

**MGIMO University**  
**School of Government and International Affairs**

*Syllabus approved*  
Dean, The MGIMO School of Government and International Affairs  
Mikhail Troitskiy  
« » 2018

**Critical Geopolitics**  
Undergraduate Course Syllabus

Instructor  
Associate Prof. Igor Y. Okunev

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This syllabus is designed in accordance with the MGIMO Educational Standard for the Bachelor Program in International Affairs.

Author \_\_\_\_\_ Associate Prof. I.Y. Okunev

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**PART 1:  
INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION, COURSE DESCRIPTION  
AND TEACHING METHODS**

**1.1 General information**

*Template*

- Full course title: Critical Geopolitics
- Type of course: Elective
- Level of course: B.A.
- Year of study: 4<sup>rd</sup>
- Number of ECTS credits allocated: 2
- Name of lecturer(s) and office hours:  
    Dr. Igor Okunev, PhD  
    Associate Professor, Department of Comparative Politics  
    Office hours: Tuesday-Friday 10 AM-6 PM, office 3032  
    E-mail: [iokunev@mgimo.ru](mailto:iokunev@mgimo.ru)

**1.2 Course aims and learning outcomes**

The aims of the course are to provide students with foundational knowledge and solid understanding of geopolitics schools in a critical perspective and to introduce students to analysis of world politics history in XX century through the development of geopolitical thought.

**Learning outcomes:**

By the end of this course students should be able to:

- know basic school in geopolitics, their main leaders and ideas,
- critically interpret main geopolitics theories and concepts,
- evaluate the main events in XX century history through the development of geopolitical thought,
- compare and contrast interpretation of the contemporary issues through the different school of geopolitics.

**1.3 Course requirements and grading plan**

**Course requirements**

Students will be required to attend not less than 90% of classes and be prepared for class discussions. Conscientious reading of the assigned materials is compulsory.

**Grading plan**

- Class participation – 20 %  
Students are expected to attend all the lectures and seminars and participate in class discussions; since the course is highly interactive, it is essential that students attend the seminars having read the materials for that day's class.
- In-class tests – 60 %  
Students will write three tests during the semester. Dates of test classes are defined by the instructor and communicated to the students at the first class of the respective course.
- Issue essay – 20 %  
Such an essay (up to 10 pages including literature) is written by each student at the end of the term (it should be handed in at the last but one seminar so the lecturer has enough time to check the works and to provide feedback). The topic will be chosen from the list given at the end of this program and may be based on readings included in reading list, as well as the sources

chosen by the student. The author should supply his view of a problem and a critical interpretation of the existing sources (preferably those used in the course). The author should also attempt to consider how the existing arguments could be framed differently. The author will be given a short written feedback in a week after the work is handed in, including the grade, which can be followed up by consultation during office hours.

## PART 2. COURSE CONTENT

### 2.1 Types of work

Types of work	Academic hours
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>
<i>Total for lectures, seminars and written exam</i>	<b>32</b>
Lectures	16
Seminars	16
Written tests and/or exam	Written test
<b>Homework</b>	<b>40</b>
Written and oral home assignments	18
Preparation for lectures, seminars and written tests	22

### 2.2. Course content and readings by topic

#### **Lecture 1. The origins of geopolitics. Social Darwinism in geopolitics.**

Influence of space on the development of mankind until the end of the XIX century. The international system by the end of the XIX century: the completion of the division of the world by colonial empires. The new system requires comprehension: The geographic factor of international relations. Social Darwinism in the science of the late XIX century.

F. Ratzel: biography. Germany in the late XIX century. Environment influence on the geopolitical views of F. Ratzel. "Political geography": the interaction of «boden» and «volk», «Lebenstraum» (development of the concept of Middle Europe). "On the laws of spatial growth of the state."

R. Kjellen: biography. The socio-political situation in Sweden in the beginning of XX century. The loss of Norway. How did this affect the views of Kjellen. The term "geopolitics". Other "politics". "The state as a form of life." The theory of great powers, "three spatial factors of great powers." Criticism of social Darwinism in geopolitics: autarky, expansion, violence.

#### **Lecture 2. Realism and neo-realism in geopolitics: geographical determinism and revisionism.**

Realistic concept of international relations and its relation to geographical determinism.

