

GEOG 375/JSIS 375: Geopolitics

Autumn 2020

Instructor	
Samantha Thompson (she/her) Department of Geography Email: spthomps@uw.edu	
Meet with the Instructor	
Optional Synchronous Session Thursdays (Oct. 8-Dec. 12) 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. (PST) Zoom: https://washington.zoom.us/j/92252111736	Office Hours Tuesdays 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. or by appointment (email spthomps@uw.edu). Zoom: https://washington.zoom.us/j/94081093882

Course Overview

Course Description

Geopolitics draws its name from geo-, meaning ‘the writing of the earth,’ and -politics, concerned with struggles for power, influence, territory, authority, and resources. As such, we can understand geopolitics as both a means of analyzing the distribution of power in the world and as the topical study of who gets what, when, where, and how, and more importantly, who gets to decide. This course explores the fundamental links between power and place, considering such factors as local histories, colonial relationships, global orders, physical and political borders, natural resource/resource extraction, and competing claims to sovereignty. In this course students will trace the historic development of current geopolitical relationships from the development of the nation-state to modern political movements and territorial contestations. This course adopts a critical perspective asking students to interrogate the assumptions and geographic imaginaries that shape politics at various scales.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- explain how power is distributed in the world and the impacts of that power
- contextualize current events and territorial struggles within their broader geopolitical contexts
- think critically about representations of the world, including maps and popular media
- recognize the various worldviews of both state and non-state actors and how those views are given voice
- employ geopolitical analysis to better understand historical and current events
- explain the role of discourses and how to critically analyze them

Teaching Philosophy

The teaching philosophy of this course is informed by an anti-racist critical pedagogy approach that highlights the struggles, and includes the voices, of the oppressed. I primarily draw on the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 1970) for guidance. Critical pedagogy acknowledges that language and knowledge production is diverse and that we cannot privilege Eurocentric perspectives, which can be oppressive to students, especially those students learning English, students with disabilities, and students whose prior education was limited. Critical pedagogy tells us to create an environment of learning where the student and teacher are co-learners. So, I aim to be a co-learner with all my students, and I am here to listen to your uncertainties around learning and help you establish realistic goals for individual success.

Course Requirements

Course Readings

For this course, all readings will be made available to you on Canvas. Each week, you will typically be asked to complete 2 readings. I will specify if you only need to read specific page numbers. Most weeks, this consists of one chapter from *Political Geography: a Critical Introduction* by Sara Smith ([available online through UW Libraries](#)) and another piece that is a podcast, video, poem, etc. As we will discuss in this course, representation is crucial in understanding geopolitics and my goal with selecting different forms and styles of readings for you is to deepen your understanding of how geopolitics are produced.

Course Evaluation

Assignment	Due Date	%
Weekly Reflections (x7)	Weekly on Saturdays, 11 p.m. (PST)	35%
Discourse Analysis Exercise	Saturday, Oct. 24 at 11 p.m. (PST)	15%
Geopolitical Imaginaries Project Part 1: Proposal (5%) Part 2: Draft (15%) Part 3: Final Project (30%)	Saturday Oct. 31, 11 p.m. (PST) Saturday Nov. 21, 11 p.m. (PST) Friday, Dec. 12 11 p.m. (PST)	50%

****Note: All assignments for this course due on Saturdays at 11 p.m. (PST), unless otherwise noted, submitted via Canvas. Detailed instructions for each assignment will be provided on Canvas.**

Assignments

****full details for each of these assignments will be provided on Canvas throughout the quarter****

Weekly Reflections: Each week (except where otherwise noted in the course calendar) you will write a Weekly Reflection. This reflection should be **200-300 words** and can be written as a free-write—that is, do not worry about paragraph structure, etc. Each reflection must engage in-depth with at least **one key concept** from that week’s materials and engage/reference at least **one of the readings/podcasts/videos/poems** from that week. The purpose of these reflections is to help you draw connections and develop your understanding across the week’s material—by encouraging you to engage with lectures, readings, and key concepts. Use the reflections to develop your own thoughts about the material you are learning and think through questions you have. I will provide

prompts for these reflections each week in Canvas—feel free to use these to guide your thinking, or not. Reflections are worth 5% each and are graded based on completion.

