

Geog 365/565: Political Geography

Instructor: Dr. Steven Radil

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Meeting times: 9:30 am - 10:45 pm TR

Office hours: TBD

Location: Pitman Center 40

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Course Description

In this course, we will survey Political Geography, a subfield of Human Geography which focuses on questions of space and power and the interconnections of geography and politics. All politics are geographical, from the spatial arrangement of local governments to the territorial basis of international trade. We will explore how politics works with a concern for where political impacts occur at a variety of geographical scales (from the international to the local) while also considering how geographical factors impact political actions. We'll also examine the geography of various formal institutions and practices of politics as well as the informal politics of everyday life within places. In short, we'll explore how political power makes geographies and how, in turn, geography may be said to make politics.

Course Objectives

The main objectives for this course are for you to:

- Become familiar with key concepts in contemporary political geography, including the state, the nation, territory, boundaries, power, and scale;
- Use geographic concepts to critically analyze how human agency interacts with the physical environment to shape and reshape political geographic outcomes;
- Advance your understanding of the political geography literature;
- Engage quality information about political issues contemporary political issues and explore your role within them;
- Use the ideas of political geography to develop a position on a contemporary issue and take a public stance on that issue.

Required Texts and Readings

The required textbook is: ***Political Geography, 2nd Ed.* by Joe Painter and Alex Jeffery, published by Sage in 2009 with a reprint in 2012 (ISBN 978-1-4129-0138-3).** The textbook serves as a guide for this class and is a necessary resource; we'll use it every week and you should bring it to all of our meetings. Other required reading material will be used throughout the course. These will be provided in class or made available online.

Developing an awareness of politics means you must also stay informed about key issues and debates, both within the US and abroad. I suggest reading *The New York Times* (www.nytimes.com) and at least one other reputable online news source every day such as the

BBC (www.bbc.com/news), *The Guardian* (www.theguardian.com), *The Economist* (www.economist.com), and so on. Please see me if you're unsure if your favorite news site suffices. Often students report that the only 'news' they view are headlines passively circulated on social media. This is obviously insufficient and we all must be active to be minimally informed. To do that, you must routinely engage quality news sources.

UI students may access the *New York Times* for free although you must first set up an account. For step-by-step instructions on how to activate your free subscription, go to the UI Library website at <http://libguides.uidaho.edu/nytimes>.

Course Access and Technology

With the exception of the required textbook, all other course materials such as lecture slides, additional readings, and various exercises or assignments will be available on BbLearn. BbLearn can be accessed at the following web address: <https://bblearn.uidaho.edu/>. If you have trouble accessing or using BB Learn, technical help is available through the UI BB Learn FAQs for students: <https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/bblearnhelp/student-help/>. You also can find in-person assistance on the UI campus at the TLC Center, room 128.

Your Responsibilities

This course is discussion-based, not lecture-based. This means our meetings will not consist of me simply reviewing the material in the book with powerpoints, etc. Instead, our time together will be largely driven through group discussion, activities, and examples that explore the concepts and ideas in the textbook. **Preparation is crucial and you are responsible for knowing all the course material including the assigned readings before coming to class.** Our meetings will supplement and build upon the assigned readings, not simply summarize them.

The nature of this class also means that **consistent attendance is necessary to succeed.** I will take attendance at the beginning of every class; you may miss up to two class meetings without penalty. Coming to class means arriving on time, staying for the duration, and being attentive. I have no patience for talking, texting, tweeting, snapchatting, instagramming, or snoring during class, and will not accept these or other kinds of disruptive behaviors. **Please silence your cell-phones.**

You must also actively participate in the course beyond simply turning up on time.

Participating means: being engaged, asking questions, offering examples, and responding to my questions and activities.

No late assignments will be accepted. None. I'm not kidding. Exceptions to this strictly enforced policy are made for students that are representing the university at some sanctioned function or for a documented medical or family emergency. **An emergency is something sudden, drastic, and unforeseen.** If you know you have a schedule conflict, plan ahead and hand in the assignment early!

No cheating or plagiarism in the exams or essays! Your written work must be independently produced and must not display cross-over or direct similarity with the work of a classmate or other author. Any cheating or plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment and maybe even the course. See me if you're unsure about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, or check out <http://www.wpacouncil.org/node/9>. **Seriously, if you turn in something that's not your own writing, you'll get a zero on it.**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform me as soon as possible.

