



GGS 301-001 - Physical Geography
Fall 2017 – Monday – 4:30 to 7:10
Classroom – Exploratory Hall - L003

Instructor: Mike Wolf; Adjunct Professor

Email: mwolf7@masonlive.gmu.edu (best way to reach me)

Office: Exploratory Hall 2219

Office Hours: Monday 7:15 – 8:00 PM (right after class) or by appointment

Course Materials:

- Readings – see posted document on Blackboard

Course Description: Political geography is concerned with the study of both the spatially uneven outcomes of political processes and the ways in which political processes are themselves affected by spatial structures. The primary concerns of political geography can be summarized as the inter-relationships between people, state, and landscape.

Course Objectives:

This is a junior level class and so it is expected that one has the basic research abilities along with refined writing skills. By attending class lectures, reading the assigned reading, and independent study, students will be able to:

- Identify geopolitical, social, economic, cultural, natural and historical trends (issues) in a local, regional and global context.
- Develop your ability to effectively and authoritatively research and present executive summaries of geopolitical trends and issues in the world arena.
- Most importantly, learn how to learn from each other in a collaborative environment.

Planned Schedule:

Date	Topic	Scope
8/28/2017	Introduction	Introduction, Classroom Conduct, Syllabus Review and What is Political Geography?
9/11/2017	Geography and States	Lecture and topic for next lecture discussion Group Team Defined and Group lead identified
9/18/2017	Geography and States	Topic discussion and close-out unit Team Project Proposal Scope Due
9/25/2017	Voting and Electoral Districts	Lecture and topic for next lecture discussion
10/2/2017	Voting and Electoral Districts	Topic discussion and close-out unit Response Paper #1 due
10/10/2017	Religion and Politics	Lecture and topic for next lecture discussion
10/16/2017	Religion and Politics	Topic discussion and close-out unit
10/23/2017	Environment and Politics	Topic discussion and close-out unit

		Response Paper #2 due
10/30/2017	Environment and Politics	Lecture and topic for next lecture discussion Interim Report Due
11/6/2017	Critical Political Geography	Topic discussion and close-out unit
11/13/2017	Critical Political Geography	Lecture and topic for next lecture discussion Response Paper #3 due
11/20/2017	International Security	Lecture and topic for next lecture discussion Final Report Due
11/27/2017	International Security	Topic discussion and close-out unit; course wrap-up Individual Contribution Report Due
12/4/2017	Project Presentations	
12/18/2017	Project Presentations (final exam period)	

Grading Policy:

Response Papers (25%):

A one page paper (single spaced, 10-12 point, Times New Roman, 1" margins) responding to the set of readings provided. Three such papers are due over the course of the semester in response to any of the three readings the student chooses; one each out of three subject area covered. Other peer-review articles not on the reading list may be chosen with professor's approval.

A "book report" is not desired. A critical review of the article is required with your thoughts and experiences as it relates to political geography. Strengths and deficiencies of the article should be addressed. See posted format and description on Blackboard.

Research Project (50%, each assignment worth 10%):

Terms of Reference: Teams of at least 4 but no more than 5 people

- Group Team Defined and Group lead identified, due 9/11 end of class (no credit value)
- Project Proposal Scope (2 – 4 page double spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman, 1" margins), due 9/18 at the beginning of class
 - Project scope should be describer along with an outline with an initial list of references
- Interim Report (10 pages double spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman, 1" margins), due 10/30 at the beginning of class
 - Interim reports should contain an annotated outline with at least 3/4th of the references
- Final Report (25 pages double spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman, 1" margins), due 11/20 at the beginning of class
 - The final report should contain at least 20 journal citations in Chicago style
- Individual Contribution Report (5 pages double spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman, 1" margins), due 11/27 at the beginning of class
 - The individual contribution report should contain at least 5 journal citations in Chicago style

- Class Presentations, in-class 12/4 & Final Exam Period (12/18)

Participation (25%):

The student is expected to attend all classes and participate in the in-class exercises.

GMU Email Accounts & Blackboard:

You must use and regularly check your GMU email account and Blackboard to receive information for this class. Please do not send emails to me from non-GMU accounts, they will be ignored. If you send me an email at mwolf7@masonlive.gmu.edu I will normally respond within 24 hours.

Honor Code:

You are expected to follow the George Mason University rules of student conduct as noted in the catalog.

Office of Disability Services:

If you require academic accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at (703)993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu>. ODS will then contact me to arrange appropriate accommodations.

Classroom Expectations and other Miscellaneous:

Students are expected to be on time for class.

1. Should circumstances arise that make you late, do not disrupt the class as you enter, take the first available seat and do not walk across the room.
2. Clean up after yourself. Leave your seat better than you found it. Remember, take only notes and leave only warm seats.

In the event of any class cancellation, including inclement weather (e.g. snow), the class will resume where we left off, adjustments, if necessary, will be made later.

3. Please turn cell phone sounds off and do not text or talk during class.
4. Lecture slides will be provided within 24 hours after the lecture. If you feel note taking is necessary, research has shown that pen and paper is the most effective.