The concept of confronting land and sea K. Ritter.

A. Mahan: biography. The concept of sea power. Criteria for the state's planetary status, the parameters of sea power. The principle of anaconda.

H. Mackinder: biography. The Great game and its influence on the views of Mackinder. Geographical pivot of history. The Heartland theory. "Democratic Ideals and Reality". Revision of the ideas of the Heartland in later works.

K. Haushofer: biography, the question of the connection with Nazism. The theory of the continental bloc. *Lebensraum* and natural boundaries. The concept of panregions. Development of ideas in K. Schmitt and in German and Japanese geopolitics. The result of realism in geopolitics.

Return of geopolitics after the Second world war. Bipolar world. *Speakman's Rimland*. Deterrence policy (Kennan). Nuclear deterrence (Alperovitz). Domino Theory. Cohen. Polycentricity and hierarchy of the geopolitical structure of the world. Mondialism (Strauss, Galtung, Kissinger, Brzezinski). Civilization School of Huntington.

## **Seminar 1. 1 Imperialist Geopolitics.**

### *Literature:*

1. MACKINDER H. The Geographical Pivot of History (Geographical Journal, 1904) // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S.Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 27-31.
2. ROOSEVELT T. 1905 "The Roosevelt Corollary (A Compilation of Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1905 // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S.Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 32.
3. HAUSHOFER K. Why Geopolitik? (The World of General Haushofer, 1942) // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S.Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 33-35.
4. HAUSHOFER K. Defense of German Geopolitics (Total Power: A Footnote to History, 1948) // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S.Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 40-43.

## **Seminar 2. Cold War Geopolitics.**

### *Literature:*

1. TRUMAN H. The Truman Doctrine (Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, 1947) // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S.Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 58-60.
2. KENNAN G. The Sources of Soviet Conduct (Foreign Affairs, 1947) // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S.Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 61-65.
3. ZHDANOV A. Soviet Policy and World Politics (The International Situation, 1947) // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S.Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 66-68.
4. O’SULLIVAN P. Antidomino (Political Geography Quarterly, 1982) // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S.Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 69-73.
5. BREZHNEV L. The Brezhnev Doctrine (Pravda, 1968) // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S.Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 74-77.
6. GORBACHEV M. New Political Thinking (Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World, 1988) // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S.Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 97-99.

### **Lecture 3. Liberalism and neoliberalism in geopolitics: geographical possibilism. Postmodernism in geopolitics.**

Idealistic concept of international relations and its relationship with geographical feasibility. Opposition to the French school of German. P. Vidal de la Blache and J.Ancel. Iconography of Gottman. Group of Herodotus, Lacoste, Fouche.

The origin of postmodernism in literature, social sciences and the theory of international relations. Postmodernism in geography: critical geography. Harvey. The emergence of critical geopolitics. Toal. Spatial myths. Schools of critical geopolitics. Radical geopolitics The difference between the geopolitics of modernity and the geopolitics of postmodernity. Criticism of critical geopolitics (Kelly) and postcritical geopolitics. J. Agnew. Rethinking sovereignty and territoriality.

### **Seminar 3. New World Order Geopolitics.**

#### *Literature:*

1. FUKUYAMA F. The End of History? (The National Interest, 1989) // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S.Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 114-124.
2. LUTTWAK E. From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics: Logic of Conflict, Grammar of Commerce (The National Interest, 1990) // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S.Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 125-130.
3. BUSH G. Toward a New World Order (Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, 1991) // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S.Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 131-135.
4. BUSH G. The Hard Work of Freedom (Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, 1992) // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S.Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 136-138.
5. KLARE M. The New ‘Rogue-State’ Doctrine (The Nation, 1995) // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S.Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 155-158.

### **Seminar 4. Critical Geopolitics.**

#### *Literature:*

1. Ó TUATHAIL G., AGNEW J. 1992 “Geopolitics and Discourse: Practical Geopolitical Reasoning in American Foreign Policy (Political Geography Quarterly, 1992) // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S.Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 78-91.
2. SAID E. Orientalism Reconsidered (Europe and Its Others, Volume 1, 1984) // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S.Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 256-261.
3. KING M. A Time to Break Silence (A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr. 1986) // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S.Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 266-271.