Firearms Policy (this is not satire)

The University of Idaho bans firearms from its property with only limited exceptions. One exception applies to persons who hold a valid Idaho enhanced concealed carry license, provided those firearms remain concealed at all times. If an enhanced concealed carry license holder's firearm is displayed, other than in necessary self-defense, it is a violation of University policy. Please contact local law enforcement (call 911) to report firearms on University property.

The University of Idaho's leadership remains committed to maintaining a safe work, living and learning environment on campus and will not tolerate any threatening use of firearms or any other weapons. While authorized license holders may be at ease carrying a loaded firearm, **please be aware that many people are not familiar with such weapons and are uncomfortable in their presence. Especially me.**

Course Assignments

Your performance in this course will be assessed through the following activities. More information about all these assignments will be offered during the semester.

Weekly response papers: Each week, you will write a short essay that will discuss and reflect on the reading assignments. Your essay is due on the Tuesday before we begin discussing the reading assignment. *In other words, you will write about the readings before we discuss them in class.* Each essay should be about 450 words long (the equivalent to 1½-2 pages of double-spaced text, 12 pt Times New Roman font, and 1" margins); your work will be graded based on your level of engagement with and application of the concepts from the readings.

Exams: There will be two in-class exams, each covering approximately ½ of the course material. The best preparation for the exams will be to complete all assigned readings, attend all meetings, and engage in all class discussions.

Letters-to-newspapers (LtN) assignment: There is no comprehensive final exam for the course. Instead, you will perform an assignment designed to relate the concepts of the course to a real-world topic by developing an evidence-based position about that issue in a concise, written

format. To do this, you will submit an ‘opinion’ letter for publication to the editor of a national, regional or local newspaper. Your letter will respond to an article or editorial previously published in that newspaper that in some way relates to the content of the class. The assignment has three components. The first is a required in-class workshop that will deal with the details of the assignment. The second is a 3-4 page commentary (1,500-1,800 words, double-spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman font, and 1” margins) that identifies and defends the choice of topic and usage of concepts in the letter. The third and final is the letter itself (along with proof of submission to a newspaper). Both the letter and the commentary will be due during finals week. More information about this assignment will be provided during class.

Political Research Paper (GEOG 565 students only): The research paper is an opportunity for you to explore a topic in political geography of your choice in greater depth. This may be thematic, or a case study, or a tangential idea. Students will research and write a 10-13 page paper (3,000-4,000 words, double-spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman font, and 1” margins) that includes at least 10 new relevant academic references apart from the readings introduced in class. The main purpose is to advance your own understanding of a topic of interest to you while also expanding your knowledge about the literature connected to your topic. More information about this assignment will be provided during class.

Weekly Class Attendance and Participation: Attendance is required and will be taken during all class meetings. However, you may miss two meetings without penalty. Active participation in class is also essential to succeed in this course. Every meeting, we will use our time to explore the assigned material in depth. During these meetings, you will have the chance to expand your understanding of the course material through in-class discussions and activities. You are expected to contribute with questions and thoughtful and informed reactions. Your overall contributions and participation will comprise a significant portion of your overall grade.

Grading Criteria

Your grade will be determined on the percentage of points you receive for the required assignments and exams. Your final grade will be calculated using the following breakdown:

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Weekly response papers (10 total, 10 points each)	100 points
Exams (2 total, 50 points each)	100 points
LtN Workshop	50 points
LtN Letter	100 points
LtN Commentary	100 points
Attendance and participation	50 points
Total	500 points

GEOG 565

Weekly response papers (10 total, 10 points each)	100 points
Exams (2 total, 50 points each)	100 points
LtN Workshop	50 points
LtN Letter	100 points
LtN Commentary	100 points
Political Research paper	150 points
Attendance and participation	50 points
Total	700 points

The final grades will be assigned according to the standard UI system:

A: 90-100% B: 80-89% C: 70-79% D: 60-69% F: anything below 60%

Course Calendar (All dates and readings are subject to change)

Week 1, Jan. 10: Syllabus review, meet & greet

Week 2, Jan.15, 17: Course intro; What is Political Geography?

