

# Geography 4997, Section 3 – Political Geography Political Science 4060, Section 6 – Political Geography

Fall 2014

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 11:30am - 12:20pm – 245 Howe-Russell

Final exam: Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am - 12:00pm

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Office hours: Mondays 1:00-2:00pm, Wednesdays 10:00-11:00am, and by appointment

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Course website: <http://moodle2.lsu.edu/my/>

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## Course description

Once upon a time, there was a class at LSU called Political Geography with the course number GEOG 4060. The course description for that class was: “Systematic, cultural-political geography; emphasis on technical and philosophical aspects and on American political landscapes; territorial political entities (cadastral, civil, national, imperial); role of the lands and seas, nature and objects of war; impacts of political entities on the landscape.” This class marks the return of Political Geography to LSU as a cross-listed Geography and Political Science course under temporary course numbers for the time being. This class will address two big, and related, questions: How is politics geographical and how is geography political? To answer those questions, we will seek to understand what we mean by politics and geography in the relations between nation-states, or geopolitics, the relations between people and states, or government, and the forms that politics can take outside of, or in opposition to, state power. While this course is not a comparative study of Political Geography, a sub-discipline within human geography, and Political Science, its existence at the boundary between the two will provide opportunities to compare and contrast approaches to the study of politics from the geography and political science disciplines.

## Geography B.A. learning objectives

This course’s learning objectives are based on the Bachelor’s of Arts degree program in the Department of Geography and Anthropology at LSU. Those objectives are:

- A capacity to construct and to evaluate arguments in light of geographical evidence.
- An understanding of continuity and change in human activity across the globe.
- Awareness of the influence of varied and complex factors on human activity across space.
- An ability to examine a variety of sources critically and to analyze them in terms of their contexts.
- The capacity to evaluate human activity in light of geographical evidence.
- Awareness of diversity and complexity of human activity as it relates to space and place.

Geography 4997, Section 3 / Political Science 4060, Section 6 will emphasize the following student learning objectives:

- An understanding of continuity and change in human activity across the globe.
- Awareness of the influence of varied and complex factors on human activity across space.
- A capacity to construct and to evaluate arguments in light of geographical evidence.
- An ability to examine a variety of sources critically and to analyze them in terms of their contexts.

GEOG 4997.3 is an upper-division elective in the B.A. and B.S. degree programs in Geography and can be taken for graduate credit towards the Geography M.S. and Geography and Anthropology PhD programs.

## Academic integrity

All rules regarding student conduct and ethical behavior apply in this class. See the *Code of Student Conduct* ( <http://saa.lsu.edu/code-student-conduct> ) for these rules. Academic honesty and integrity are expected from all at all times and plagiarism and cheating are not tolerated. All work submitted for this course must be original. You may not submit work prepared for another course or work done by another person. Violations of the *Code of Student Conduct* may be reported to the Dean of Student’s office.

### **Disability accommodations**

Louisiana State University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to speak with Disability Services and the instructor, as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please contact Disability Services, 115 Johnston Hall, (225)578-5919.

### **Course withdrawal dates**

The last day to withdraw without receiving a "W" in the course is September 3<sup>rd</sup> at 4:30pm.  
The last day to withdraw from the course is November 7<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm.

### **Classroom behavior**

Please turn off or make silent your cell phones and any other electronic things that can make noise before class starts. If any electronic device goes off during class, please silent the device immediately as I will ask you to give me the device for the remainder of the class if I get to it before you can silence it. (I will return the device as soon as class ends).

### **Access to grades**

I cannot provide students' grades over the phone or email, nor can I provide a student's grades by any means to someone other than that student, including their parents, without the student's written consent in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). I will post grades through the course's Moodle website and you can ask me in person during office hours for your grades. Grades should be posted to the Moodle site within three days of a given assignment. Note that grade averages will not be ordinarily posted to the Moodle site, and explicit announcement will be made in class before any grade averages are posted to the site, most likely before the final exam.

### **Turning in assignments**

Assignments must be turned in to me in paper format in class or by email to my lsu.edu email address on or before the due date. No assignments should be turned in under my office door or through my departmental mailbox.

### **Absences, late assignments and make-up exams**

I will assist students absent from class with valid reasons as defined in PS-22 of the LSU System, such as hospitalization, religious holidays, or university athletics. Students who miss class for valid reasons are excused from class attendance and any exams or other assignments on those days. Students are still responsible for the work missed, however. Any exams or other class work missed must be made up before the assignment is due. Contact me at least one week before your expected absence to make arrangements for taking make-up exams or completing other assignments early.

I do not accept late assignments for any reason, nor do I give make-up exams after the exam date. If you believe you cannot turn in an assignment on the due date, turn it in before the due date. If you can't take an exam or do other course work on a specified day and time, then, to the best of your ability, contact me at least one week before your absence. In the case of official university-sponsored events and scheduled medical appointments, please provide me appropriate documentation when you're able to. Appropriate documentation means a letter from your coach, instructor, or doctor that provides me with the details of the event or appointment and is signed by the appropriate party. For religious observances, you don't need to provide documentation but you still need to inform me a week beforehand. In the event of family emergencies, contact me as soon as possible and provide any documentation you can, such as an obituary, about the emergency. All rescheduled exams or other coursework, whatever the reason for the absence, must be taken before the original date and time for the exam.

