

**COURSE TITLE/FIELD: P280 Eurasia: Geopolitics, Religion, and Security**  
**Spring 2019, Tuesday, 3:20 p.m. – 5:20 p.m.**  
**Mugar 235**

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### **COURSE INTRODUCTION**

This course explores the classical and critical schools of geopolitics as they relate to control over and construction of Eurasia, as a territorial and cultural space, with particular emphasis on issues of religion and security as part of contemporary geopolitical contestation in and about Eurasia. The course focuses primarily on the relationship between the United States and Russia, but the US-Russia focus is intended to provide a contemporary framework for thinking about broader geopolitical processes, issues, and trends in Eurasia *writ large*.

Eurasia is a vast geographic expanse characterized by regime-type diversity (democratic, authoritarian, totalitarian, hybrid, illiberal, sultanistic), religious pluralism (Western and Eastern Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, et al), complex security interests and threats (state, non-state, and human), and rich, if unevenly distributed, natural resources (oil, natural gas, minerals, water).

Taking into account these features and characterizations of Eurasia, this course analyzes the geopolitics of Eurasia as **both a territorial and cultural space of contestation**, with control over Eurasia understood as a *sine qua non* for global hegemony. Indeed, since the end of the Cold War and, especially, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Eurasia is a geopolitical playing field where scholars and policymakers are debating whether Western (mainly defined in terms of NATO and the EU) and Eastern (primarily understood in terms of Russia and China) interests and identities are locked into a zero-sum competition.

The domains of security and religion are especially crucial to the contemporary geopolitics of Eurasia. This course considers the multi-dimensional, intersecting dimensions of security (including changing technologies of force projection, transportation, communication, and information; and distinctions of state, non-state, and human security) and religion (including ideas, institutions, and actors; and, the causes and effects of religious pluralism versus homogenization), in analyzing diverse modalities of control over and construction of Eurasia.

The course relies on a combination of readings in theory, case study analysis, guest presentations by academic and policy experts, collaborative classroom assignments, and focused debates.

**The course is designed according to the following goals:** (1) to introduce the classical and critical traditions of geopolitics; (2) to introduce Eurasia as a “super-continent” that is intrinsic to the traditions of geopolitics and to arguments about global hegemony international relations; (3) to develop understanding of the geographies of power and geographies of culture that have defined Eurasia and that shape competition for control over Eurasia; (4) and, to understand the nexus between religion and security in the geopolitics of Eurasia.

The course focuses heavily on the NATO-Russia relationship as the primary reference point for understanding the intersection of religion and security in the geopolitics of Eurasia. We will be

questioning the evidence and logic for the growing perception and discourse among US and Russian political and security elites that Washington and Moscow are competitors, foes, and enemies in Eurasia. We will consider whether the US and its European allies share the same perspective and approach to Russia. We will consider the alternative possibility that, especially in terms of the religion-security nexus, there may be rationality and possibility for cooperation between NATO and Russia. Finally, we will consider the role of China as a possible hegemon in Eurasia and, therefore, we will consider a move beyond neo-Cold War thinking on Eurasia.

## **COURSE DESIGN AND GOALS**

**This course is an introduction divided into two parts:**

### **Part One (Theory and Practice): The Return of Geopolitics and the Rediscovery of Eurasia.**

Introduction to the theory of geopolitics and connections to IR theory. Focus on origins and evolution from late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> century origins, to evolution through 20<sup>th</sup> century and renewal and reconfiguration in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Focus on both classical geopolitics and critical geopolitics and their mutual reinforcement. Consider the notion “no Eurasia, no geopolitics.” Evaluate differences between Eurasia, Eur-Asia, Europe and/versus Asia.

### **Part Two (Case Studies): Eurasia, Geopolitics, and the Religion-Security Nexus.**

Consider case studies that illustrate the reality of Eurasia as a massive **geospace with regional and local specificities**. Consider the integration of classical and critical perspectives to understand how interests, alliances, and enemies are determined. Examine the impact of technology on both classical and critical frameworks for analyzing conflict and order in Eurasia. Identify reflexivities between religion and security in case studies illustrating geopolitical contests for hegemony in Eurasia.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Class Meetings.** The course turns on a combination of lectures and regular discussion. Attendance at all classes is mandatory. There will be cold calling in class, and students should be able to demonstrate thorough preparation of the weekly reading assignments. We will also incorporate real-time events relevant to our weekly topics.

