

GEOG 334: POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY **Spring Term 2011**

Time : Tuesday, 5:35 – 8:15PM

Instructor: Charles A. Heatwole Office: 1045 North Building

Contact: Phone (212) 772-5323 E-mail: Charles.Heatwole@hunter.cuny.edu

Office Hours: Monday 9AM – 12 Noon
Tuesday 2 – 5 PM
Thursday 3 – 6 PM
And by appointment

Text: Martin Glassner and Chuck Fahrer, Political Geography. 3rd edition.
John Wiley & Sons, 2004. [Special reduced-cost binder edition will be available.]

Supplemental Readings (see course web page) to be assigned.

Grading formula:	Mid term exam	25%
	Final exam	25%
	Analytical essays (3)	15%
	Pol. District Exercise	15%
	Term project	<u>20%</u>
		100%

Lecture/readings schedule:

Date	Topic	Chapter(s)
Tu 2/1	Course Overview	1&2
	Maps and political geography	3
	States and nations	4-6
Tu 2/8	States and nations	4-6
	State territory	7
Tu 2/15	Frontiers and boundaries	8
	Core areas and capitals	9
Tu 2/22	Types of states	10 & 11
	First order civil divisions	12
Tu 3/1	Civil divisions of the U.S.	13
	Special purpose districts	14
	(First analytical essay due today)	
Tu 3/8	Electoral geography	15

	Spaces for indigenous peoples	16
Tu 3/15	Colonial empires	17&18
	Aftermath of colonialism	19
	(Political District Exercise due today)	
Tu 3/22	MID-TERM EXAMINATION	
	Geopolitics	20&21
Tu 3/29	Geography of war and peace	22-24
	Trade and globalization	25
	(Second analytical essay due today)	
Tu 4/5	Economic integration	26-28
	Landlocked States	29
Tu 4/12	Outlaws and merchants of death	30
	Law of the Sea	31&32
Tu 4/19	No Class today – Spring Break	
Tu 4/26	No Class today – Spring Break	
Tu 5/2	Antarctica and outer space	33&34
	The cultural dimension	35
Tu 5/9	The cultural dimension	35
	Transportation and communications	36
	(Third analytical essay due today)	
Tu 5/16	Demographics and food	37
	Politics and the physical environment	38&39
	(Term project due today)	

DESCRIPTION and GOALS

Political geography concerns the nature and consequences of human efforts to divide and control Earth. Major topics to be covered by this PowerPoint-based lecture course include the origin and evolution of countries and their constituent political units; the defining and drawing of political boundaries; territorial conflicts and disputes; the impact of boundaries on personal and cultural identity; centripetal and centrifugal forces that encourage the success or failure of political units; jurisprudence, crime and punishment; electoral geography; war, piracy and terrorism; ownership of ocean floors and outer space; the environmental impacts of political power (zoning, incorporation, height restrictions, land tenure); and symbols of power in the landscape. Lectures and assignments will stress the relevancy of political geography to issues that affect our everyday life.

ABOUT THE EXAMS

The midterm and final exams will each consist of three parts: a selection of words/terms to be defined; multiple-choice questions; and short answers/mini-essays. The final exam is not cumulative, but will instead only cover material covered since the midterm.

THE ANALYTICAL ESSAYS

The purpose of the analytical essays is to emphasize the relevance of this course to contemporary events. You are required to submit three (3) analytical essays. Check the course outline for due dates. Each essay is worth 5% of your final grade. Late submissions will be penalized by a full letter grade deduction. The definition of late is anytime after the end of class on the respective due dates. **Please keep all returned work as proof of submission.**

Each essay must be based on a regular news article (not an editorial, letter, advertisement, or travel-section article) in *The New York Times* or other similarly respected newspaper, periodical, or on-line source. The article you choose must be at least 500 words in length and have some relation to political geography. Be sure to cut out or download the article, which must be submitted along with your essay. Other instructions follow.

First Analytical Essay

- It must be based on an article published on or after February 1, 2010.
- The essay must be at least two full pages in length.
- The essay must be typed or word-processed (12-point type, double-spaced).
- Begin your essay by summarizing in your own words the content of the article. This discussion should take up about half of the first page of your essay.
- The remainder of the essay must describe how the article relates to geography. To do this, identify four of the Five Themes of Geography (Location, Place, Human-Environment Interaction, Movement and Region) that are evident in the article, and discuss how each theme relates to the article's content. (A companion document about the Five Themes is provided below.) Be specific. Begin this portion of your essay by writing "Geography is evident in this article, which demonstrates the themes of" Here you should mention the 4 themes you have identified. Each theme should be the subject of separate paragraphs that clearly identify the theme in question, and how that theme is apparent in the article.
- Staple the original copy of the article to your essay (no photocopies allowed).

Second Analytical Essay

- Must be based on an article published after the due date for the First Analytical Essay.
- Otherwise, the instructions for this essay are the same as above.

Third Analytical Essay

- Must be based on an article published after the due date for the Second Analytical Essay.
- Otherwise, the instructions for this essay are the same as above.

THE FIVE THEMES OF GEOGRAPHY

(This compliments the section above)

The study of geography includes specific *topics* such as landforms, climates, population, and

culture. Geography also entails a number of unifying, interrelated *concepts*. Among the most important concepts are the “Five Themes” of geography. They are:

Location. Geographers want to know where things are located, both by themselves and in relation to other things. Therefore, **location** is a very important theme because it answers a fundamental geographic question: “Where?”

