

Political Geography

GGG 301__001 Spring 2025

Professor

Dr. Christine Rosenfeld
(*she/her*)

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Phone

1-703-993-4298

Office Hours

By appointment, email
to arrange

2216 Exploratory Hall
or by [zoom](#)

TA

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LA

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Student Expectations

- Read email daily
- Attend class and be engaged
- Reach out if you're stuck or behind
- Display respect

Course Delivery

In-person

Meeting Time & Location

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:00-1:15 pm
3012 Horizon Hall

Course Description

This 3-credit course provides an overview of the subfield of human geography called political geography. Subtopics include state formation and fragility, statelessness, nationalism, boundary disputes, etc. Theory foundational to political geography will be discussed alongside historical and contemporary case studies. Special attention is paid to the unevenness of power at various scales as expressed through politics. **Course satisfies the Mason Core Social and Behavioral Sciences Req.; it has a Just Societies flag.**

Required Texts

Readings are free and accessible at canvas.gmu.edu.

Learning Outcomes

- Identify deeper context of geopolitical disputes
- Describe how power works and is expressed through politics and across space
- Apply theoretical concepts to current events
- Explain how political processes affect people, especially marginalized groups
- Navigate a scholarly journal article
- Explain how individuals, groups or institutions are influenced by contextual factors
- Demonstrate awareness of changes in social and cultural constructs
- Use appropriate methods and resources to apply social and behavioral science concepts, terminology, principles and theories in the analysis of significant human issues, past or present
- Define key terms related to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion as related to this course's field/discipline and use those terms to engage meaningfully with peers about course issues
- Articulate obstacles to justice and equity, and strategies for addressing them, in response to local, national, and/or global issues in the field/discipline

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Grading/Requirements

Submit on Canvas.

100 pts, 10%

200 pts, 20%

100 pts, 10%

320 pts, 32%

280 pts, 28%

Grade Point Cutoffs

A+	980-1000	B-	800-829
A	930-979	C+	780-799
A-	900-929	C	700-779
B+	880-899	D	600-699
B	830-879	F	0-599

Participation

For this class, participation means that you show up and when you show up, you're actively engaged with me and your classmates, contributing verbally and non-verbally. If you need to miss class, email the professor to make alternative arrangements. Failure to regularly attend class may result in a failing course grade.

(Un)Just Politics StoryMap

You will create a StoryMap with various place-markers and associated write ups that present a case study related to exclusionary voting matters, tribal sovereignty matters, environmental justice matters, or statelessness and unrecognized states.

(Un)Just Politics StoryMap Discussion

You will post your StoryMap to the discussion board, review classmates' work, and reply to classmates.

Exams

There are 2 exams. Exams occur in person during class time. Format is a mix of short essay, fill in/definition, T/F, multiple choice, and/or matching.

Reading Responses

You must complete 7 Reading Responses (RR) (there are 9 opportunities), which are one page (at least 300 words) double spaced where you summarize the key content and argument of the scholarly reading assigned for the week. Make connections between readings/topics that span units and/or relate to outside events. If you complete one extra RR, your lowest RR grade will be dropped.

Late Work Policy

Each student starts with 3 late work tokens, which allow you to turn in a graded item up to 48 hours past the original due date without penalty. When using a late token, you do NOT need to email the professor in advance; simply turn in/complete your item. Email to discuss extenuating circumstances affecting submission of work.

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Academic Standards

George Mason University has academic standards with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity to which all students are expected to adhere. Cheating and/or plagiarism—passing off work as your own that is not—will result in an F for your final grade in this class. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism and familiarize yourself with the Honor Code. The official GMU policies are available from the Office of Academic Integrity: <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/>. Please consult with me about questions *prior* to turning in assignments.

Miscellaneous

- Communicate accommodations or concerns.
- Obtain reliable access to computer & internet.
- Course materials are [private to this class](#).
- Only use your GMU email account; include full name and course #.

Additional Resources

See [Common Policies Addendum](#) on Canvas.

Title IX

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993- 8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

Diversity Statement & Accommodations

GMU promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty, and staff. Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study, and personal growth. An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion (see [religious holiday calendar](#)), age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard, and respected. *Share your name and gender pronouns and how best to address you in class and via email and update your PatriotWeb profile.*

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474. Students who are pregnant or experiencing pregnancy-related circumstances are welcome to reach out to the professor to discuss adjustments. The university directs you to the [Pregnant and Parenting Adjustment Form](#).

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Course Schedule

Weeks	Tues & Thurs 12-1:15 pm	Topic	Case Study Focus	Due by Tuesdays 12:00 pm
Week 1	1/21, 1/23	Course Welcome States & Nations		None
Week 2	1/28, 1/30	Separatism	Northern Ireland, Yugoslavia, Russia & Ukraine	Reading Response
Week 3	2/4, 2/6	Separatism & State Fragility	The Sahel	Reading Response
Week 4	2/11, 2/13	State Fragility	Haiti	Reading Response
Week 5	2/18, 2/20	Statelessness	Sahrawis, Nubians, Rohingya, Roma	Reading Response
Week 6	2/25, 2/27	Unrecognized States	Nagorno Karabakh & Transcaucasia	Reading Response
Week 7	3/4, 3/6	Exam Review, EXAM 1		Exam 1 on Thursday
Week 8	3/11, 3/13	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
Week 9	3/18, 3/20	Types & Traits of Power		Reading Response
Week 10	3/25, 3/27	Shock Doctrine & State of Exception StoryMap Overview		Reading Response
Week 11	4/1, 4/3	Boundary Disputes	Various Case Studies (Guyana/Venezuela, Israel/Palestine, North Korea/South Korea, Arctic, Falkland Islands, Kashmir, etc)	Reading Response
Week 12	4/8, 4/10	Boundary Disputes		Reading Response
Week 13	4/15, 4/17	Boundary Disputes		(Un)Just Politics StoryMap (Due Sunday, 4/20)
Week 14	4/22, 4/24	Dispute Settlement StoryMap Gallery Walk		(Un)Just Politics StoryMap Discussion Board (due 4/27)
Week 15	4/29, 5/1	Exam Review, EXAM 2		Exam 2 on Thursday