4. HAVEL V. The Power of the Powerless (The Power of the Powerless, 1985) // The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S. Dalby, P. Routledge London, New York: Routledge, 2006. – p. 272-276.

#### **Lecture 4. Russian geopolitical thought.**

The origins of the Russian school: Moscow - the third Rome, Westernism and Slavophilism. Pan-Slavism. Mechnikov. Danilevsky. Eurasianism (Trubetskoy, Savitsky) and non-Eurasianism (Gumilev). National-Eurasianism (Dugin). Modern schools (Kolosov, Zamyatin, Tsymburgsky, Ilyin, etc.). Disputes about the Russian geopolitical code.

#### **Seminar 5. Final Test.**

##### **2.3. Essay topics/Exam Questions**

1. The origins of geopolitics. Social Darwinism in geopolitics.
2. Criticism of social Darwinism in geopolitics: autarky, expansion, violence.
3. Realism and neo-realism in geopolitics: geographical determinism and revisionism.
4. The concept of confronting land and sea
5. The Great game and its influence on the views of Mackinder.
6. Revision of the ideas of the Heartland in later Mackinder works.
7. Imperialist Geopolitics.
8. The result of realism in geopolitics at WWII.
9. Cold War Geopolitics.
10. Rimland theory.
11. Deterrence policy. Nuclear deterrence.
12. Domino Theory.
13. Polycentricity and hierarchy of the geopolitical structure of the world.
14. Liberalism and neoliberalism in geopolitics: geographical possibilism.

15. New World Order Geopolitics.
16. Postmodernism in geopolitics.
17. Spatial myths.
18. Schools of critical geopolitics.
19. Radical geopolitics
20. The difference between the geopolitics of modernity and the geopolitics of postmodernity.
21. Criticism of critical geopolitics.
22. Postcritical geopolitics.
23. Russian geopolitical thought.
24. Westernism and Slavophilism.
25. Russian geopolitical code.

#### **2.4. Exam timing**

Last week of May.

#### **2.5. Consolidated reading list (in alphabetic order)**

- **Basic readings**

1. The Geopolitics Reader. Ed. By G. Ó Tuathail, S. Dalby, P. Routledge → London, New York: Routledge, 2006.

- **Additional readings**

2. Agnew J. *Geopolitics : Re-Visioning World Politics*. London: Routledge, 2003. Available from: eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost)
3. *Bueno de Mesquita B. Principles of International Politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2009. — 460 p.
4. *Dodds K. Geopolitics in a Changing World*. - Harlow : Prentice-Hall, 2000. - XIII, 178 p.
5. *Dodds K. Political Geography III: Critical Geopolitics after 10 years // Progress in Human Geography*. 2001. No. 3. P. 469–484.  
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1191/030913201680191790>
6. *Flint C. Introduction to Geopolitics*. N.Y.: Routledge, 2012. — 296 p.
7. *Flint C. Political Geography : world-economy, nation-state, and locality / C. Flint, P. J. Taylor*. - 6th ed. - London ; New York : Routledge, 2014. - XII, 340 p.