**Workflow.** Course assignments are designed to ensure that **workload is manageable** over the duration of the semester, while also assuming graduate and professional standards. Assignments are also designed to ensure a **multi-dimensional pedagogical approach that allows students to learn from and play to their strengths**. Assignments are designed to maximize the opportunities for student engagement in class discussion and debate, as well as to have access to expert guest speakers.

**Class Attendance and Participation.** Regular class attendance is mandatory, and active participation is expected. There is only so much “air time” available for in-class discussion, so we will strike a careful balance in time spent on discussion and in allowing opportunities for everyone to participate. This is an introductory course, designed with breadth and generalizability, with specific deep-dives into case studies; therefore, there is no presumption of expertise for success in the course, but there is definitely an assumption regarding the expectation of regular preparation of materials.

**40% (20 % each) Analytic Brief.** Each student must write two analytic briefs of selected from the readings for the semester. These begin in Week 2 of the semester. The analytic briefs are intended to allow you to deconstruct, critique, and synthesize the reading, and to share with fellow students. Your brief should clearly summarize the author's main argument and critique the rigor and logic of the author's claims. As part of this assessment, you should also keep in mind the following: identify the approach to geopolitics (classical, critical, or some combination) utilized by the author; identifying the key geopolitical challenge and actors (state, non-state, multilateral, religious, non-religious) involved in the case; specify the type and significance of security (state, non-state, transnational, human) at issue; the salience of religion (actors involved, ideas, connection to violence and disintegration versus stability and cohesion); and the explicit versus implicit connection to Eurasia as an "axial supercontinent" relevant to ideas about power and hegemony. **Each brief should be between no less than two and no more than three single-spaced pages. You must submit your essays (to the folder on Canvas) by midnight on the day preceding the class.**

**25% Proposal for White Paper.** Session 9 is a free session—i.e. we do not meet formally as a class, but instead, you must sign up for a meeting with me during day-long office hours, to discuss preliminarily your selection of a final assignment topic. This meeting and your workload that week will give your team (see below) the opportunity to brainstorm and to conduct very preliminary research on your topic for the final White Paper assignment. **The proposal for the White Paper must be submitted by Friday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, at 5 p.m. (i.e. before the start of Spring Break).** **You should include the following in your proposal:** 1. preliminary assessment of the key elements of the geopolitical threats/opportunities and their significance for US strategic interests in Eurasia; 2. Initial specification of the religion and security dimensions, and their nexus, of the geopolitical issue; 3. Identification of the US policymaking stakeholders necessary for effective response, resolution, and/or management of the problem; 4. Initial assessment of whether this is a problem that can be resolved or whether it is a "wicked problem" without final resolutions, with associated implications; 5. Initial ideas for policy responses; and 5. Preliminary bibliographical references (between five and ten) that you anticipate as foundational for your final white paper.

**35% Final White Paper.** In place of a final exam, there is a White Paper on a specific geopolitical problem drawn from a list of possible geopolitical scenarios originating in Eurasia; the list of scenarios is designed in terms of significance for US strategic interests in Eurasia. Your audience for the White Paper must be determined by you, but should consider the multiple stakeholders in the US foreign policy architectures who are intrinsic to successful policymaking related to your scenario (you can also propose the creation of an inter-agency task force (IATF) of US government officials that you view as critical to management and/or resolution of the geopolitical issue which you select). The White paper should provide a clear description and argumentation of the policy issue and significance for US strategic interests in Eurasia; an analysis of the opportunities and threats associated with the scenario; and a sophisticated, precise set of policy recommendations for responding to the scenario. As you write your White Paper, keep in mind that you are trying to apply your social science training to knowledge gaps in areas of critical importance to US strategic planning on religion and security issues central to US geopolitical priorities in Eurasia. **Your White Paper should be no longer than 40 pages** (25 pages of text; a two-page Executive Summary; and, up to 13 pages of appendices, including maps, charts, etc.). **The goals of this exercise are: critical thinking, innovative and efficacious policymaking, development of policy presentation skills, and a final written product that you can share with prospective employers and/or consider as the basis for capstone ideas.**

**The assignment is due by e-mail on May 6 at midnight.**

## GUEST SPEAKERS

The course will have occasional guest speakers, in order to allow students to engage with scholars and policymakers with particular expertise on key theoretical and operational topics geopolitics, religion, and security in Eurasia. The guest speakers provide policymaking and practitioner experience, and also offer students a networking opportunity for professional purposes.

