COURSE TITLE/FIELD: P280 Eurasia: Geopolitics, Religion, and Security
Spring 2020, Tuesday, 3:20 p.m. – 5:20 p.m.
Cabot 205

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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 21st 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, occasional guest presentations by academic and policy experts, collaborative student assignments, and focused class discussions.

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 term "geopolitics is**

used ubiquitously by IR scholars, policymakers, practitioners, as well as by the media, and in popular discourse. Yet, the origins of the term, inextricably linked to Eurasia, as well as the diverse conceptions of geography, are frequently overlooked and/or misunderstood. This course aims to provide clarity and precision to those elements of omission and misunderstanding.

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

The course is divided into two parts:

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

- Introduction to theory of geopolitics and connections to IR theory.
- Historicize geopolitics: focus on origins and evolution from late-19th and early-20th century origins, to evolution through 20th century and renewal and reconfiguration in 21st century.
- Consider "geographies" and the implications for distinctions between classical and critical schools of geopolitics: (how) is religion relevant to these geographies?
- Consider the notion of "no Eurasia, no geopolitics."
- Evaluate differences between Eurasia and Europe versus Asia.
- Explain causes for return of geopolitics in international affairs today.

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

- Consider case studies that illustrate the reality of Eurasia as a massive, supercontinental geospace with regional particularities and specificities.
- Analyze cases at the local and regional levels, with thoughtful, precise attention to supercontinental framework and implications: e.g. how do cases such as Ukraine, Syria, Balkans, China, etc. relate to one another?
- Consider classical and critical perspectives as framers for the cases.
- Examine impact of religion in the integration of classical and critical perspectives to understand how interests, alliances, and enemies are determined.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & WORKFLOW

Workflow. Assignments are designed to maximize opportunities for student engagement, as well as to have access to expert guest speakers. Assignments and workload are designed to ensure a **manageable** workload over the duration of the semester, as well as to **play to your strengths** (i.e. through a combination of very short writing assignments, oral participation, and a collaborative final project). Course assignments are designed to allow you to produce outputs that could be useful to you beyond the course. **Readings average 100-120 pages weekly.**

20% Class Attendance and Participation. Weekly class attendance is mandatory, and active participation is expected. This is an introductory course, designed with breadth and generalizability, with specific deep-dives into case studies. Therefore, there is no presumption of expertise as prerequisite for success in the course, but there is definitely an assumption regarding the expectation of regular preparation of materials.

30% Analytic Brief and In-Class Presentation (15% each). Each student must write two analytic briefs of selected from the readings for the semester. These cover Weeks 2 through 6 on the syllabus. The analytic briefs are intended to allow you to deconstruct, critique, and synthesize the reading. As part of this assessment, you should 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. You may write your brief as either an essay or with bullet points and summary; your text can be no longer than three, single-spaced pages. Your in-class presentation can be no longer than 10 minutes.

30 % Team Case Study Presentations. From Weeks 7 through 13, student teams will present a 40-minute, power-point briefing on the week's case study. Your brief should include a detailed analysis of the case for the week, and the presentation must include all members of the student team. Power point slides should serve as the support for your presentation—i.e. please do not read directly from power point slides, but instead, offer a narrative that is amplified by the slides. Student teams should sign up in office hours to meet with the professor to discuss the presentations.

20 % Final Assignment. Individual Oral Exam. The final exam is an oral exam in the form of a one-on-one conversation with the professor. Exams will take place during the scheduled reading period in the university calendar sign-up times for the oral exam will be provided during the next-to-last week of the semester, in order to provide for the greatest flexibility in terms of student schedules. The exam will last for 20 minutes, and will focus exclusively on your particular team case study. The oral exam, therefore, provides students with an opportunity to perfect a crucial part of your skills repertoire as students of contemporary international relations.

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.

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 14)

- 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
- NOTE: This is our first meeting. In reading these four articles, consider them as an introduction to current discussions that either actively deploy or implicitly rely on the concept of geopolitics in order to make an argument. Consider the different types of geographies used in the articles, consider the conceptions of Eurasia used either explicitly or implicitly, consider the salience of religion and the religion-security nexus in the articles, and finally, consider the utility of geopolitics as an analytic framework and methodological approach for managing contemporary international relations. **Our first meeting will turn on a general discussion of these questions as framers for the course.**

Clover, Charles. "Dreams of the Eurasian Heartland: The Remergence of Geopolitics." https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/1999-03-01/dreams-eurasian-heartland-reemergence-geopoliticsMichael Herzfeld. "Welcome to Greece (but Not to Europe)," in *Foreign Policy* (February 25, 2015).

Meade, Walter Russell. "The Return of Geopolitics," in *Foreign Affairs*. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2014-04-17/return-geopolitics

Osnos, Evan, 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

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

Tuesday, January 21—no class—University calendar follows Monday schedule

Session 2 (Tuesday, January 28)

- 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 4)

- Historicizing and Updating Classical Geopolitics
- Technology Matters
- 21st 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).

Session 4 (Tuesday, February 11)

- 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

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

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

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

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

Reuber, Paul. "Conflict Studies and Critical Geopolitics: Theoretical Concepts and Recent Research in Political Geography," in *GeoJournal*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (2000): 37-43.

Session 5 (Tuesday, February 18)

- Eurasia, Eurasianism, and the origins and return of geopolitics
- Some examples of Eurasianism, and some illustrations of religion in conceptions of Europe, Asia, and Eurasia

Matsuzato, Kimitaka. "Cultural Geopolitics and the New Border Regions of Eurasia," in *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 1 (201): 42-53.