8. *Haverluk T. W., Beauchemin K. M., Brandon A., Mueller B. A.* The Three Critical Flaws of Critical Geopolitics: towards a Neo-Classical Geopolitics // *Geopolitics*. 2014. Vol. 19. No. 1. P. 19–39. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14650045.2013.803192>
9. *Johnson C., Coleman A.* The Internal Other: Exploring the Dialectical Relationship between Regional Exclusion and the Construction of National Identity // *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 2012. Vol. 102. No. 4. P. 853–880. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00045608.2011.602934>
10. *Kelly P.* A Critique of Critical Geopolitics // *Geopolitics*. 2006. Spring. Vol. 11. No. 1. P. 24–53. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14650040500524053>
11. *Klieman A.* Pushing Back: The Balance and Balancing of Power / *Great Powers and Geopolitics: International Affairs in a Rebalancing World* / Ed. by A. Klieman. Cham: Springer, 2015. P. 11–29. <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-16289-8>
12. *Knight D. B.* Identity and Territory: Geographical Perspectives on Nationalism and Regionalism // *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 1982. Vol. 72. No. 4. P. 514–531. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-8306.1982.tb01842.x>
13. *Lapid K.* The Third Debate: on the Prospects of International Theory in a Postpositivist Era // *International Studies Quarterly*. 1989. Vol. 33. No. 3. P. 235–254. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/2600457?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/2600457?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)
14. *O'Tuathail G.* Understanding Critical Geopolitics: Geopolitics and Risk Society // *Journal of Strategic Studies*. 1999. No, 2/3. P. 107–124. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01402399908437756>
15. *O'Tuathail G., Agnew J.* Geopolitics and Discourse: Practical Geopolitical Reasoning in American Foreign Policy // *Political Geography*. 1992. Vol. 11. No. 2. P. 190–204. [https://www.disp.uniroma1.it/sites/default/files/O%27Tuathail%20-%20Agnew%20Geopolitics%20and%20Discourse\\_0\\_0.pdf](https://www.disp.uniroma1.it/sites/default/files/O%27Tuathail%20-%20Agnew%20Geopolitics%20and%20Discourse_0_0.pdf)
16. *Okunev I.* The New Dimensions of Russia's Geopolitical Code // *Turkish Policy Quarterly*. 2013. Vol. 12. No. 1. P. 67–75. <http://turkishpolicy.com/Files/ArticlePDF/the-new-dimensions-of-russias-geopolitical-code-spring-2013-en.pdf>
17. *Okunev I., Domanov A.* Space Imagination and Mixed Identity in Russian Towns Bordering on Finland // *Human Geographies*. 2014. Vol. 8. No. 2. P. 101–110. <https://mgimo.ru/upload/iblock/a79/a79fed15f5e8952aa13fe80a3952896c.pdf>
18. *Paasi A.* The Institutionalization of Regions: A Theoretical Framework for Understanding the Emergence of Regions and the Constitution of Regional Identity // *Fennia*. 1986. Vol. 164. No. 1. P. 105–146. <https://fennia.journal.fi/article/view/9052/19829>

19. *Said E. W. Orientalism.* N.Y.: Pantheon, 1978. — 368 p.  
[https://monoskop.org/images/4/4e/Said Edward Orientalism 1979.pdf](https://monoskop.org/images/4/4e/Said_Edward_Orientalism_1979.pdf)
20. *Spaces of Democracy. Geographical Perspectives on Citizenship, Participation and Representation / Ed. by C. Barnett, L. Murray.* L.: SAGE Publications, 2004. — 264 p.  
Available from: eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost)
21. *Spykman N. J. Geography and Foreign Policy // American Political Science Review.* 1938. Vol. 32. No. 1. P. 28–50. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1949029.pdf>  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1948667.pdf>
22. *Todorova M. N. Imagining the Balkans.* N.Y.: OUP, 1997. — 272 p. Available from: eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost)
23. *Wallerstein I. The Modern World-System I : Capitalist Agriculture And The Origins Of The European World-Economy In The Sixteenth Century.* - Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011. Available from: eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost).
24. *Wallerstein I. The Modern World-System II : Mercantilism And The Consolidation Of The European World-Economy, 1600–1750.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011. Available from: eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost).
25. *Wallerstein I. The Modern World-System III : The Second Era Of Great Expansion Of The Capitalist World-Economy, 1730S–1840S.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011. Available from: eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost).
26. *Wallerstein I. The Modern World-System IV : Centrist Liberalism Triumphant, 1789–1914.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011. Available from: eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost).
27. *Wendt A. Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics // International Organization.* 1992. Vol. 46. No. 2. P. 391–425.  
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-organization/article/anarchy-is-what-states-make-of-it-the-social-construction-of-power-politics/B03BC7C9AAC5211B6DC319C077C1A854>

### **PART 3. FINAL REMARKS**

- Plagiarism is considered as a severe violation and as an indication of incompetence in the course. Plagiarism is understood as making of one's text using compilation method for other people's publications, even connected with own phrases and sentences. Collective performance of individual tasks is also unacceptable. Proved plagiarism an F-mark is given regardless of the fulfillment of all other requirements.
- Assignments are to be handed in on the due date. Late submissions will translate into the lowering of the grade by 1/3 of a grade for each day of delay.
- Students are asked to keep a copy of all work submitted for evaluation.