Our guest speakers will include NATO policymakers, faculty from the US Naval War College, religious leaders, and academic country experts. Below are guest speakers scheduled for this semester. The speaker list may change, depending on their schedules.

**Dr. Nikolas K. Gvosdev**, Prof. of National Security, US Naval War College

**James Mackey**, NATO, Head of Euro-Atlantic and Global Partnerships

**Dr. Sharyl Cross**, Global Policy Scholar, Kennan Institute, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington D.C.

**Dr. Artyom Lukin**, Deputy Director for Research at the School of Regional and International Studies, Far Eastern Federal University (Vladivostok, Russia)

**Dr. Cyril Hovorun**, Director, Huffington Ecumenical Institute, Loyola Marrimount University

**Dr. Cole Durham**, Founding Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University

**Dr. Bruce Everett**, The Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy, Prof. of International Business and Energy Security

## COURSE READINGS

All journal articles and selected book chapters will be posted to the course site on Canvas.

## CLASS SESSIONS

### **PART 1: (Theory and Practice): The Return of Geopolitics and the Rediscovery of Eurasia**

#### **Session 1 (Tuesday, January 15)**

- Introduction to the Old and New Debates: Return of Geopolitics, Rediscovery of Eurasia
- Clarity and Stability or Confusion and Conflict: Geopolitics Everywhere, a Concept So Compelling, Yet So Opaque

Michael Herzfeld. "Welcome to Greece (but Not to Europe)," in *Foreign Policy* (February 25, 2015).

Walter Russell Meade. "The Return of Geopolitics," in *Foreign Affairs*.

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2014-04-17/return-geopolitics>

Evan Osnos, David Remnick, and Joshua Yaffa. "Trump, Putin, and the New Cold War," in *The New Yorker* (March 2017). <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/03/06/trump-putin-and-the-new-cold-war>

## No class on January 22<sup>nd</sup>—University Calendar

### Session 2 (Tuesday, January 29)

- Origins of Classical Geopolitics and Linkage to Eurasia

Alfred T. Mahan. "Discussion of the Element of Sea Power," in Jason Dittmer and Joanne Sharp, eds., *Geopolitics: An Introductory Reader*.

Halford J. Mackinder. "The Geographical Pivot of History," in Jason Dittmer and Joanne Sharp, eds., *Geopolitics: An Introductory Reader*.

Karl Haushofer. "Why Geopolitics?" in Jason Dittmer and Joanne Sharp, eds., *Geopolitics: An Introductory Reader*.

### Session 3 (Tuesday, February 5)

- Historicizing and Updating Classical Geopolitics
- Technology Matters
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Specificities: Religion and Security

George F. Kennan. "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," in Jason Dittmer and Joanne Sharp, eds., *Geopolitics: An Introductory Reader*.

Colin S. Gray. "In Defense of the Heartland: Sir Halford Mackinder and his Critics a Hundred Years On," in Jason Dittmer and Joanne Sharp, eds., *Geopolitics: An Introductory Reader*.

Zbigniew Brzezinski. "A Geostrategy for Eurasia," in *Foreign Affairs* (September 1997).

Svarin, David. "The Construction of 'Geopolitical Spaces' in Russian Foreign Policy Discourse Before and after the Ukraine Crisis," in *Journal of Eurasian Studies*. Vol. 7, Issue 2 (July 2016).

Laruelle, Marlene. "Eurasianism as a Geopolitical Identity," in Bassin, Mark, Glebov, Sergey, and Laruelle, Marlene, eds. *What Was Eurasianism and Who Made It?* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015).

Cohen, Stephen F. "The US 'Betrayed' Russia, But It Is Not News That's Fit to Print," in *The Nation*. <https://www.thenation.com/article/the-us-betrayed-russia-but-it-is-not-news-thats-fit-to-print/>

### Session 4 (Tuesday, February 12)

- Readings in Critical Geopolitics: Deconstructing and Constructing Eurasia
- Culture and History as Raw Materials in the Geography of Eurasia

- Occident, Orient and Religion: Civilizationalism and Eurasianism

Edward Said. "Orientalism," in Jason Dittmer and Joanne Sharp, eds., *Geopolitics: An Introductory Reader*.

Samuel P. Huntington. "The Clash of Civilizations?" in Jason Dittmer and Joanne Sharp, eds., *Geopolitics: An Introductory Reader*.

