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## American Public University System

*The Ultimate Advantage is an Educated Mind*

### **Strategic Geography and Geopolitics IRLS 600 Course Syllabus 3 Credit Hours Length of Course: 8 Weeks**

Graduate students are encouraged to take required or core courses prior to enrolling in the seminars, concentration courses or electives.

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#### **Instructor Information**

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#### **Course Description**

This course of study examines the history of political, tactical and strategic developments and concepts regarding geopolitical concerns regarding political and military planning and execution from the mid-20th Century through the modern era. The comparative analysis of these concepts from the applicable secondary literature will provide a stepping stone to understanding the nature of modern combined arms and joint forces warfare. [3 Semester Hours]

#### **Course Scope**

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The political, military, economic, and cultural effects of geography are analyzed in historical and current terms. The role of geography in the development of international, national, and regional strategies is assessed. This course studies the effect of geography on military-political affairs. The overall objective is to familiarize the student with the fields of study that comprise Geopolitics and Geostrategy and the analytical processes involved in the assessment of various Geostrategies. The theoretical, geographic, political, economic, and cultural rationales that contribute to the formation of the Geostrategies of both nation-state and non-state actors in the global arena will be discussed extensively in the course. Students will study the development of geopolitical theory, including both classic works by figures such as Sir Halford MacKinder and more recent studies by Colin S. Gray and others regarding the impact of geography on the development of politics and on their fortunes. Key questions will include how seapowers and landpowers craft effective grand strategies, and in what ways are those strategies likely to differ? In what historical periods have landpowers tended to be dominant in the international system? When have seapowers been dominant? Also, how has the development of airpower affected geopolitical thinking? We will also focus on the Caucasus as a particular exemplar of the application of Geostrategy.

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### **Course Objectives**

Upon successful completion of IRLS 600 the student should demonstrate:

- 1) Knowledge of the various definitions of Geostrategy and Geopolitics and their implications for the field of International Relations.
- 2) An understanding of the linkages among International Relations, Political Science, National Security policies, History, Political and Economic Geography, Geopolitics and Geostrategy.
- 3) Familiarity with theories of the state as a geographical and political unit, such as Geopolitik.
- 4) An understanding of the elements and nature of power, power analysis, and power projection in world politics, to include not only the traditional nation-state as actor, but also contemporary non-state phenomena such as multinational corporations and the environment as Geostrategic factors.
- 5) Knowledge of Geostrategic/Geopolitical theories of land (Mackinder), sea (Mahan), air (deSeversky), etc. and their contemporary applications; in addition to emerging Geostrategic theories involving the globalization of issue areas such as democratization, the environment, and the international political economy.
- 6) Awareness of the Geostrategic implications of contemporary International Relations issues i.e. outer space, globalization.

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### **Course Delivery Method**

This Security and Global Studies course is delivered via distance learning and enables students to complete academic work in a flexible manner, completely online. Course materials and access to an

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online learning management system are made available to each student.

Online assignments are usually due by Sunday midnight each week (may vary based on the type of weekly learning activities) and must include Discussion Board questions (accomplished in groups through linear, threaded or roundtable discussion board forums), examinations and quizzes (graded electronically), and individual written assignments (submitted for review to the faculty member).

In online courses we construct knowledge not just by completing readings and assignments. An important part of the process is communicating with classmates and learning from what they have to say. As such, we need to share online conversations about ideas.

Direct interaction between faculty members and students is a key feature of the educational experience. For that reason, faculty members have a responsibility to ensure that students interact with fellow students and the course instructor during the course as specified in the course syllabus, and can contact the instructor during posted office hours. The faculty member should initiate contact if a student is absent from class and makes no attempt to contact the faculty member during the week. This is especially important if the student fails to make contact at the start of the course. Students are dropped from the class if they do not log into the classroom during the first week of class.

Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. As adults, students, and working professionals we understand you must manage competing demands on your time. Should you need additional time to complete an assignment please contact the faculty before the due date so you can discuss the situation and determine an acceptable resolution. Routine submission of late assignments is unacceptable and may result in points deducted from your final course grade.

