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National Research University Higher School of Economics  
School of World Economy and International Affairs



Undergraduate Programme  
in International Relations  
(Parallel Degree from HSE and UoL)

**POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY**

Course Syllabus  
(ex. Winter 2019)

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# Political Geography

## Course Syllabus

### Course Description

#### Abstract:

This course is concerned with the ways in which political practice is bound up with geographical definition: with spatially defined conceptions of inside and outside, center and margin, core and periphery systems that are regulated by international law and governed by such concepts as sovereignty, national self-determination and so on.

#### Aims and Objectives:

1. To understand the development of group identities such as nations and examine the linkages between these identities and the political organization of territory.
2. To examine states emergence with an emphasis on how internal and external forces work centripetally and centrifugally on the integrity of state territories.
3. To develop an appreciation for the effects of boundaries on economic, political, and social processes.
4. To study in relevant details theoretical concepts and challenges underpinning the study of geography and politics.
5. To identify the political, economic, and environmental forces that are undermining the modern nation- state system.
6. To have a working familiarity with the most current research topics in political geography

#### Learning Outcomes:

To build factual knowledge about profound processes in political geography and develop skills of critical evaluation of various cases, that highlight political affairs within a geographical framework

**Office hours:** Wednesdays 12:00-15:00

#### Grading System

Grading formula consist of:

1. Quizzes (20%)
2. MapTest (20%)
3. Seminars (60%)

## Seminars:

All students are expected to attend every class and participate by contributing to the in-class discussions, participating in group projects and making notes. The statements and answers to the questions must contain well formulated arguments that clearly show your position. To do this, students must demonstrate a quality preparation for the seminar: read all the assigned literature and be ready to perform your critical evaluation of it.

The final grade is made up of points that students earn through out the course. The distribution of points is the following:

0	0,5	1	2	3
Absence without a valid reason*	Present, but no participation**	Present; little contribution***	Present; sophisticated contribution	Present; outstanding contribution

\* Medical certificate should be handed in to the Administration Office or a proof of academic importance (e.g. conference), if a student wants to makeup for the missed opportunity to get credits it is obligatory to notify the tutor of the assistants to ask for a special task for the related topic. Unless such wish is articulated in some form a student gets "0"

\*\* Not being able to respond to the question of the tutor or passive participation in group projects is considered as "no" participation

\*\*\* Having answered the question of the tutor, but no involvement volunteering or volunteered 1-2 times without demonstrating comprehensive analysis is considered as "little" contribution

Therefore, overall participation in seminars through out the course makes up the grading scheme:

### NOT A PASS

Grade	Points
1	2,5
2	3,5
3	4,5

### SATISFACTORY

Grade	Points
4	5,5
5	7

### WELL PASSED

Grade	Points
6	8,5
7	10

EXCELENTLY PASSED

Grade	Points
8	12
9	14
10	16

! Only overall grade for the course is rounded, which determines the mark

### Quizzes:

Quizzes\* are short tests aimed to verify how the material was learned and understood. Each quiz may (but not necessarily) contain three types of questions: a) material from the lecture; b) material from the previous seminar; c) the least frequently answered questions from the previous quizzes. Normally quiz consists of 5-15 short questions. The final grade for this part is the average for all\*\* quizzes.

\* There may be more than one quiz at the seminar

\*\*Seminar attendance is required to have a grade for quiz. Medical certificate or another document mentioned in the first section is the only excuse to skip the quiz. In other cases, the skipped quiz is estimated at zero which is included in the average score.

### MapTest:

MapTest is a necessary\* check of factual knowledge for every student on the program. This test is designed as a special quiz which will be held on a particular day which will be announced by the tutor as well as its topic.

MAP TEST is held on the knowledge of COUNTRY, ITS CAPITAL AND ITS FLAG

\* Map tests attendance is obligatory. Retake is required and may happen only if you have medical certificate or another document mentioned in the first section. In other cases, test is estimated at zero which is included in the average score.

### **Examination Type**

The cumulated grade for the course is enough to pass the discipline, therefore no exam is intendent

## **Main Readings**

All reading sent via email by the tutor or the assistants are required for a productive seminar, which is necessary to pass this academic discipline

## Course Plan

**Course Title**

Week#	Topic	Seminar Questions	Readings	
			Required	Optional
1	<b>Territory and Sovereignty:</b> state as an independent political body, autonomy of power over a territory	<p>Why the Peace of Westphalia is said to have a crucial importance in the development of the notion of modern sovereign state?</p> <p><b>Does international law suppress sovereign states or supports its existence? (How can international law perform as both sovereignty protector and aggressor)</b></p> <p>What are non-state actors? How do these actors' effect sovereign state behavior?</p> <p>What are the contemporary changes for a state to undergo, regarding an international framework?</p> <p>How do this development work specifically?</p> <p>Does might of a state predetermine its claim claim for sovereignty?</p>	<p>Krasner - Rethinking the sovereign state model</p> <p>James, "The Practice of Sovereign Statehood in Contemporary International Society"</p> <p>Murphy. 1994. International law and the sovereign state: Challenges to the status quo. Chap. 12 in Reordering the world</p>	
2	<b>Terra Nullius:</b> how a state can enlarge the horizons of its sovereign territory by law	To be sent via email	To be sent via email	To be sent via email
3	<b>Nation-State:</b> nation, nationality and identity under the roof of the same government; where does the power derive from?	To be sent via email	To be sent via email	To be sent via email
4	<b>World Political Geography &amp; Political Systems:</b> origins of diversity of political systems and the evolution of statehood approaches	To be sent via email	To be sent via email	To be sent via email
5	<b>Geography of Democratization:</b> global spread of democracy, battling different regional and historical	To be sent via email	To be sent via email	To be sent via email

	conditions; outcomes of 1991+			
6	<b>Failed States:</b> why states fail; origins and processes of such a phenomenon	To be sent via email	To be sent via email	To be sent via email
7	<b>Challenges of Globalization:</b> the duality of global progress or progress across the borders by the means of technologies	To be sent via email	To be sent via email	To be sent via email
8	<b>Political integration;</b> union building, and preservation of sovereign goodwill exercised in a cooperation	To be sent via email	To be sent via email	To be sent via email
9	<b>Political Organizations of the Future:</b> exploration of cosmos and its potential demarcation and political purposes	To be sent via email	To be sent via email	To be sent via email

