**FALL 12 Course Syllabus**

**GE 4150: ST: Political Geography Dr. Patrick May 535-2501**

Class: MW 2:30 – 3:45; Memorial 010 Office: Rounds 209

**Office Hrs: MWF 8:30 – 9:30 -** or by appt. Email: pmay@plymouth.edu

This course is designed to introduce students to the history, concepts, and context of the field of Political Geography, with particular emphasis toward the practical application of this content to better understand current political issues around the globe. Students will work collaboratively to investigate issues of nationalism, borders, and cultural conflicts that have influenced the relative stability states, both currently and historically. This course applies the viewpoint of historical geography, utilizing related concepts of pattern and process to better identify historical trends which have molded countries within each major world region. Emphasis is put on ways of thinking geographically and the analysis of regional patterns as a context for the characterization of current global issues.

**TEXTS:**

Required Painter, Joe and Alex Jeffrey. Political Geography. (2nd ed.) Sage Publications, 2009.

*Recommended: Students are expected to have regular access to a world atlas. If you don’t have one, ask me for suggestions.*

- Additional readings may be assigned throughout the semester via email, on Moodle, or put on reserve in the library.

**COURSE EVALUATION:**

Grades will be based on the following breakdown:

Exams (2) 45% (MT 20%, Final 25%)

Case Studies (3) 45% (15% each)

Homework / Participation 10%

# Total 100%

**Assigned Readings:** Students are required to read and study in advance all sections in the assigned text which coincide with the specific course content or topics listed in the course outline. Periodically, additional readings will be assigned in class, emailed to you, or put on reserve in the library.

**Exams:** TWO (2) exams will given throughout the semester, one mid-term and one final. Exams may consist of various types of questions, including multiple-choice, short answer/identification, and short essay. Students will take exams on the day and time designated for their class section. **No make-up exams will be allowed without prior notice of a valid excused absence. ANY AND ALL MAKE-UP EXAMS WILL BE SUBJECT TO A 10% PENALTY FOR EVERY CLASS PERIOD WHICH HAS PASSED.**

**Case Study / Special Topic Reports:**

Students will be required to work individually and collaboratively to complete **THREE (3)** brief reports throughout the semester, exhibiting their ability to analyze the historical and social factors which have contributed to current conditions within a given country, region or global conflict. The details of these reports will be provided as a written outline of major points in the summary, as well as through powerpoint presentations to the class or in groups. Concepts and terms from these in-class summaries will be incorporated into mid-term and final exams.

Case Study 1: Nation-State Conflict Topic

Case Study 2: Special Topic / Article Review

Case Study 3: Special Topic

**Homework (Current Events) / Participation:**

Throughout the semester, brief homework or essays may be assigned in class. These will also include weekly feedback on news items relating to issues discussed in the course. These assignments are generally due in the following class period and will not be accepted late. The cumulative total of all of these assignments, along with attendance and participation in class discussions, account for 10% of you final grade, so they should all be taken very seriously.

**Attendance and Class Policies:**

Regular and prompt class attendance is expected from every student. Attendance will be recorded and will factor into the participation portion of your grade. If you anticipate missing a class due to a scheduling conflict, please notify me in advance so we can discuss any assignments. If you participate in PSU sports or group activities that have scheduled off-campus travel, please notify me ASAP. Students missing any portion of a class are responsible for all notes or assignments given in their absence. As attendance is recorded at the beginning of each class, it is the responsibility of each student to notify the instructor if you arrive late.

**You are allowed 2 unexcused absences. After those 2, your participation grade is reduced by 50% for each following absence.**

**All work submitted late, whether excused or unexcused, is subject to a deduction in point total (10% per class period late, unless otherwise stated).**

Cell phones are banned from use during class time. Leave it at home or turn it off. Text messaging during class is unprofessional and unacceptable. If there is a campus-wide emergency, we will also be alerted via siren and I will be notified via cell phone.

**Email Communication and Moodle:** I anticipate that a significant portion of the communication in this course will happen via email so I expect each student to have frequent and regular email and Moodle access. Course reading assignments, follow up questions, and some assignments will be distributed and collected via email. In particular, I expect to provide a series of reading/discussion questions at the conclusion of each week, indicating what expectations I have for the following week. The course Moodle site will largely serve as a reservoir for course resources (readings, powerpoint slides), to be accessed for the purpose of study and review. On occasion, students will be required to post assignments and provide peer-reviews via Moodle forum pages. Details will follow.