Elizabeth H. Prodromou. "Paradigms, Power, and Identity: Rediscovering Orthodoxy and Regionalizing Europe," in *European Journal of Political Research* (September 1996).

Luiza Bialasiewicz. "The Uncertain State(s) of Europe?," in Jason Dittmer and Joanne Sharp, eds., *Geopolitics: An Introductory Reader*.

Gertjan Dijkin. "When Geopolitics and Religion Fuse: A Historical Perspective," in *Geopolitics* (July 2006).

John Agnew. "Religion and Geopolitics," in *Geopolitics* (11: 2).

Graham Smith. "The Masks of Proteus: Russia, Geopolitical Shift and the New Eurasianism," in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (Vol. 24, No. 4, 1999).

### **Session 5 (Tuesday, February 19)**

- Religion and Eur-Asia, Religion and Security in the Geopolitics of Eurasia
- Religion-Security Nexus in the Geopolitics of Eurasia: Sacralization of Threats and Alliances

Sidorov, Dmitrii. "Post-Imperial Third Romes: Resurrections of a Russian Orthodox Geopolitical Metaphor," in *Geopolitics* (11: 2006).

Petro, Nicolai N. "Russia's Orthodox Soft Power," in *Carnegie Council for Ethics and International Affairs*. [https://www.carnegiecouncil.org/publications/articles\\_papers\\_reports/727](https://www.carnegiecouncil.org/publications/articles_papers_reports/727)

Mohiaddin Mesbahi. "Islam and Security Narratives in Eurasia," in *Caucasus Survey*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (October 2013).

Gvosdev, Nikolas K. "Russia's Hand Is Visible Everywhere in the Middle East," in *The National Interest* (September 12, 2017.) <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/russias-hand-visible-everywhere-the-middle-east-22272>

## **PART 2: Case Studies**

### **Session 6 (Tuesday, February 26)**

NATO and the New Geopolitics of Hegemony in Eurasia: Transatlantic (Dis?)Unity

- US/NATO Perspective
- Are Brussels and Washington in sync on Eurasia?
- How does NATO define its greatest threats and opportunities in Eurasia? States (e.g. Russia, China), non-state actors (e.g. terrorism, religious terrorism and radicalism, criminal

networks), transnational phenomena (e.g. migration), internal cohesions versus fragmentation (e.g. Turkey, Hungary, Poland)?

- Does it make sense to discuss NATO as a community of values and as a collective security arrangement?

GLOBSEC NATO Adaptation Initiative. “One Alliance: The Future Tasks of the Adapted Alliance” (November 2017) <https://www.globsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/GNAI-Final-Report-Nov-2017.pdf>

Keohane, Daniel. “Policy Brief: EU Military Cooperation and National Defense,” *The German Marshall Fund of the United States* (4: 2018).

Munich Security Report, 2017: Post-Truth, Post-West, Post-Order?

Committee on Foreign Relations, January 2018. “Putin’s Asymmetric Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe: Implications for U.S. National Security.” (*Peruse at your leisure: This is intended as a background, not as an assigned reading.*)

### **Session 7 (Tuesday, March 5)**

Ukraine: Religion and Security in the Colliding US-Russia Game

- Geopolitics of Transatlantic versus Russian Foreign Policy in Ukraine
- Ukraine as a religiously plural space: competition, cohesion, division
- Ukraine, democracy, and force: Crimea
- Readings to be assigned (See Trunk site.)

Deni, John R. “Tie Lethal Aid for Ukraine to an Admission that NATO Made a Mistake,” in *War on the Rocks* (December 2017) <https://warontherocks.com/2017/12/tie-lethal-aid-ukraine-admission-nato-made-mistake/>

Bateson, Ian. “A People Without a History Won’t Fight: The Battle to Control Ukraine’s Past,” in *World Policy Journal*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1 (Spring 2016)

Bremer, Thomas. “Religion in Ukraine: Historical Background and the Present Situation,” in Krawchuk, Andrii and Bremer, Thomas, eds., *Churches in the Ukrainian Crisis*. (NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016).

Hovorun, Cyril. “Interpreting the ‘Russian World’,” in Krawchuk, Andrii and Bremer, Thomas, eds., *Churches in the Ukrainian Crisis*. (NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016).

Plokhyy, Serhii. *Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*. (NY: Basic Books, 2015). Chs 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27.

### **Session 8 (Tuesday, March 12)**

Proposal Week. No class meetings. Sign-up for meetings with professor to discuss final assignment.