Discourse Analysis Exercise: In this assignment, you will complete a guided critical discourse analysis of two media sources related to outer space exploration and its relationship to geopolitics. In this assignment, you will begin to employ geopolitical concepts you have learned so far, engage with assigned readings, and conduct an analysis of geopolitical discourses found in these sources (we will discuss discourse analyses in Week 1). You will be provided with prompts to guide your analysis. The purpose of this assignment is to develop your skills in conducting discourse analysis, which you will use again for the course project. The feedback you receive for this assignment should help you strengthen your approach for the final project. **The Discourse Analysis Exercise will consist of one worksheet and a 400-word reflection/analysis.**

Geopolitical Imaginaries Project: The larger project will center around geopolitical imaginaries. The purpose of this project is for you to take what you have learned about geopolitics, discourse, and geopolitical imaginaries over the quarter and apply it to a topic that is interesting to you. You will be required to engage with readings, key concepts, and lecture material in the project. The project consists of three scaffolded assignments: the proposal, the project draft, and the final project.

Part I: Project Proposal: In the proposal (1-2 paragraphs), you will choose/discuss the following:

- **Your chosen topic:** this topic can be related to current events (e.g., climate change, Brexit, border disputes/conflicts, racial justice) or it can be a response to the question “How do geopolitics impact your everyday life/you personally?” You will conduct a detailed discourse analysis of the geopolitical imaginaries for your topic.
- **The form your project will take:** Examples include podcast, zine, academic essay, memes, comics, video, illustration/art. You are welcome to use a medium other than those listed as well, propose it in your proposal and we can discuss it.
- **What your project will consist of:** the final project should be equivalent to the work of a 1500-word paper. In class we will discuss what this could look like for each medium. Each final project will include a bibliography, and all except the academic essay will also include a 200-400 word reflection that explains the connections to key concepts and material.

Part II: Project Draft: In the draft, you want to submit the material you have developed so far—which key concepts are you drawing on? Which readings? What external sources? This can be a detailed paper outline, a storyboard, a script, etc. I will provide feedback on your drafts that you can take under consideration as you develop your final project.

Part III: Final Project: Students will submit the complete and final version of their project.

Weekly Course Structure

For Autumn Quarter, this course will be fully online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This course is primarily asynchronous will use recorded lectures and is intended to be completed on your own time

each week. Each week of the quarter will have a weekly module in Canvas. This module will have all of the lectures, readings, other material, and assignment instructions/reminders for that week. Weekly modules will be posted at 9 a.m. (PST) each Monday.

However, each week on Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. (PST) there will be an *optional* synchronous time where we can gather together as a class. During this time, we will discuss the readings, work through key concepts together, and address any questions about the material for that week. You can choose whether or not to have your video turned on. If you attend the synchronous session, you can work with your peers at that time to discuss key terms and concepts for your concept reflection. After the session, you must submit your own reflection entry, but it can be based off the work you did with your peers during the synchronous session. The purpose of these sessions is to reduce the amount of solo work you have to do for the reflection entry, help you to think through new ideas and connections, and offer any clarity on course material for that week. Each week (unless otherwise noted) you will have a weekly reflection to complete for that week's module. These assignments are due on Saturdays at 11 p.m. (PST).

Course Calendar

Week	Dates	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
0	Sept. 30-Oct. 3	Course Introduction	None (except the syllabus).	None.
1	Oct. 4- Oct. 10	Political Geography & Geopolitical Imaginations	Sara Smith, Ch.1: Introduction. Mark Monomier, <i>How to Lie With Maps</i> . Ch. 8: Maps for Political Propaganda (pgs. 1-15).	Weekly Reflection #1: Oct. 10, 11pm
2	Oct. 11- Oct. 17	History of Geopolitics Pt. 1: Classical Geopolitics	Colin Flint, <i>Introduction to Geopolitics</i> . Prologue. (pgs. 26-40). Podcast: <i>Moonrise</i> . Episode 8: A New Frontier. https://www.washingtonpost.com/podcasts/moonrise/the-beyond/ .	Weekly Reflection #2: Oct. 17, 11pm
3	Oct. 18- Oct. 24	History of Geopolitics Pt. 2: Critical Geopolitics & Subaltern Geopolitics	Sara Smith, Ch. 9: Geopolitics. Jason Dittmer, <i>Captain America and the Nationalist Superhero</i> . Introduction.	Discourse Analysis Exercise: Oct. 24, 11pm Weekly Reflection #3: Oct. 24, 11pm
4	Oct. 25- Oct. 31	The State, Territory, & Power	Edgar Sandoval, "More than Violence: UndocuQueers' Narratives of Disidentification and World-Making in Seattle, Washington, USA." Podcast: <i>New Poverty Politics for Changing Times</i> . Episode: Ananya Roy and Nicholas deGenova on migration, borders, and freedoms. https://soundcloud.com/user-836862238/ananya-roy-in-conversation-with-nicholas-de-genova	Geopolitical Imaginations #1: Oct. 31, 11 p.m. Weekly Reflection #4: Oct. 31, 11pm
5	Nov. 1- Nov. 7	Urban Geopolitics	Margaret Ramírez, "City as borderland: Gentrification and the policing of Black and Latinx geographies in Oakland." Podcast: <i>99% Invisible</i> . Episode: Making Up Ground. https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/making-up-ground/	None.
6	Nov. 8- Nov. 14	Decolonizing Geopolitics	Sara Smith, Ch.8: Decolonizing Political Geography? Video: "Leaks" by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, from <i>Islands of Decolonial Love</i> . https://vimeo.com/79076989	Weekly Reflection #5: Nov. 14, 11pm