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

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

Ozturk, Ahmet Erdi. "Who Is Pushing Turkey to Libya: the Partnership of Eurasianism and

Islamism. https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/who-pushing-turkey-libya-partnership-eurasianism-and-islamism/

Session 6 (Tuesday, February 25)

- Religion and Soft Power
- Religious Diplomacy: Another Take on Geopolitics, Religion, and Security
- Religion-Security Nexus in the Geopolitics of Eurasia: Sacralization of Threats and Alliances

Philpott, Daniel, and Timothy Samuel Shah. "State of the Field Essay. In Defense of Religious Freedom: New Critics of a Beleagered Human Right," in *Journal of Law and Religion*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (2016).

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

Haynes, Jeffrey. "Causes and Consequences of Transnational Religious Soft Power." https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6310/283d54f78eb79c91e9e64aa0933174e4f481.pdf

Steiner, Sherrie. "Religious Soft Power as Accountability Mechanism for Power in World Politics: The InterFaith Leaders Summit(s), in *Sage, Opern Journal*, January 2011.

PART 2: Case Studies

Session 7 (Tuesday, March 3)

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?

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

Hillen, John and Michael P. Noonan. "The Geopolitics of NATO Enlargement," in *Parameters* (Autumn 1998): 21-34.

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/

Sjursen, Helen. "On the Identity of NATO," in *International Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 4 (July 2004):

687-703.

Kurth, James. He Next NATO: Building an American Commonwealth of Nations," in *The National Interest*, No. 64 (Fall 2001): 5-16.

Hunter, Robert E. "NATO in Context: Geopolitics and the Problem of Russian Power," in *Prism*, Vo. 6, No. 2 (2106): 2-27.

Cook, Steven A. "Neither Friend Nor Foe: The Future of US-Turkey Relations." Council on Foreign Relations, Council Special Report, No. 82 (Nov. 2018).

Session 8 (Tuesday, March 10)
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.

Friday, March 13 – Sunday, March 22: Spring Break

Session 9 (Tuesday, March 24)
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).

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).

Session 10 (Tuesday, March 31)
China and Russia: Eurasian Competition or Cooperation?

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.

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.

Wang, Tingyi. "China's One Belt One Road Initiative and Its Strategic Connections with Arab Countries in the Gulf," in *The Arab States of the Gulf and BRICS: New Strategic Partnerships in Politics and Economics* (Gerlach Press, 2016): 172-191

Session 11 (Tuesday, April 7)
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): 61-74.

Armakolas, Ioannis and Karatrantros, Triantafllos. "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).

Baumgart-Ochse, Claudia. "Religious Justifications for an Overlapping Consensus on Palestinian Refugees' Human Rights," in Mavelli, Luca and Wilson, Erin K. , eds. *The Refugee Crisis and Religion: Secularism, Security and Hospitality in Question*. (NY: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017): 187-204.

Session 12 (Tuesday, April 14)
Geopolitics of Energy Security and Religion: Heartland, Rimland, World Island

Herd, Graeme P. "Living the 'Chinese Dream; in the 'Russkiy Mir': Central Asia Between Sino-Russian Strategic Trilemmas?" in Matthew Susex and Roger E. Kanet, eds., *Russia, Eurasia and the New Geopolitics of Energy: Confrontation and Consolidation*. (NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015).

Lomagin, Nikita A. "Foreign Policy Preferences of Russia's Energy Sector," in Matthew Susex and Roger E. Kanet, eds., *Russia, Eurasia and the New Geopolitics of Energy: Confrontation and Consolidation*. (NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015).

Toprani, Anand. "A Primer on the Geopolitics of Oil," in *War on the Rocks*, 1/17/2019. https://warontherocks.com/2019/01/a-primer-on-the-geopolitics-of-oil/

Velichnka, Milina. "Energy Security and Geopolitics," in *Connections*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Winter 2007): 25-44.

Calder, Kent E. "Emerging Ententes Amid Complex Continentalism," in *The New Continentalism Book Subtitle: Energy and Twenty-First-Century Eurasian Geopolitics* (Yale University Press: 2012): 199-246.

Session 13 (Tuesday, April 21)
The Balkans Space: Eurasian Convergence Zone

Galleoti, Mark. "Do the Western Balkans Face a Coming Russian Storm?" in *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 4/4/2018.
https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/do_the_western_balkans_face_a_coming_russian_storm

"EU's Balkan Test: Geopolitics of a Normative Power," in *Europe Now Journal*, https://www.europenowjournal.org/2018/06/25/eus-balkans-test-geopolitics-of-a-normative- power/

Hide, Enri. "Islamic Extremism in the Balkans as a Geopolitical Instrument," in *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269960740_Islamic_Extremism_in_the_Balkans_as_a_G eopolitical_Instrument

Azinovic, Vlado. "Understanding Violent Extremism in the Western Balkans," in *Extremism Research Forum: Western Balkans British Council).*
https://www.britishcouncil.me/sites/default/files/erf_report_western_balkans_2018.pdf

"Russia Competes for Geopolitical Influence in the Balkans." *Stratfor*. 2014.

Pickering, Paula M. "Implications for Eurasia," in *Peacebuilding in the Balkans: The View from the Ground Floor*. (NY: Cornell University Press, 2017): 165-188.