

Fall 2020 Course Syllabus:

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY (GEOG 453)

Tu/Th 11:30-12:45

Remote lectures on zoom:

<https://unc.zoom.us/j/92749172758>

course homepage: via <https://sakai.unc.edu>

cross-listed: PWAD 453

Professor Scott Kirsch

Department of Geography, UNC-Chapel Hill

email: kirsch@email.unc.edu

office hours (via <https://unc.zoom.us/my/kirsch.geography>):

Wed 3:00-4:30; Fri 11:00-12:30; and by appt.

homepage: <http://kirschgeographies.web.unc.edu/>



Prospectus

What is power? What are politics? How are they geographical? From the boundaries of our electoral districts, school boards, and sewage authorities to the role of international borders and regional trade agreements, the premise of the sub-discipline of Political Geography is that *where*, and at *what geographical scale* political events and processes take place often make a difference to how politics work. When it comes to relations of power and politics, geography matters—and this is a class about it. Through a survey of key topics in Political Geography, its purpose is for students to better understand how societies both shape – and are shaped by – political geographic processes occurring at multiple and intersecting spatial scales. As part of a synthetic, geographical approach, Geog 453 (cross-listed PWAD 453) draws on social science, historical, and international relations perspectives, to offer a range of concepts, frameworks, and perspectives for interpreting our political worlds, including:

- state sovereignty and territoriality
- world-systems theories
- classical, contemporary, & postmodern geopolitics
- geographies of war & peace;
- nationalism and identity politics;
- geographies of democracy, electoral geographies, & social movements.

Students will also produce original research projects using digital media which emphasize the development of research and writing skills and the application of political geographic concepts to contemporary research problems of their own design.

Requirements and Grades

Mid-Term Exam	25
Final Exam	25
Poli-Geo Research Project	25
<i>Decoding Geopolitics</i> essay	12.5
Classwork: Participation/Response*	<u>12.5</u>
	100%

* Classwork includes semi-regular response exercises (every week or two), assigned in lectures to promote active learning approaches. In the remote format, these will mainly take the form of responses to be submitted via *sakai* assessment tools, to be discussed in the following lecture (see “A Note on Format” below).

A Note on Format:

Geog 453 Political Geography is a remote learning course designed as a synchronous class, with students able to participate in “live” lectures and discussion, but will be “asynchronous-compatible.” All lectures will be recorded in zoom and posted to *sakai*, and can be viewed asynchronously if need be, whether due to student scheduling challenges or even occasional “zoom fatigue,” but all students will be expected to keep up with “classwork” assignments announced in lecture (due dates, *tba*). Students participating asynchronously may also submit follow up questions by email to be addressed in the next class session.

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

Flint, Colin, and Taylor, Peter. 2018. *Political Geography: World-Economy, Nation-State, Locality*. 7th edn. New York: Routledge. (“F&T” in schedule)

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:

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Section/Topic</u>	<u>Required Readings</u>
Aug 11-20	I. Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is Political Geography?</i> • <i>Core concepts and perspectives</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F&T, <i>Prologue</i> (1-10); • Painter; • Warren; • Kirsch
Aug 25-Sep 3	II. The Territorial State <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Territoriality and state formation</i> • <i>The state as container?</i> • <i>World-systems approaches</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F&T, <i>Ch. 1</i> (11-47) • F&T, <i>Ch. 4</i> (129-173) • Wallerstein*
Sep 8-17	III. Geopolitics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Geopolitical world orders; geopolitical codes</i> • <i>Imperialist and Cold War geopolitics</i> • <i>Current approaches: realist, critical, feminist & popular geopolitics</i> • <i>Popular geopolitics case study: Cinema Bataan</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F&T, <i>Ch. 2</i> (49-89) • <i>Geopolitics Reader</i> (selections) • Sharp
Sep 24*	<i>De-coding Geopolitics</i> essay due (To be assigned Sep 17)	
Sep 22-Oct 1	IV. Geographies of War & Peace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>New world disorder: geopolitics rampant?</i> • <i>Post-war: civil wars, refugees, and post-war reconstruction</i> • <i>Rethinking the “everywhere war”</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kirsch and Flint; • Macaspac; • Belcher <i>et al.</i>
Oct 6*	MID-TERM EXAM ASSIGNED [Due Oct 13*]	
Oct 8-20	V. Geographies of Democracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Formal and informal politics</i> • <i>Electoral geography and gerrymandering</i> • <i>Geographies of social movements</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F&T, <i>Ch. 6</i> (217-269) • Koopman
Oct 22-Nov 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationalism, Identity, and Landscape <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A world of nations?</i> • <i>Identity and symbolic space</i> • <i>Banal and extreme nationalism</i> • <i>Genocide, refugees, & returns in the Balkans</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F&T, <i>Ch. 5</i> (175-215)