Place. Geographers want to know what different parts of the world are like, and why. Accordingly, **place** is concerned with the human and physical features that characterize different parts of Earth’s surface. In our everyday speech the words location and place may have the same definition. In the study of geography, however, they have distinctive meanings. **Location** answers the question “Where?” **Place** answers a different but equally important geographical question: “What is it like?” Here is an example that illustrates the difference between the terms. I use **location** when I point to New York City on a map, or say it is found where the Hudson River meets the Atlantic Ocean, or give its latitude and longitude. I use **place** when I say that New York City has a warm summer and cool/cold winter, encompasses a large area, has lots of tall buildings, and is home to millions of people who exhibit a large variety of cultural and ethnic attributes.

Human-Environment Interaction. Human beings and the physical environment interact in many ways. Geographers recognize that human beings play a very important role in shaping and modifying the natural environment. Some results of this interaction may be visually enchanting, such as the skyline of Manhattan, or the terraced rice paddies of Southeast Asia, or the English countryside. But other products of **human-environment interaction**, such as pollution and deforestation, are very troubling. Geographers also recognize that the environment impacts human life through such agencies as climate, landforms, and natural hazards (earthquakes and hurricanes, for example). Indeed, people and the environment impact each other so pervasively and so profoundly that when geographers use the concept of **place** (that is, when they consider what a particular area is like, and why) they often end up focusing on **human-environment interaction**.

Movement. Geographers recognize that the world is increasingly inter-connected because of trade, commerce, migration, electronic media, discretionary travel, and other forms of **movement**. One result of **movement** is that the global pattern of culture is becoming less complex. Another result is that different parts of the world have risen or fallen with respect to their economic importance. Still another is that **human-environment interaction** is increasing because new roads and better communication have encouraged more contact between people and their environment. The theme of **movement** often complements the theme of **place** by helping to explain why a particular area has a particular characteristic. For example, I use the theme of **place** when I say that many people of Greek ancestry live in Astoria, Queens, and that many people of Russian ancestry live in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn. If I want to explain why these people live in those locales, then I would describe and analyze their migration, a form of **movement**.

Region. A **region** is an area of the earth that has one or more unifying characteristics or (stated

differently) one or more things in common. **Region** is a significant concept because it helps geographers achieve their most fundamental goal: to describe and analyze the distribution of phenomena on Earth's surface. Our world is exceedingly diverse. Geographers recognize that one way to make sense out of the observed complexity is to create **regions**; that is, to divide the world into areas with something in common. **Regions** can be large or small, and can be based on just about any human or environmental characteristic(s). Examples of **regions** include Sahara Desert, Hudson Valley, Upper West Side, and Islamic realm.

POLITICAL DISTRICT EXERCISE

The purpose of this exercise is to acquaint you with electoral districts in which you live, and thus to make personal the relevance of electoral geography. Follow the instructions for either Option A or Option B depending on whether you live in New York City or somewhere else.

Option A: New York City Residents

New York City residents live in each of the following:

- A U.S. Congressional District (the area represented by your Congressperson)
- A New York State Senate District
- A New York State Assembly District
- A New York City Council District

Your task is to prepare a 6-8 page paper that:

1. Begins with a brief description of the nature and character of your neighborhood;
2. Includes maps of each District above together with a red dot that shows where you live;
3. Identifies the person who represents you in each district, as well as that individual's political affiliation;
4. Briefly describes and analyzes the shape of each district;
5. Explains (or speculates) why each district is shaped the way it is (in particular, how similar/diverse is the population/area included in each district) ; and
6. Briefly describes and analyzes the overlap between these districts.

After addressing #1 above, your paper should be organized in a district-by-district manner, and typed (12 point type) double-space on consecutively numbered pages.

Option B: Non-New York City Residents

Please see me so we can identify four electoral districts that are pertinent to your residential location. Otherwise, the organization of your paper should be the same as points 1-6 above.

A number of online sources on political district boundaries are available. You can confirm this

by Googling New York State Senate (or New York State Senate Districts) and viewing the results. The same applies to the other types of political districts involved in this exercise. Examples that cover each type of district are shown below. I cannot vouch that these are the very best online resources now available, but they will give you what you need to know.

U.S Congressional Districts

<http://www.nationalatlas.gov/printable/congress.html>

New York State Senate Districts

<http://www.senate.state.ny.us>

New York State Assembly Districts

<http://www.assembly.state.ny.us>

New York City Council Districts

<http://www.nyc.gov/citymap>

THE TERM PROJECT

The term project is a 15-20 paper (double-space in 12-point type, not including graphics and bibliography) related to any aspect of political geography. I advise you to consult with me early and often about the content and status of your project.

ATTENDANCE

I take attendance every class session and regard your overall attendance record as a “tie-breaker.” That is, if your final average is on the borderline between two letter grades, then I will use your attendance record to determine whether or not I should “round up” and award you the higher grade. Also, a majority of exam questions come from lecture. Thus, poor attendance normally results in a poor final grade.

COLLEGE POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g. plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing CUNY

Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures. Acts of plagiarism, dishonesty, or cheating related to any portion of the work required for this course will be punished to the full extent allowed according to Hunter College regulations. In a nutshell, academic dishonesty is a serious matter. And although I take no pride in telling you this, I once got a CUNY doctoral candidate expelled from the university on account of plagiarism.

“PROFESSOR, DO YOU GIVE A REVIEW SHEET FOR YOUR EXAM”

No. You are strongly advised to attend every class and take notes. The result will be the best review sheet you could possibly have.