Political Geography

Undergraduate Course Syllabus

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

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Director MGIMO Library__________Marina Reshetnikova
PART 1:
INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION AND COURSE DESCRIPTION

1.1 General information

• Full course title: Political Geography
• Type of course: Compulsory
• Level of course: B.A.
• Year of study: 2nd
• Number of ECTS credits allocated: 4
• Name of the instructors: Ass. Prof. Igor Okunev, Ass. Prof. Lidia Zhirnova.
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1.2 Course aims and learning outcomes

The course on political geography is devoted to a discipline concerned with the spatial dimensions of politics. This course is an introduction to the study of political science, international relations and area studies, providing a systemic approach to the spatial dimension of political processes at all levels. It covers their basic elements, including states, supranational unions, geopolitical systems, regions, borders, capitals, dependent, and internationally administered territories. Political geography develops fundamental theoretical approaches that give insight into the peculiarities of foreign and domestic policies. The ability to use spatial analysis techniques allows determining patterns and regularities of political phenomena both at the global and the regional and local levels.

Students will learn:
- The structure and elements of modern world political map
- Territorial aspects of international relations and world politics
- Political and geographical organization of the state
- Conceptions and methods of political geography

1.3 Course requirements and grading

Requirements

Students are required to attend no less than 80% of classes and be prepared for class discussions. Reading of the required materials and active engagement in class discussions are expected. Always read and think about assigned reading materials before class. Perceptive observations and thoughtful questions contribute equally to a good discussion.

The class seminars are accompanied with a special workbook that is designed to streamline the educational process, reinforce the student’s knowledge of the course material, and make the course more interesting. Like the textbook, the study guide is arranged by topic, with the corresponding paragraphs of the textbook being indicated for each chapter.

Students are encouraged to read the relevant chapters of the textbook, listen to the relevant lectures as part of the curriculum, or checking the online materials before starting with this study guide. Most tasks can be completed by reading the material in the core textbook carefully and studying the political atlas of the world. However, in some cases, additional sources may be required, for example, to reflect the current geopolitical situation, which changes from year to
year. The facts and figures presented in the workshop correspond to the year in which the first edition was printed.
The study guide contains various types of tasks:
- work with contour maps;
- key terms;
- completing data tables;
- building diagrams;
- detailed practical tasks;
- topics for essays and presentations.
Students can fulfil some tasks, for instance, those with maps and tables, in the workbook. For other exercises, including open-ended questions and essays, students need a separate exercise book. It is not necessary to complete all the tasks – the instructor can choose the most appropriate exercises depending on the level of the group, as well as the scope and duration of the course.

**Grading**

Final examination – 70%.
Three multiple choice tests – 15% (5% each test).
Class participation – 15%.

**PART 2. COURSE CONTENT**

2.1 Course content and readings by topic

1. **Introduction to Political Geography. Geopolitics.**


*Basic Literature:*


2. **Macrolegions and Mesoregions.**

Basic Literature:


3. Integration Groups.

Basic Literature:


4. The Evolution of Statehood.

Basic Literature:


5. State-Building.
Basic Literature:


Basic Literature:


7. Properties of State’s Territory.


Basic Literature:


8. Composition of State Territory.


Basic Literature:

9. Territorial Changes.


Basic Literature:


10. International and Internationalized Entities.


Basic Literature:


11. Colonialism and Decolonization.


Basic Literature:


12. Dependent Territories.

Basic Literature:

13. Capitals.

Basic Literature:


Basic Literature:
15. Regions and Municipalities.


Basic Literature:


16. Local Politics.


Basic Literature:


17. Spatial Identity.


Basic Literature:


Additional Literature.


2.2 Recommended Primary Sources and Russian Publications

- President of Russia. All publications. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts
- Russia in Global Affairs journal. [http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/](http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/)

### 2.3 Recommended Websites

- Center for Global Interests [http://globalinterests.org/](http://globalinterests.org/)
- Eurasia Daily Monitor [https://jamestown.org/programs/edm/](https://jamestown.org/programs/edm/)
- The Moscow Times [https://themoscowtimes.com/](https://themoscowtimes.com/)
- Russia beyond the Headlines [http://rbth.com/](http://rbth.com/)
- Russia in Global Affairs [http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/](http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/)
- Russia Matters [https://www.russiamatters.org/](https://www.russiamatters.org/)

### 3. Exam questions

7. Integration types. Integration Theories.
13. City-States.
17. Sovereign States. Territory and Sovereignty.
24. Land Space.
25. Maritime Space.
29. Geopolitical Field. Types of Territorial Changes.
33. International Airspace. Outer Space and Celestial Bodies.
34. Arctic. Antarctica.
47. Cleavages.
50. Electoral Geography.
52. Unitary States.
53. Federations.
58. Territoriality and Spatiality. Absolute and Relative Space.
59. Heterotopias and Spatial Inversion. Spatial Experience and Commemorative Places. Place-Based Policy and Place Branding.
60. Spatial Myths and Co-Spatiality. Territorial and Spatial Identity.