**SPRING BREAK: No class on March 19 (Spring Break the week of March 18)**

**Session 9 (Tuesday, March 26)**

Geopolitics in Syria: Religion and Security in Eurasia's Levant

Phillips, Christopher. *The Battle for Syria: International Rivalry in the New Middle East*. (Yale University Press, 2016). Introduction and chs. 1, 2,3, 9, 10, pg 232.

**Session 10 (Tuesday, April 2)**

China and Russia: Taking a Broad View of 21<sup>st</sup>-century Geopolitics

Blanchard, Jean-Mar F., and Flint, Colin. "The Geopolitics of China's Maritime Silk Road Initiative," in *Geopolitics*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2017).

Kaplan, Robert O. "Eurasia's Coming Anarchy: Chinese and Russian Weakness," in *Foreign Affairs*, February 15, 2016.

Laruelle, Marlene. "Russia's Eurasianist Soft Power in Central Asia," in *Eurasian Studies*. (15 August 2017.) <http://greater-europe.org/archives/3190>

Pirro, Ellen B. "Great Power Foreign Relations in Central Asia: Competition, Cooperation, and Congruence," in Kanet, Roger E. and Sussex, Matthew, eds. *Russia, Eurasia and the New Geopolitics of Energy: Confrontation and Consolidation*. (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

Cau, Enrico. "The Geopolitics of the Beijing-Moscow Consensus," in *The Diplomat* (4 January 2018). <https://thediplomat.com/2018/01/the-geopolitics-of-the-beijing-moscow-consensus/>

Mattis, Peter. "Contrasting China's and Russia's Influence Operations," in *War on the Rocks*, January 16, 2018.

Lukin, Artyom. "Thinking Beyond China When Dealing with North Korea: Is There a Role for Russia?" <https://www.fpri.org/article/2017/04/thinking-beyond-china-dealing-north-korea-role-russia/>

**Session 11 (Tuesday, April 9)**

Migration, Religious Pluralism, and Security

- Geopolitics of Eurasian Migration through the Eastern Mediterranean
- How does migration reframe and reshape the perception and reality of the religion-security nexus?
- Does migration help to reconfigure and clarify different meanings, components, needs for security?
- Is religion a driver of migration or is religion activated through migration experience?
- Do the above questions change, depending on migration from the East versus migration from the South? Heartland, rimland, world island?
- How has the migration, religion, security triad affected notions of Europe, Asia, and Eurasia?



Wagenvoorde, Renee. "How Religion and Secularism (Don't) Matter in the Refugee Crisis," in Mavelli, Luca and Wilson, Erin K. , eds. *The Refugee Crisis and Religion: Secularism, Security and Hospitality in Question*. (NY: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

Takešević, Ruzica, and Tatalović, Sinisa. "Securitization (and De-Securitization) of the European Refugee Crisis: Croatia in the Regional Context," in *Teorija in Praksa*, Let. 53. 5/2016.

Armakolas, Ioannis and Karatrantos, Triantaflos. "Infiltration of Terrorists in Mixed Migration Flows in Eastern Mediterranean and the Western Balkans," in Philips, David L., ed. *Balkan Human Corridor*. (NY: Columbia University Institute for the Study of Human Rights, 2016).

Buckley, Cynthia J. "Introduction: New Approaches to Migration and Belonging in Eurasia," in Buckley, Cynthia J., Ruble Blair, and Hofman, Erin Trought, eds. *Migration, Homeland, and Belonging in Eurasia*. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008-2009).

Anthony Cooper. "Where Are Europe's New Borders? Ontology, Methodology, and Framing," in *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, Vol. 23, Issue 4 (2015).

### **Session 12 (Tuesday, April 16)**

Geopolitics of Energy Security and Religion: Heartland, Rimland, World Island

Lomagin, Nikita A. "Foreign Policy Preferences of Russia's Energy Sector: A Shift to Asia Great Power Foreign Relations in Central Asia: Competition, Cooperation, and Congruence," in Kanet, Roger E. and Sussex, Matthew, eds. *Russia, Eurasia and the New Geopolitics of Energy: Confrontation and Consolidation*. (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

- Additional Readings to be assigned. (See Canvas site.)

### **Session 13 (Tuesday, April 23)**

The Balkans Space: Eurasian Convergence Zone

- Readings to be assigned. (See Canvas site.)

**The assignment is due by e-mail on May 6 at midnight.**