Fall 2016 Course Syllabus:
POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY (GEOG 453)
Tu/Th 12:30-1:45  Carolina Hall 220

Instructor: Dr. Scott Kirsch
Department of Geography, UNC-Chapel Hill
Office: CH 306  Office hours: W 1-3 F 2-3; or by appt.

course homepage: via https://sakai.unc.edu/  email: kirsch@email.unc.edu

Overview
Politics are geographical. From the boundaries of our electoral districts to those of our sewage authorities, and from the functions of international borders to the work of regional trade agreements, the premise of Political Geography is that questions of how, where, and at what geographical scale politics “take place” often make a difference to how they work. Through a survey of key concepts and perspectives in the subfield of Political Geography, and the interdisciplinary zone of Geopolitics, the purpose of the course is to understand how we shape the world through political processes and relations occurring at global, regional, national, and local scales, and to raise questions about how these landscapes of power may shape the nature of our future politics.  GEOG 453 (cross-listed PWAD 453) draws on geographical and interdisciplinary social science/international relations perspectives to offer students new means of interpreting significant contemporary topics and issues, including:

- state sovereignty and territoriality under globalization;
- geographies of war & peace;
- nationalism and identity politics;
- geographies of democracy & electoral geographies;
- new social movements.

In addition to two exams, an essay, and semi-regular in-class exercises, one of the primary course requirements is to participate with small groups in an original research project and website. These projects, which emphasize the development of collaborative research and writing skills, involve the application of political geographical concepts to contemporary research problems of the group’s design.
Requirements and Grades

Mid-Term Exam 25%
Final Exam 30%
Group Research Project 25%
Decoding Geopolitics essay 10%
Participation/Classwork 10%

The Group Research Project includes both individual and group components. Participation/classwork includes in-class exercises, group assignments, and related homework.

Assigned Text  (Available at UNC Student Stores and online booksellers):

Additional Required Readings
Additional required readings, to be provided as pdf files or links via sakai, are listed by author in the provisional schedule, with full bibliographic reference below.

Provisional Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Section/Topic</th>
<th>Required Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 23-Sep 1</td>
<td>I. Introduction</td>
<td>• F&amp;T, Prologue (1-10);</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- What is Political Geography?</td>
<td>• Elden</td>
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<td>- Core concepts and perspectives</td>
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<td>Sep 6-15</td>
<td>II. The Territorial State</td>
<td>• F&amp;T, Ch. 1 (11-46);</td>
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<td>- ... and globalization</td>
<td>• Ch. 4 (115-155)</td>
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<td>- The state as container? Territoriality and state formation</td>
<td>• Wallerstein</td>
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<td>- World systems approaches</td>
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<td>Sep 20-29</td>
<td>III. Geopolitics</td>
<td>• F&amp;T, Ch. 2 (115-155)</td>
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<td>- Geopolitical world orders; geopolitical codes</td>
<td>• Geopolitics Reader (selections)</td>
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<td>- Imperialist and Cold War geopolitics</td>
<td>• Sharp</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Current approaches: realist, critical, feminist</td>
<td>• “Accidental Geographer” podcast</td>
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<td>&amp; popular geopolitics</td>
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<td>- Popular geopolitics case study: Cinema Bataan</td>
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<td>Oct 6*</td>
<td>De-coding Geopolitics essay due</td>
<td>(To be assigned Sep 29)</td>
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<td>Oct 4-13</td>
<td>IV. Geographies of War &amp; Peace</td>
<td>• Gregory</td>
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<td>- Geographies of war &amp; peace; terror &amp; counter-terrorism;</td>
<td>• Tyner et al.</td>
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<td>- Post war: civil wars, refugees, militarism and</td>
<td>• Kirsch and Flint</td>
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<td>- The ‘pivot to Asia’? Guam case study</td>
<td>• Megoran et al.</td>
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<td>• Fifield</td>
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<td>Oct 18*</td>
<td>MID-TERM EXAM</td>
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<td>Oct 20</td>
<td>Fall Break – No Class</td>
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<td>Oct 25-Nov 3</td>
<td>V. Geographies of Democracy</td>
<td>• F&amp;T, Ch. 6 (193-240)</td>
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<td>- Formal and informal politics</td>
<td>• Burns</td>
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**Electoral geography and gerrymandering**
**Geographies of social movements**

Robertson
Nicholls

**Nov 8-17**

**VI. Nationalism, Identity, and Landscape**
- A world of nations?
- Nationalism, identity and symbolic space;
- Case study: Localized geopolitics?
  Genocide, refugees, and returns in the Balkans

F&T, Ch. 5 (156-192)
O’Tuathail;
Srebrenica animation

**Nov 22-29**

**VII. Local Political Geographies**
- Globalization and urban governance
- Geographies of gentrification
- Politics of “under-bounding” in North Carolina

F&T, ch 7 (241-266)
NPR podcast
Nagourney
Chen
Marsh et al.

**Nov 24**

NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

**Dec 1*6**

GROUP RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS: *Papers & Websites due

**Dec 9***

FINAL EXAM (@12pm, CH 220)

* due dates/exams

**Additional Required Readings**

Unless indicated, pdf files or web links for all readings will be posted under Resources in the course sakai page. Some coursework may require additional short readings.


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- In this research-exposure course, you will be working with a Graduate Research Consultant (GRC), Mike Hawkins (hawkins4@live.unc.edu), a graduate student/researcher who will help student groups in the development of their research projects. The GRC Program is sponsored by the Office for Undergraduate Research (http://our.unc.edu). You may be able to use this research-exposure course to meet a requirement of the Carolina Research Scholars Program (http://www.unc.edu/depts/our/students/students_crsp.html). You are encouraged to visit the OUR pages to learn more about how you might engage in research, scholarship and creative performance while you are at Carolina.

- Please inform the instructor if you have special needs which require accommodations in or out of the classroom in order for you to fully participate in this course.

- *All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty as reflected in the UNC honor code:* http://honor.unc.edu