You will be posting your response to discussion questions posted by me each week. These questions are a response to the week's module and readings. Aim for two solid paragraphs per answer to the discussion board questions (longer posts test the limits of the software). The aim of the questions is twofold. First, they force you to fit the readings into your busy schedule. Second, and more importantly, they are designed to elicit critical reflection of some of the major themes of the readings. So, concentrate your energies on analysis of the readings rather than restatement of them. I'll redouble my efforts at making sure the questions themselves aim in that direction.

Please remember that asynchronous means that we do not meet at specific times and that students have flexibility as to how they approach the material and when.

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### **Course Materials**

Graduate students must explore the research holdings of [The Online Library](#), Department's Study Portals [History and Military Studies](#), and their ability to support research needs. Each student may be required to write a scholarly review of a particular research issue, with specific attention afforded to:

- *Online Scholarly Journals:* Students will identify and monitor the key refereed journals in their research area as part of their ongoing scholarly portfolio; and
- *Electronic Books/Subject Clusters:* Students will identify key texts or clusters or

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resources (e.g., Praeger Security International) in their research area and explore the electronic researching ability for such genre as a complement to print-based immersion.

University libraries, including the APUS Online Library, national libraries, and college professors have created major sites with information resources, links to other trusted sites, and electronic networking potential. Students will determine appropriate archival repositories and government agencies for their research interests. Students are expected to learn about archival research and the use of government documents, but also advanced Web tools like Encoded Archival Description, finding aids and associated online searching tools for government and academic sites. While certainly not inclusive – as the student is expected to conduct their own independent research – examples and links to relevant sites include:

- *The Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War*  
<http://valley.vcdh.virginia.edu>
- *National Geographic: Remembering Pearl Harbor*  
<http://plasma.nationalgeographic.com/pearlharbor>
- *American Memory: Historical Collections for the National Digital Library, Library of Congress*, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/amhome.html>
- *H-Net – Humanities and Social Sciences Online* <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/>
- *World History Matters* <http://chnm.gmu.edu/worldhistory>
- *H-Diplo: diplomatic and international history* H-Net discussion group dedicated to diplomatic history and international affairs. Features archive, reviews, bibliographies, reading lists, course syllabi etc.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

1) *The Grand Chessboard : American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* by Zbigniew K. Brzezinski  
HarperCollins ISBN: 0465027261

Additional readings (more current ones to enhance the seminal articles) will be available within the course website as per the announcement section.

## RECOMMENDED REFERENCES (For All History Majors)

- *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Turabian, Kate L. *Manual for Writers of Term Papers*, 6th Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. *Purchase Optional*.
- Marius, Richard, and Melvin E. Page. *A Short Guide to Writing about History*, 6th ed. New York: Longman, 2007.

Accessible through [The Online Library](#).

## WEB-BASED READINGS

The foundational readings are available at the following link and also within the Discussion Boards course materials section as current readings will be provided.

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<https://spectrum.troy.edu/~teemu/>

Username: POL6602

Password: space

### SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

- Microsoft Office 2003 or newer versions (MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint)
- Word documents created in Office 2007 have the default file extension of **.docx**, which is not supported by APUS & some internet browsers. To ensure the Word documents you create in Office 2007 can be opened by all, students must save them with the **.doc** extension using the "Save As" feature prior to submitting for grading.
- Adobe Acrobat Reader (for PDF files)
- To view streaming media and audio, individuals should have the following installed on their machines (all are free downloads):
  - Real Audio – <http://www.real.com>
  - Windows Media Player – <http://www.microsoft.com>
  - Quick Time – <http://www.apple.com/quicktime>

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### Evaluation Procedures

| <b><u>Grade Instruments:</u></b> | <b><u>Points</u></b> | <b><u>% Final Grade</u></b> |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Discussion Group Participation   | 40                   | 30%                         |
| Short Essays                     | 30                   | 30%                         |
| Final exam                       | 30                   | 40%                         |
| TOTAL                            | 100                  | 100%                        |

### Grading Criteria for Think Piece and Exam Essay:

*GRADING CRITERIA:*

1. *Is the question answered?*
2. *Is there a personal argument presented in the first 10 lines and defended throughout the essay?*
3. *Clarity, Organization, Structure (good outline, good transitions)*
4. *Integration of class material, facts, and readings to back up the argument*

