

Spring 2007

Political Geography

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**Syllabus for
Political Geography
GOVT 440 – Spring 2007
Dr. Steven Alan Samson
Liberty University
Helms School of Government**

- I. **Course Description** A study of the political, cultural, and economic dynamics of the international system with special attention given to their geo-strategic dimensions.
- II. **Rationale** This course directly supports Aims 1-11 of the Liberty University Statement of Purpose.
- III. **Prerequisite** GOVT 200 or GOVT 220, preferably both
- IV. **Materials List**

Purchase:

De Blij, H. J., and Peter O. Muller. The World Today, 3d ed. [C]
De Blij, Harm. Why Geography Matters [W]
Goode's World Atlas (shrink-wrapped with The World Today)

Reserve:

Morris, Robert. Our Globe under Siege III [O]

Intercollegiate Studies Institute:

- A free subscription to the INTERCOLLEGIATE REVIEW
- One year free of NATIONAL REVIEW DIGITAL
- Plus your choice of one year free of either MODERN AGE or UNIVERSITY BOOKMAN (which are two of ISI's other journals).

<https://secure.isi.org/isi/memupdate.aspx?option=1&promo=nro&referid=20-4662-76513>

Internet:

www.andaman.org
www.atimes.com
www.countrywatch.com
<http://demographymatters.blogspot.com/>
www.fpri.org
<http://geography.about.com/>
<http://www.ipl.org/reading/news/>
www.menewslines.com
<http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/>
www.policyreview.org
www.stratfor.biz
www.dir.yahoo.com/regional/countries
<http://oddens.geog.uu.nl/index.php>

V. **Course Objectives**

1. The student will be exposed to a variety of social science concepts and approaches to the study of political and cultural geography.
2. The student will learn how to analyze and compare the history, geography, economies, governing institutions, and political behavior of contemporary nations, states, and international entities.
3. The student will thereby become better equipped to understand, participate in,

and evaluate international political processes.

VI. Graded Requirements and Options

1. **Reading:** Each student is responsible for completing reading assignments **prior** to class. The emphasis is on close and careful reading of the text. Keeping a loose leaf notebook of class materials is highly recommended, as is bringing it to class.
2. **Participation** is an essential part of class. Textbook chapters, collateral readings, and current events will be the subject of class commentary and discussions. It is especially recommended that students follow <http://www.stratfor.com/>, particularly George Friedman's analyses, and <http://www.atimes.com/>, particularly the pieces by "Spengler." The full Stratfor service is obtainable on campus through the library's database links at the end of S. Students should come prepared to discuss textbook readings as well as current events.
3. **Tests:** Students will be tested on the lecture and reading material through a series of eight tests that are to be taken at the scheduled time. Students who will be absent due to illness, family emergency, or some university sponsored activity must notify the professor by e-mail **before the test**. The 35-question comprehensive final test, drawn from the first five or six tests, may be substituted for any one of those tests only **if** the score is higher. Otherwise it counts as one regular test.
4. Four **map tests** are scheduled. They represent 20% of the grade.
5. **Optional:** Students who miss a regular test may read and take a test on **parts of** Robert D. Kaplan's The Empire Wilderness. One option would be chapters 1-13. The other option would be chapters 1, 10-13, 15, 17-18, 20, 25-26, 28-30. Upon request I will post study aids on Blackboard. The resulting score will be substituted for the lowest test score (except for the last final test).
6. **Honors:** Honors students may fulfill their honors requirement by reading and taking a test on Wilbur Zelinsky's Cultural Geography of the United States. Alternatively, they may do so by reading Halford J. Mackinder's Democratic Ideals and Reality or chapters 1-4, 10-12 of Geopolitics of the World System by Saul Bernard Cohen **and** writing an 8-10 page summary and analysis.
7. **Grades:** The grading scale is 100-90=A, 89-80=B, 79-70=C, 69-60=D, 59 and below=F. The world map test is 10% of the grade. The tests are 90% of the grade.

VII. Attendance Students are expected to arrive **on time** for every class meeting. Students who are absent due to illness or emergency should notify the professor prior to class or soon afterward. Excused absences include participation in university-sponsored events, serious illness (if accompanied by a physician's note), or a family emergency. **Three unexcused absences will result in a lower grade. Six unexcused absences will result in a withdrawal of failing grade.** Prolonged absences for any reason will generally result in a withdrawal or failing grade. Anyone who expects to remain enrolled in the class must grace us with his or her physical presence or maintain regular e-mail contact with the professor during any period of absence. Persistent tardiness has a detrimental effect on grades.

