Theory.
5. Discuss how representation in the House of Representatives is structured. Discuss gerrymandering and how race has played a role in recent debates about gerrymandering. Provide arguments for and against the recent Republican-led redistricting in Texas.
6. Describe the role of the Electoral College. Discuss the original reasons for establishing this College and how these reasons have changed since the College's creation. Provide a brief argument why the College should be abolished, or why it should not be abolished.
7. Discuss the changing geography of democracy around the world (core, semi-periphery, periphery) since 1945. What impact has the end of the Cold War had on the geographic distribution of democratic governments?

Political Geography

Test #2

Name:

(worth 1 point)

Choose 4 questions to answer. Each is worth 6 points.

1. Discuss Ratzel's "Organic State Theory."
2. Discuss the main features and rationale behind Mackinder's idea of a "Geographical Pivot of History," including the theory's underlying assumptions and shortcomings.
3. Discuss the basic geopolitical tenets of American foreign policy during the Cold War. Conclude with a critical assessment of these strategies.
4. Discuss the basic geopolitical tenets of American foreign policy during the Post-Cold War period. Conclude with a critical assessment of these strategies.
5. Compare and contrast the geopolitical ideas outlined in Cohen's article with Huntington's idea of a 'clash of civilizations.'

Political Geography

Test #3

Name:

(worth 1 point)

Choose 4 questions to answer. Each is worth 6 points.

1. What is nationalism? What do nationalist believe and want? How is this related to geography?
2. Discuss the different theories of nationalism (where do nations come from or how did they develop?) outlined in class and in the text. Explain Anderson's interpretation of nations.
3. Discuss possible strategies for peacefully resolving tensions between two nations in one state.
4. Discuss the main features of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. How do you think the construction of the separation barrier will affect the conflict (and justify your opinion)?
5. Discuss the main features of globalization. How might globalization influence the importance of state boundaries? How might globalization influence nationalism around the world?
6. Discuss the idea of the environment or environmental change as a security issue.