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### Course Outline

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| <u>Week</u> | <u>Topic(s)</u>                    | <u>Learning Objective(s)</u>  | <u>Reading(s) and Web-Activities</u>  | <u>Assignment(s) and Discussion Boards</u>                        |
|-------------|------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 1           | <b>Introduction to Geopolitics</b> | Compare and contrast Geostrategic concerns such as political, economic, environmental, cultural, and physical factors.                                | <p>Colin S. Gray and Geoffrey Sloan, eds., <i>Geopolitics: Geography and Strategy</i> (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 1-11, 161-77.</p> <p>Geoffrey Parker, <i>Geopolitics: Past, Present, and Future</i> (London: Pinter, 1998), "Chapter3 "24-57.</p> <p>David G. Hansen, "The Immutable Importance of Geography" <i>Parameter</i>, Spring 1997.</p> <p>Thomas Owens, "In defense of classical geopolitics" <i>Navel War College Review</i>, Autumn 1999.</p> | Virtual Introduction and Response To Weekly Discussion Questions. |
| 2           | <b>Alfred Thayer Mahan</b>         | Apply the ideas of Mahan to the field of Geostrategy illustrating the terms, concepts, tools, and approaches that are applicable to current concerns. | <p>P. Crowl, "Mahan: The Naval Historian." pp. 444-477.</p> <p>Sprout, M. "Mahan: Evangelist of Sea Power." pp. 415-445.</p> <p>Sumida, J. "Alfred Thayer Mahan, Geopolitician." pp. 39-62.</p>   | Response To Weekly Discussion Questions.                          |

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|   |                                 |  | <p>Langewiesche, W. "Anarchy at Sea." <i>Atlantic Monthly</i>, Sept 2003.</p> <p>"Navy of Tomorrow, Mired in Yesterday's Politics" <i>New York Times</i> April 18, 2005.</p>   |  |
| 3 | <b>Sir Halford Mackinder</b>    | <p>Apply the ideas of Mackinder to the field of Geostrategy illustrating the terms, concepts, tools, and approaches that are applicable to current concerns.</p> | <p>H. MacKinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History." pp. 27-31.</p> <p>G. Parker, "Mighty Opposites: The Bipolar World." pp. 96-117.</p> <p>G. Sloan, "Sir Halford J. Mackinder: The Heartland Theory Then and Now." pp. 15-37.</p> <p>Christopher J. Fettweis, "Sir Halford Mackinder, Geopolitics, and Policymaking in the 21st Century" <i>Parameters</i> Summer 2000.</p> | Response To Weekly Discussion Questions. |
| 4 | <b>Haushofer and Geopolitik</b> | <p>Apply the ideas of Haushofer to the field of Geostrategy illustrating the terms, concepts, tools, and approaches that are applicable to</p>                   | <p>K. Haushofer, "Why Geopolitik?" pp. 33-35.</p> <p>H. Herwig, "Geopolitik: Haushofer, Hitler and Lebensraum."</p>  | Response To Weekly Discussion Questions. |

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|   |                               | current concerns.  | pp. 218-241.<br><br>G. Parker, "War and the Fall of Geopolitik." pp. 26-57.<br><br>D. Whittlesey, "Haushofer: The Geopoliticians." pp. 388-411.  |  |
| 5 | <b>The Airpower Theorists</b> | Show graduate level critical thinking and writing regarding the application of Airpower within the Geostrategic discourse. | "Air Power: An enduring Illusion" <i>The Economist</i> , August 24 <sup>th</sup> 2006.<br><br>Rebecca Grant, "The Fallujah Model" <i>Air force Magazine</i> February 2005.<br><br>Pape, Robert, "The True Worth of Air Power" <i>Foreign Affairs</i> March/April 2004.<br><br>Conrad Crane, "Sky high: Illusions of air power" <i>The National Interest</i> Fall 2001.<br><br>E. Warner, "Chpt. 20: Theories of Air Warfare." pp. 485-503.<br><br>Gordon, Michael R. and Bernard E. Trainor, <i>The General's War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf</i> : "Chpt. 4: Instant Thunder." (Boston: Little, | Response To Weekly Discussion Questions. |