### **Nullifying missed assignments in extraordinary circumstances**

In the eventuality of extraordinary circumstances where I judge it was impossible for a student to complete an assignment on time and could not give prior notice to turn in the assignment early, I will adjust that student's grading scale to make all other course work worth more toward the final grade in proportion to the points lost in the missed assignment. For example, having 1% of your grade nullified would shift the point base of the course from 100 to 99; having a mid-term exam nullified would shift the base from 100 to 75. Your final grade average would be adjusted by dividing your nominal average by the decimal form of shifted point base. This is how a nominal grade of 75 points would be calculated with the nullification of 25% of the course's grade:  $(75) / (0.75) = 100.00$

## Course readings

1. Agnew, John and Luca Muscara (2012) *Making Political Geography* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. ISBN-13: 978-1442212305.
2. Bullock III, Charles (2010) *Redistricting: The most political activity in America*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. ISBN-13: 978-1442203549.
3. Scott, James (1998) *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0300078152.

The three required books should be available at the LSU bookstore and other nearby textbook stores.

Other readings will be available through the course's Moodle site, under 'Readings' for the respective week of class the readings correspond to.

## Grading

The instructor is responsible for the assigning of individual assignment grades and final course grades. Grades for individual assignments are recorded in a numerical format and those numerical grades are weighted according to their share of the total course grade of 100 possible points. The sum of those numerical grades is the student's final course average, with the exception of circumstances when students have nullified graded work. Final letter grades are assigned according to a 10-point scale as listed below; grade breaks occur at precisely 0.10 points before the 10-point interval. Letter grades are not shifted to higher (or lower) letter grades if they fall near this break point, apart from the specific instances when I judge that students have participated significantly in class discussions.

### Grading scale

89.90̄ - 100	A
79.90 - 89.89̄	B
69.90̄ - 79.89̄	C
59.90̄ - 69.89̄	D
<= 59.89̄	E

## Class format and assessment

In this class, we will critically engage with the readings and our original research. Everyone is expected to come to class prepared to discuss the material. As this is a seminar-style course based on critical engagement with the material, active student participation is important, part of your grade, and much appreciated.

Classes will consist of a mix of lectures, discussions, review sessions, and films.

Assessment will be based on leadership in seminars, reaction papers to course readings, and a final research paper with a preliminary prospectus on some aspect of political geography. Reaction papers will be taken in class, seminar leadership will happen during class, and the research paper prospectus and final paper will be accepted in person at the beginning of class and to Moodle by the end of the day they are due (11:59pm).

Some guidelines for your written work:

- Type your written work double-spaced and proof it before you turn in the assignment.
- Include consistently formatted bibliographic references to others' written work that you used in your writing.
- Use correct grammar and syntax in your writing.

# of points	Assignment	Due date
5	Class leadership	During the semester
15	Reaction papers (5 x 3)	During the semester
25	Mid-term exam	10/20
5	Paper prospectus	10/31
25	Final paper	12/5
25	Final exam	12/8
100	Total points	End of Semester

## Seminar leadership (1, 5% each = 5%, due throughout the semester)

During the first few weeks of the semester, students will select one day when they will lead the class discussion. One or two students can choose any day of the class. Seminar leadership means that the student or two students will be responsible for giving a short presentation on the readings (10-20 minutes) for that class and helping to lead discussion.

**Reaction papers (5, 3% each = 15%, due throughout the semester)**

You have the choice of any five classes to turn in a reaction paper on the readings, or some selection from those readings, for that day's class. The reaction papers should be around 250 words and should not just summarize the readings, but make an effort to critically engage with the material and present questions it raised for you for discussion during class. *Reaction papers must be turned in to me by my lsu.edu email address at least 24 hours before the class to which they correspond.* Some questions you may want to consider in your response papers are: What is the author's main argument? Does the author present evidence to support the argument and is that evidence convincing to you? What are some of the weaknesses or strengths of the article? What questions are left unanswered? These response papers will be shared among the class to aid in discussion (I will also write and share my own response papers periodically).

**Midterm exam (25%, October 20<sup>th</sup> in class at regular class time)**

The midterm exam will be taken during the entire class period on October 20<sup>th</sup> and is worth one quarter of your final course grade. This exam will cover the first half of the class, from the first day of class through October 17<sup>th</sup>. The exam format will be short answer and essay questions, likely 5-8 questions total, on substantive topics we've covered in the first half of the course. We will have an exam study session, taking the entire class period on October 17<sup>th</sup>, to prepare for the midterm by reviewing what we've learned in the class so far.

**Paper prospectus (5%, due October 31<sup>st</sup>)**

See below for the details on this paper. Your prospectus is a proposal of what you want to write about – what your research question is and how you're going to go about answering that question, in 500-1,000 words. Consider this prospectus a first rough draft of your paper, from which you can narrow down what you will research and get feedback from me on the topic and your writing.

