

**GEOG 441/541**  
**POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY**  
**Winter 2015**  
**Tuesdays/Thursdays 4:00-5:20 pm**

Instructor:  
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**Course objectives:**

Throughout this course we will examine political patterns and processes from a geographical perspective. We look at the political organization of territory in different parts of the world and examine the spatial relationships between political patterns and a variety of related phenomena, including resources, militarization, ethnicity, economic development, and policy making. We will also examine ways in which long-standing political-territorial arrangements are being challenged or undermined.

This course has three main objectives:

1. An introduction to the major themes and concepts in the discipline of political geography, including: state, territory, nationalism, geopolitics, imperialism, postcolonialism, identity, and power.
2. An exploration of these themes within the framework of real world case studies and current events.
3. The development of critical thinking and writing skills that can be applied to discussions of political relationships and processes in a global context.

**Course readings:**

Many of the readings for the course are in article form and are available under the Course Documents tab in the Blackboard site for the class. Other readings come from three books: J. Agnew and L. Muscarà, *Making Political Geography* (available at the UO Bookstore), G. Orwell, *Burmese Days*, and M. Brooks, *World War Z*. The second two books are required reading only for undergraduate students.

**Coursework:**

For undergraduates the requirements of the course are a map exercise (15% of the grade), a two-page book review (15% of the grade), two exams (each worth 20% of the grade), and a five-page paper on a territorial conflict between nations or states (30% of the grade). For graduate students the requirements are participation in a few extra discussion sections (20% of the grade), a late-in-the-term take-home exam (30% of the grade) and a term paper (50% of the grade).

**Course policies and academic support:**

Regular class attendance is expected. The readings listed below should be completed before the lectures to which they are assigned. Please note that assignments must be turned in on time. No extensions will be granted unless the circumstances are exceptional. There will be no possibilities for extra-credit work. And please be respectful of your classmates and instructors. Respect is essential to a group learning process.

*Technology:* If you have plans to use a computer or tablet for note-taking or to access digital readings during class please do so in a way that is not distracting to others. (I should add, however, that considerable research shows old-fashioned note taking tends to lead to better understanding.) Students found using their computers for non-class purposes will be asked to leave. It is 2015, and should go without saying, but please silence your cell phone for the duration of the class period.

*Academic integrity:* Violations of academic integrity, such as cheating or plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Suspected violations will be reported to the Director of Student Judicial Affairs. If that office finds the student to be guilty of a violation, it may result in a failing grade. For more information visit <http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html>.

*Accessible Education Services:* Please contact the instructors early in the course so that we can make arrangements if you have particular learning needs. There are a range of accommodations possible and you may find useful information through the Accessible Education Center on campus, located at Oregon Hall 164 or online at <http://aec.uoregon.edu/>.

*Academic Support:* Visit the Teaching Learning Center for assistance with speed reading, test taking, critical thinking, time management, and more. Head to PLC 72 or visit their website at <http://tlc.uoregon.edu/>.

**Course schedule:**

<i>Week</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Topics covered</i>	<i>Readings</i>
1	Jan. 6, 8	What is political geography? Pre-modern forms of political/territorial organization	TBD
<b><i>Map exercise handed out Jan. 8, due Jan. 22</i></b>			
2	Jan. 13, 15	The state and territory, foundations of the modern state system, sovereignty and nationalism	TBD
3	Jan. 20, 22	Diffusion of the nation-state idea, colonialism and imperialism	George Orwell's <i>Burmese Days</i>
<b><i>Book review assignment handed out Jan. 22, due Feb. 5</i></b>			
4	Jan. 27, 29	Geographical approaches to the study of the state: territory, resources,	TBD
5	Feb. 3, 5	Culture, ethnicity, and nationalism	TBD
6	Feb. 10, 12	Introduction to classical geopolitics, ideological bases for territorial extent	TBD
<b><i>Feb. 12 - Midterm exam covers the first half of class</i></b>			
7	Feb. 17, 19	Critical geopolitics	Max Brooks' <i>World War Z</i>

<b><i>Undergraduate short paper assignment handed out Feb. 19, due Mar. 10</i></b>			
8	Feb. 24, 26	Globalization and political geography above the scale of the state, deterritorialization and reterritorialization	TBD
<b><i>Graduate take-home midterm handed out Feb. 26, due Mar. 3</i></b>			
9	Mar. 3, 5	The cultural turn, the everyday, and the political geography of localities	TBD
10	Mar. 10, 12	Political geography of the environment, contemporary world in political geographic perspective	TBD
<b><i>Mar. 18, 12:30 pm – Final exam covers the second half of class (i.e. not cumulative) Graduate term paper due at 5:00 pm</i></b>			