Nov 5 - 17	VII. Local Political Geographies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Globalization and urban governance</i> • <i>Gentrification v. rebel cities?</i> • <i>Under-bounding, ETJ, and environmental justice in North Carolina</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F&T, ch. 7 (271-300) • Kirk • Vasudevan and Smith
Nov 12	Research Projects due*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F&T, <i>Epilogue</i> (335-341)
Nov 18-21; 23-24 [tba*]	FINAL EXAM*	

- *Poli-geo research projects will include additional due dates (tba) during the second half of the semester related to the development of topics, research questions, and bibliographies.*

Additional Required Readings

Pdf files or web links for readings will be posted under Resources in sakai. Some coursework may require additional short readings and video.

Belcher, O., Bigger, P., Neimark, B., and Kennelly, C. 2020. Hidden carbon costs of the “everywhere war”: Logistics, geopolitical ecology, and the carbon boot-print of the US military. *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers* 45: 65-80.

Kirk, M. 2018. How centuries of protest shaped New York City. *Citylab* May 24, 2018: <https://www.citylab.com/life/2018/05/how-centuries-of-protest-shaped-new-york-city/561137/>

Kirsch, S. 2015. West Philippine Sea? ASEAN Sea? What’s in a Name. *Geography Directions* (online publication, Royal Geographical Society), posted October 22, 2015: <http://blog.geographydirections.com/2015/10/22/west-philippine-sea-asean-sea-whats-in-a-name/>

Kirsch, S., and Flint, C. 2015. “Geographies of reconstruction: Rethinking post-war spaces” in M. Turner and F.P. Kühn (eds), *The Politics of International Intervention: The Tyranny of Peace*, pp. 39-58. London: Routledge.

Koopman, S. 2015. “Social Movements” in J Agnew *et al.* (eds), *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Political Geography*, pp. 339-351. Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.

Macaspac, N.V. 2019. Insurgent peace: Community-led peacebuilding of indigenous peoples in Sagada, Philippines. *Geopolitics* 24(4): 839-877.

Ó Tuathail, G., S. Dalby, and P. Routledge (eds). 2006. *The Geopolitics Reader*. Second edition. London: Routledge. *Selections*.

Painter, J. 2015. “Power” in J. Agnew *et al.* (eds), *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Political Geography*, pp. 141-151. Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.

Sharp, J. 2014. Critical geopolitics. In P. Cloke, M. Crang, and M. Goodwin (eds), *Introducing Human Geographies*, 3rd edn. London and New York: Routledge.

Vasudevan, P., and Smith, S. 2020. The domestic politics of racial capitalism. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2399654420901567>

Wallerstein, I. 2019. Selected commentaries.

<https://www.iwallerstein.com/category/commentaries/>

Warren, S. 2019. Editorial: Borders and the freedom to move. *Dialogues in Human Geography* (published online first, September 15, 2019). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2043820619876399>



Class Policies

- Please inform the instructor if you have **special needs** which require accommodations in order for you to fully participate in this course.
- **Attendance** is expected (though we will be asynchronous-compatible). Participation/classwork grades, in particular, are based on occasional in-class (or post-class) activities, and exams will test students on both readings and lectures.
- **Changes** to the syllabus and class schedule are occasionally required. Any key date changes will be announced in class lectures and via **sakai: announcements**.
- All student **coursework** is to be **submitted on sakai** (including **dropbox** and the **tests & quizzes** assessment tool, depending on the assignment).
- It is important to acknowledge that the Covid-19 pandemic is causing stress, anxiety, and other untold burdens on the lives of many students, teaching assistants, staff, and instructors. Your health and well-being is of the utmost importance, and while it is necessary to run the class on a regular schedule I will try to help you work around issues or concerns that may arise.
- Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty as reflected in the **UNC honor code**: <http://honor.unc.edu>