**Class Cancellation:** In the unlikely event of PSU closing due to weather, it will be posted on the **PSC Stormline (535-3535).** If the college is open but I am unable to come to class, you should receive an email prior to class and I will post it on my voice mail (535-2501).

**Accommodations/ADA Statement:** Plymouth State University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you think you have a disability requiring accommodations, you should immediately contact the PASS Office in Lamson Library (535-2270) to determine whether you are eligible for such accommodations. Academic accommodations will only be considered for students who have registered with the PASS Office. If you have a Letter of Accommodation for this course from the PASS Office, please provide the instructor with that information privately so that you and the instructor can review those accommodations.

**Welcome to Political Geography.** This course is designed to help you develop a historical-geographic perspective and apply it in analyzing the political geographies that exist throughout the world. You should find an opportunity to pull knowledge and experience from previous courses in high school (World History, Geography, Civics) as well as other General Education courses here at PSU. I hope that it will be enjoyable for each and every one of you.

Given that a significant portion of the class will involve discussion of current issues and their historical causes, it is important that you find a reliable source for news of current world events. A few of my favorites are listed below:

Christian Science Monitor (daily) [www.csmonitor.com](http://www.csmonitor.com)

The Economist (weekly) [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com)

World Press Review (monthly) [www.worldpress.org](http://www.worldpress.org)

National Public Radio (daily – Ch. 3 on Plymouth cable) [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org)

I will do my best to accommodate for different needs and expectations for each student and encourage you to bring it to my attention if something is not clear. Class participation is not only required, but should be valuable. I also welcome each of you to visit my office, during office hours or by appointment, to discuss the content of the class. Please, if an assignment is not clear, or you have a question about material discussed, come to see me so we can clear up the difficulty before it becomes a problem. We will both benefit in the long run. Thank you.

**GE 1400: TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE**

**Week: Content: Reading assignment:**

1. 9/5 Political Geography: Geography of Politics or Politics of Geography? Flint, ch.1

2. 9/10 -9/12 Nations, States, and Nation States Braden, ch. 2

*9/10 – Add/Drop Deadline*

3. 9/17 – 9/19 Intro to Geopolitics, Agency, and Geopolitical Codes **9/17: Case Study 1 Assigned**

4. 9/24 – 9/26 State Formation and the History of Geopolitics Painter, ch. 1-2

Braden, ch. 2-3

5. 10/1 – 10/3 State Formation and the History of Geopolitics Painter, ch. 3, 9

**10/3: Case Study 1 Due**

**M 10/8 COLUMBUS DAY– NO CLASS**

6. 10/10 Welfare and Workfare – Approaches toward Civil Service Painter, ch. 4

7. 10/15 – 10/17 Electoral Politics Painter, ch. 5

**10/15: Case Study 1 Presentations**

**10/17 Case Study 3 Proposal Due**

8. 10/22 – 10/24 Electoral Politics and Politics of Scale

**10/24 MIDTERM EXAM**

*10/26 – FY Student Drop Deadline*

9. 10/29 – 10/31 Social Movements and Organizations as Political Agents Painter, ch. 6, 7

**10/29 Case Study 2 Assigned**

*11/2 – Withdrawal Deadline*

10. 11/5 –11/7 Boundaries, Resources, and Immigration

**M 11/12 VETERANS DAY– NO CLASS**

11. 11/14

**11/14 Case Study 2 Due**  Painter, ch. 8

12. 11/19 Political Imperialism, Post-Colonialism and Supranationalism?

**10/19: Case Study 2 Presentations**

**11/21 THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS**

13. 11/26 – 12/28 New World Order: Geopolitics of Terrorism and Globalization Painter, ch. 9

14. 12/3 – 12/5 **12/3 Case Study 3 Due**

15. 12/10 – 12/12 Case Study Presentations, Review **10/19: Case Study 2 Presentations**

## Monday 12/17 2:30 p.m. – 5;00 p.m.