Readings

- Painter & Jeffery Ch.1, Politics, Geography and Political Geography
- Flint, C. 2003. Dying for a “P”? Some questions facing contemporary political geography. *Political Geography*, 22(6): 617–620.

Assignment

- 1st response paper due Tues Jan. 15

Week 3, Jan. 22, 24: Power and place

Readings

- Allen, J. 2003. Power. In *A companion to political geography*, (eds.), J. A. Agnew, K. Mitchell & G. Ó Tuathail, 95-108. Malden: Blackwell Pub.
- Staeheli, L. 2003. Place. In *A companion to political geography*, (eds.), J. A. Agnew, K. Mitchell & G. Ó Tuathail, 158-170. Malden: Blackwell Pub.

Assignment

- 2nd response paper due Tues Jan. 22

Week 4, Jan. 29, 31: The state I

Readings

- Painter & Jeffery Ch.2, State Formation
- Newman, D. Boundaries. In *A companion to political geography*, (eds.), J. A. Agnew, K. Mitchell & G. Ó Tuathail, 123-137. Malden: Blackwell Pub.

Assignment

- 3rd response paper due Tues Jan. 29

Week 5, Feb. 5, 7: *The state II*

Readings

- Painter & Jeffery Ch.3, From Welfare State to Workfare State
- Passi, A. Territory. In *A companion to political geography*, (eds.), J. A. Agnew, K. Mitchell & G. Ó Tuathail, 109-122. Malden: Blackwell Pub.

Assignment

- 4th response paper due Tues Feb. 5

Week 6, Feb. 12, 14: *Democracy and citizenship*

Readings

- Painter & Jeffery Ch.4, Democracy, Citizenship, and Elections
- Staeheli, L., P. Ehrkamp, H. Leitner, and C. Nagel. 2012. Dreaming the ordinary: Daily life and the complex geographies of citizenship. *Progress in Human Geography*, 36(5): 628-644.

Assignment

- 5th response paper due Tues Feb. 12

Week 7, Feb. 19, 21: *Urban politics*

Readings

- Painter & Jeffery Ch.5, Politics and the City
- Brenner, N., and N. Theodore. 2005. Neoliberalism and the urban condition. *City*, 9(1): 101-107.

Assignment

- 6th response paper due Feb. 19

Week 8, Feb. 26, 28: Exam #1 (in-class) Feb. 26

Week 9, Mar. 5, 7: LtN assignment workshop (attendance required)

Week 10, Mar. 12, 14: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Week 11, Mar. 19, 21: *Identity politics*

Readings

- Painter & Jeffery Ch.6, Identity Politics and Social Movements
- Arbour, B., and J. Teigen. 2011. Barack Obama's "American" Problem: Unhyphenated Americans in the 2008 Elections. *Social Science Quarterly*, 92(3): 563-587.

Assignment

- 7th response paper due Tues Mar. 19

Week 12, Mar. 26, 28: *Nations and nationalism*

Readings

- Painter & Jeffery Ch.7, Nationalism and Regionalism

- Billig, M. 1995. Flagging the homeland daily. *Banal nationalism*. Thousand Oaks, Sage, 93-127.

Assignment

- 8th response paper due Tues Mar. 16

Week 13, Apr. 2, 4: AAG MEETING Watch “Fog of War” documentary

Week 14, Apr. 9, 11: *Geopolitics I*

Readings

- Painter & Jeffery Ch.8, Imperialism and Colonialism
- Huntington, S. 1993. The clash of civilizations? *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3): 22-49.
- Bassin, M. 2007. Civilisations and their discontents: Political geography and geopolitics in the Huntington thesis. *Geopolitics*, 12: 351-374.

Assignment

- 9th response paper due Apr. 9

Week 15, Apr. 16, 18: *Geopolitics II*

Readings

- Painter & Jeffery Ch.9, Geopolitics and Antigeopolitics
- Falah, G.-W., C. Flint, and V. Mamadouh. 2006. Just War and Extraterritoriality: The popular geopolitics of the United States’ War on Iraq as reflected in newspapers of the Arab world. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 96(1): 142-164.

Assignment

- 10th response paper due Tues Apr. 16

Week 16, Apr. 23, 25: Exam #2 (in class) Apr. 23

Week 17, Apr. 30, 2: Open dates (possible field trip)

Final Exams: Apr. 29-May 2: LtN materials due (TBA)