Political Geography is a branch of human geography that concentrates on the spatial structure of political behavior. Political geography is concerned with political and related social and economic processes that generate “geographies of action” and landscapes of power. We approach these problems at three different scales: 1) the international arena, 2) the state, and 3) sub-state aggregates/local phenomena.

The state has become the main element of spatial political organization over the last 400 years (since 1648). As such, the rationale, functioning and changing role of the state will be addressed in a geographical context. The major territorial features of states such as frontiers, boundaries, secondary divisions, ethnic/national groupings, and the historical/social-economic factors that affect the form, organization and operation of the state and groupings of states will be treated. In addition and particularly, we will examine the relationships of geopolitics: that is, the political and economic inter-relationships among the most powerful states and their relations with weaker states and the landscapes of power that these interactions create.

Additionally, states will be treated in global perspective through various conceptions of world-scale structures such as theories of geopolitics, geopolitical world-orders and dependency. These structures reflect economic patterns of trade and investment as well as strategic orientations of individual states or groups of states. Economic and political development of states will be evaluated using historical, geographical and cultural/social perspectives to provide a realistic picture of the current status of the state in an increasingly integrated global-scale economy.

The course will begin with an overview of the geopolitical perspective. A selection of the topics to be covered are: (1) the geopolitical context and the role of geography in creating landscapes of power, (2) definitions, origins and structure of the state and formalized territoriality, (3) political processes that create “spaces of action” including the roles of nationalism, religious fundamentalism, ethnicity and shared historical experience as forces of state integration and devolution, (4) hegemony, imperialism and colonialism, neocolonialism, (5) geopolitical world orders and variants, (6) the means of mastering space, geopolitics, geostrategy and their impact on the political and economic geography of world order.

“. . . the earth is in effect one world, in which empty, uninhabited spaces virtually do not exist. Just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings. . .”

Textbooks
Required:


The textbooks are available at the UI bookstore. A BlackBoard site has been made available and all additional readings and course materials will be placed on the site.

Additional readings will be used to provide added depth and many are listed in the following schedule. These additional readings will either be provided as handouts in lecture to students or will be made available either as PDF or Word documents via e-mail or through BlackBoard. The additional readings will be used to expand standard course material to provide greater depth. It is advised that students spend some time studying the additional readings because theory and examples will be provided in these materials.

Grading: The course grade will be distributed by completion of course requirements as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Grade Contribution</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attendance will be taken at all lectures as one component of participation. As such, students are expected to attend ALL lectures and discussion sections and arrive in a timely fashion and be prepared to actively take notes and contribute to the class experience. Eating, drinking and particularly sleeping are not acceptable behaviors during lectures or discussions. Furthermore, there is no need for either laptops, PDAs, cell phones, smart phones/iPhones, iPads, etc. to be used or consulted during lecture! Students are expected to have read background material prior to arriving at lecture and behave in lecture and discussion sections in accordance with the University of Idaho Academic Conduct Code regarding class comportment, attendance, and issues of cheating, and plagiarism. Discussion is greatly encouraged during lecture as are questions for ideational clarification and inquiry.

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in failure. Please ask me if you need to use a laptop during lecture and be prepared to justify your request.
**Exams.**
The exams will consist of essay questions designed to test your knowledge of basic concepts, theories and principles of political geography as well as provide new insights into the subject. The exams will be of the “take-home” type. However, they will be graded for originality and mastery of application of the ideas. Simple regurgitation of material from the readings and lecture will not suffice. There will be no substitution or make-up exams given. **Also, extra credit papers will NOT be accepted as replacement for any other course requirement.** Cheating or plagiarism discovered on an exam will result in failure.

**Paper.**
*The topic for the semester paper may be chosen by the student but requires explicit discussion and approval by the course instructor.* The content and presentation of the papers will adhere to strict academic standards. A style manual will be provided based on the *Cambridge Handbook for Editors*. Websites are not acceptable for references as the web is ungoverned and lacks intellectual policing. However, papers and books may be accessed on the web and used as valid references. Only government agencies, select NGO websites (e.g., UN, FAO, UNESCO, IMF, etc.) may be consulted and used to provide a few references (say, < 5).

Research papers are rigorous and scholarly reports presenting information that provides complete coverage of a topic or issue. Research papers will follow the extended essay format of thesis, argument and support followed by conclusions. The best research papers should be acceptable for publication in a major journal, with some additional work, when completed. As such, ideas and arguments must be unique, engaging, pertinent, substantive and meritorious. Presentation and arguments must be rigorous and thorough. Reference materials should not be included in the page count and must be thorough as well. Footnotes *are not required* but rigorous scholarly referencing is mandatory. Endnotes are acceptable as are footnotes, if the author should choose to use them. Page lengths of 10-15 pages, with 1-inch margins, double-spaced with 12-point Times, Arial or Calibri fonts should define the paper format. Website materials and references are usually NOT acceptable except for references to specific government or NGO projects or data sets.

Topics – in the following list, *all readings are required.* Only optional readings are, well, optional. Please note that substitutions and/or additions may be forthcoming. However, there will be ample notice of any changes in the specified reading list.
## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART 1:</th>
<th>INTRODUCTION.</th>
<th>Duration: weeks 1 - 3.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic 1:</td>
<td>The Geopolitical and World-Systems Perspective: the Role of Geography (and History) in Foreign Affairs.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Readings:**

8. Additional selections on the world systems perspective and analysis and long-duration change in the international state system.


**Readings:**


OPTIONAL:


Topic 3: GEOPOLITICAL CODES: The State: preserving the “status quo” in international structures.

Duration: weeks 7 - 9.

Readings:


9) Selections from John Lewis Gaddis’ writings.

>>>MIDTERM: TBA

Readings:
6) Additional readings from the journals *Foreign Affairs* and *Current History* as well as from Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*; Paul Gilbert’s *The Philosophy of Nationalism*; and William Pfaff’s *The Wrath of Nations*. {available on BlackBoard as additional course/lecture materials}.

OPTIONAL


Readings:
OPTIONAL


_____________________________________________________________________________

Semester paper is due: Tuesday, December 7, 2010

Last day of lectures: Thursday, December 9, 2010

FINAL EXAM Due: Thursday December 16, 2010; 12:00 Noon

The final exam is a “Take-Home” cumulative exam but will emphasize the material covered after the midterm exam. The exam will be given to the class on the last day of classes and will be due one week later on Thursday, December 16, 2010.