**Final research paper (25%, due December 5<sup>th</sup>)**

You will choose a topic related to political geography and write a substantive research paper (2,500 words for undergraduates, 5,000 words for graduates) or research proposal for future work about that topic. The exact topic is entirely up to you, but whatever you choose you should define the topic you're focusing on, review what has been written by scholars already on that topic (including references to those published works), describe coherently the evidence you find on the topic and give your analysis and discussion of that evidence. Include a complete list of the sources you cited in your paper. Use your paper prospectus to help you craft your topic, research approach, writing, and argument. If you have any doubts or insights during your research process, please see me during office hours or speak up during class – your research experiences can be a valuable part of our class discussion.

**Final exam (25%, December 8<sup>th</sup> in class, 10:00am)**

The final exam will be taken in the regular classroom, but not at the normal class time: Rather, it will happen during the final exam time period (10am-12pm) on December 8<sup>th</sup>, and like the midterm the final exam is worth one quarter of your final course grade. This exam will cover the second half of the class – it is not comprehensive – from October 22<sup>nd</sup> through December 5<sup>th</sup>. The exam format will again be short answer and essay questions, likely 5-8 questions total, on substantive topics we've covered in the last half of the course. We will have another exam study session, taking the entire class period on December 5<sup>th</sup>, to prepare for the final.

## Course schedule

August	M	25	Course introduction, review of assignments, orientation
	W	27	Discussion of <i>Coriolanus</i> (2011)
	F	29	Discussion of <i>A Pervert's Guide to Ideology</i> (2012)
September	M	1	<b>Labor Day holiday (no class)</b>
	W	3	How political geography is made (Agnew and Muscara vi-58)
	F	5	The historic canon (Agnew and Muscara 59-102)
	M	8	Reinventing political geography (Agnew and Muscara 103-160)
	W	10	Horizons (Agnew and Muscara 161-244)
	F	12	Horizons [continued] (Agnew and Muscara 161-244)
	M	15	U.S. geopolitical discourses now (O'Lear 2014; Kaplan 2014a, 2014b; Barnett 2003; Hall 2012)
	W	17	New geopolitical spaces: The Arctic (Dittmer et al. 2011; Strandsbjerg 2012)
	F	19	Old geopolitical spaces: Israel/Palestine (Yacobi and Pullan 2014; Harker 2011; Elden 2013)
	M	22	Redistricting and population geography (Bullock 1-48)
	W	24	Race, political districting, and American law (Bullock 49-86)
	F	26	Partisan gerrymandering and its consequences (Bullock 87-138)
	M	29	Gerrymandering Georgia: A case study; Conclusions (Bullock 139-192)
	October	W	1
F		3	<b>Fall holiday (no class)</b>
M		6	<i>Shelby v. Holder</i> and the VRA: Implications (Grofman 2013; Short 2014)
W		8	How much does redistricting matter? (Forest 2012; Masket et al. 2012; Hayes and McKee 2012)
F		10	Inter-regional migration and electoral geography (Gimpel and Schuknecht 2001; Burmilla 2009)
M		13	The 'Big Sort': Migration and political polarization (Jurjevich and Plane 2012; Cho et al. 2013)
W		15	Race, ethnicity, and the Census (Tafoya 2000; Cohn 2014; Wikipedia; Census Bureau 2000)
F		17	Midterm exam review session
M		20	<b>Midterm exam</b>
W		22	State formation through geography: Census, map, museum (Anderson 1991)
F		24	(Geo)politicizing identity, population, and reproduction: Ladakh, Kashmir, India (Smith 2012)
M		27	International migration (Williams, Boyce 2013; Ashutosh and Mountz 2012; Reid-Henry 2013)
W		29	Popular geopolitics (Tuathail and Agnew 1992; Dittmer and Dodds 2008; Holland 2012)
F		31	<b>Paper prospectus due;</b> Geography, zombies & superheroes (Saunders 2012; Dittmer 2005)
November	M	3	<b>Field trip to ... Baton Rouge!</b> (fieldwork observing the geography of the mid-term elections)
	W	5	Seeing like a state: Making nature and space legible (Scott 1-52)
	F	7	Sorting people into populations (Scott 53-84)
	M	10	Transformative visions (Scott 85-146)
	W	12	Transformative visions [continued] (Scott 85-146)
	F	14	The revolutionary modernizing state (Scott 147-192)
	M	17	Social engineering of rural settlement and production (Scott 193-306)
	W	19	Social engineering of rural settlement and production [continued] (Scott 193-306)
	F	21	The missing link (Scott 307-358)
	M	24	The art of not being governed (Scott 2010)
	W	26	<b>Thanksgiving holiday (no class)</b>
F	28	<b>Thanksgiving holiday (no class)</b>	
December	M	1	Political geography of climate change (Devlin and Hendrix 2014; Dalby 2013)
	W	3	Political geographic futures (Mountz 2013)
	F	5	<b>Final paper due;</b> Final exam review session
	M	8	<b>Final exam, 10:00am – 12:00pm</b>