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|   |                             |  | <p>Brown, 1995), 75-101.</p> <p>Lambeth, B. "Air Power, Space Power, and Geography." pp. 63-82.</p> <p>Kelly, Michael. "The Airpower revolution" <i>Atlantic Monthly</i>, April 2002.</p>   |  |
| 6 | Space-The Final Frontier? 1 | Show graduate level critical thinking and writing regarding the idea of "Space" within the Geostrategic discourse. | <p>Mark Harter, "Ten Propositions Regarding Space Power" <i>Air &amp; Space Power Journal</i>, Summer 2006.</p> <p>John Miller, "Our 'Next Manifest Destiny'," <i>National Review</i>, July 2002.</p> <p>Steven Lambakis, "Space Weapons: Refuting the Critics," <i>Policy Review</i>, Feb/March 2001.</p> <p>Nader Elhefnawy, "Four Myths about Space Power," <i>Parameters</i>, Spring 2003.</p> <p>James Moltz, "Reigning in the Space Cowboys," <i>Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists</i>, Jan/Feb 2003.</p> <p>Everett C. Dolman.</p> | Response To Weekly Discussion Questions. |

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|---|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
|   |                                    |  | <p><i>Astropolitik: Classical Geopolitics in the Space Age</i> (Portland: Frank Cass: 2002), pp. 1-59, 145-184.</p> <p>John Hyten and Robert Uy, "Moral and Ethical Decisions Regarding Space Warfare," <i>Air and Space Power Journal</i>, Summer 2004</p> <p>Bruce M Deblois, Richard L. Garwin, R Scott Kemp &amp; Jeremy C Marwell, "Star-Crossed" <i>IEEE Spectrum</i>, March 2005</p> |  |
| 7 | <b>Space-The Final Frontier? 2</b> | Show graduate level critical thinking and writing regarding the idea of "Space" within the Geostrategic discourse. | See above.  | Response To Weekly Discussion Questions. |
| 8 | <b>Review and Exam</b>             | To allow the student an opportunity to express the comprehensive of their understanding of Geostrategy.            |   | Exam and Paper Due.                      |

**CITATION AND REFERENCE STYLE**

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Assignments completed in a narrative essay or composition format must follow the accepted guidelines of the American historical profession, which is the *Chicago Manual of Style*. This course will require students to use the citation and reference style established by Kate Turabian in *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), which is the most readily available distillation of the *Chicago Manual*. See [Chicago Style Manual](#)

The *Chicago Style Manual* for book-length works and its *Turabian* offshoot for research papers have long been the standard across all fields of study, as well as much of the publishing industry. These texts cover the layout and production gamut--including rules for chapter headings and subheadings, abbreviations, alphabetizing non-English names, and table design/designation.

1. Front matter--e.g., [title page](#), copyright statement, dedication, table of contents, lists of illustrations or tables, acknowledgements, [abstract](#).
2. Narrative with [scholarly attributions](#).
3. Back matter--[bibliography](#), appendices.

## NETIQUETTE

Online universities promote the advance of knowledge through positive and constructive debate--both inside and outside the classroom. Discussions on the Internet, however, can occasionally degenerate into needless insults and "flaming." Such activity and the loss of good manners are not acceptable in a university setting--basic academic rules of good behavior and proper "Netiquette" must persist. Remember that you are in a place for the fun and excitement of learning that does not include descent to personal attacks, or student attempts to stifle the discussion of others.

## STUDENT HANDBOOK

The staff at American Public University System (APUS) knows how hard it is for students to balance work and other commitments while pursuing a college education. We created the APUS Student Handbook as the ultimate reference for answers to questions about administrative and academic policies and procedures. APUS students do not have to wait for our offices to be open in order to find the information they need to succeed. No matter what location or time zone our students are in, they can consult the online Student Handbook with any questions about financial aid, tuition assistance and refunds, registration, drop/withdrawal or extensions, the University System's grading system, and the electronic classroom. The handbook also covers issues related to various student services, academic guidance, and each student's rights and responsibilities. Of course, there may be a unique question that requires additional information outside that which is covered in the handbook. APUS students should use the contact information listed online inside their campus to contact the APUS staff with any additional questions. See [Student Handbook](#).

## DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

Course content may vary from the outline to meet the needs of this particular group.