VIII. Dress Code Observe the Liberty Way. Students who are not in appropriate campus attire will **not** be admitted to class. Caps will **not** be worn in class. Other than drinks, there will be **no** eating or chewing gum in the classroom.

IX. School Policies

Plagiarism and Multiple Submissions of Papers:

Plagiarism is a serious offense and utilizing the work of others without proper citation is a clear violation of University policy. However, no clear directive has been established within the Helms School of Government as to the permissibility of a student submitting substantially the same paper to satisfy writing requirements in different courses. Effective spring 2007, any writing assignment required for a Helms School of Government course must be an original composition drafted specifically for the individual course. When a course requirement in an upper division course builds upon a previously researched topic, and the student desires to utilize his/her prior submission as a foundational document for the new course assignment, he/she may bring a copy of the previous paper to the current professor. The professor will review with the student the additional research and writing elements needed to complete the current assignment without violating this policy.

Christian Service:

For those students not already involved in Christian Service, see the professor for details and other information if interested.

Disabilities:

Students with a documented disability may contact the Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) in TE 127 for arrangements for academic accommodations.

X. Office Location, Phone, E-Mail, Hours

Helms School of Government, SLAB 135

Phone: 434-592-3689

E-Mail: ssamson@liberty.edu

Hours: MWF 7:45-8:35; 11:30-12:20; 14:45-15:35; TR 13:50-15:05; and by appointment

CLASS SCHEDULE

(Subject to Change)

Preliminary Reading: Francis P. Sempa: "Mackinder's World" (in four parts)

http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/AD_Issues/sempa_mackinder.html

Here are some map exercises to prepare you in world regional geography:

<http://www.lizardpoint.com/fun/geoquiz/index.html>

For your enjoyment: A lesson in how to define a nation-state

<http://geography.about.com/od/politicalgeography/a/sealand.htm?nl=1>

January

Mon.	22	Introduction; G. pp. vi-xii
Wed.	24	C. Introduction
Fri.	26	C. Introduction
Mon.	29	W. 1
Wed.	31	W. 1-2

February

Fri.	2	W. 2
Mon.	5	W. 4
Wed.	7	W. 5
Fri.	9	W. 6
Mon.	12	C. 1; FIRST TEST: C. Introduction; W. 1-2, 4-6
Wed.	14	C. 1
Fri.	16	C. 1
Mon.	19	C. 2
Wed.	21	C. 2
Fri.	23	C. 2
Mon.	26	W. 10
Wed.	28	W. 11; EUROPE MAP TEST

March

Fri. 2 C. 3
Mon. 5 C. 3; SECOND TEST: C. 1-2; W. 10-11
Wed. 7 C. 3-4
Fri. 9 C. 4
Mon. 12 SPRING BREAK
Wed. 14 SPRING BREAK
Fri. 16 SPRING BREAK
Mon. 19 C. 4-5
Wed. 21 C. 5
Fri. 23 C. 6; NEW WORLD MAP TEST
Mon. 26 C. 6; [W. 12]; THIRD TEST: C. 3-5
Wed. 28 C. 7
Fri. 30 C. 7; AFRICA, MIDDLE EAST, AND SOUTH ASIA TEST

April

Mon. 2 W. 8
Wed. 4 W. 8-9
Fri. 6 W. 9
Mon. 9 EASTER BREAK
Wed. 11 CATCH-UP
Fri. 13 C. 8
Mon. 16 C. 8; FOURTH TEST: C. 6-7; W. 8-9
Wed. 18 C. 9
Fri. 20 C. 9; EAST/SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE AUSTRAL REALM TEST
Mon. 23 W. 7
Wed. 25 C. 10
Fri. 27 C. 10; FIFTH TEST: C. 8-9; W. 7
Mon. 30 C. 11

May

Wed. 2 C. 12; W. Epilog
Fri. 4 CATCH-UP
Mon. 7 CATCH-UP
Wed. 9 SIXTH TEST: C. 10-12; W. Epilog
Fri. 11 FINAL TEST: 11AM-1PM