7	Nov. 15-Nov. 21	Domestic Geopolitics & Racial Capitalism	Deborah Cowen and Nemoy Lewis, “Anti-Blackness and Urban Geopolitical Economy”. https://www.societyandspace.org/articles/anti-blackness-and-urban-geopolitical-economy Video: Ruth Wilson Gilmore on racial capitalism: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CS627aKrJI&t=6s	Geopolitical Imaginaries #2 (draft project): Nov. 21, 11pm Weekly Reflection #6: Nov. 21, 11pm
8	Nov. 22-Nov. 28 School holiday (Nov. 26-27).	Feminist Geopolitics	Sara Smith, Ch. 2: Citizenship Fails Sara Smith, Ch. 11: Intimate Geopolitics Gloria Anzaldua, “To live in the borderlands.” From <i>Borderlands-La Frontera. The New Mestiza</i> . https://powerpoetry.org/content/live-borderlands	None.
9	Nov. 29-Dec. 5	Trans & Queer Geopolitics	Sara Smith, Ch. 3: Living the Nation Nayyeema Ismat, “Conversation: Queerness and the Postcolony.” http://www.tanqeed.org/2016/07/queer-shuttling-tq-salon/	Weekly Reflection #7: Dec. 5, 11pm
10	Dec. 6- Dec. 11	Futures & Course Wrap Up	None.	Geopolitical Imaginaries #3 (final project): Dec. 11, 11 pm

Course Policies

Communication: You are required to use your University of Washington email or Canvas for communication with the instructor and colleagues for this course. Please check your email and Canvas regularly for messages about the course including any announcements or changes. Please feel free to communicate through email or Canvas messaging at any time with questions, concerns, thoughts, etc. Do not post questions or comments on Canvas assignments, there is no guarantee I will see them. Please give the instructor at least 48 hours (Monday-Friday) to respond. If after 48 hours you have not heard from me, please resend.

Office Hours: All office hours will be held via Zoom. Office hours will be one-on-one or in small groups, and I will let students into the Zoom meeting one at a time to have private conversations. Please see the beginning of this syllabus for office hour times and the Zoom meeting ID. I am also

available by appointment—email me if you’d like to meet at a different time and we can set something up.

Late Assignments: Students are expected to complete all assigned readings and turn in all completed assignments by due dates. Late assignments will automatically lose 5% of the grade per day. No assignments will be accepted after one week of the due date. Late Weekly Reflections will be accepted up to one week after the due date, for half credit. If you are having difficulties meeting the requirements or meeting a deadline, please email me in advance. Your extension requests will be met with empathy and understanding. COVID-19 has impacted our lives in unique and diverse ways and I am happy to work with you to facilitate your success in this course.

Grading: All grades will be posted on Canvas as soon as possible. After carefully reading and taking time to consider the comments, if you have an issue with a grade you may contact the instructor 24 hours after you received the grade. In your request for a regrade, you must provide a detailed, written explanation of your concerns regarding the grade. If warranted, the instructor will reread the assignment and re-evaluate. A re-grade can result in your grade increasing, decreasing, or staying the same. The statute of limitations on re-grade requests is 1 week after the return of the assignment.

Course Grading Scale:

≥ 99% = 4.0	≥ 78% = 2.2
≥ 98% = 3.9	≥ 77% = 2.1
≥ 97% = 3.8	≥ 75% = 2.0
≥ 96% = 3.7	≥ 74% = 1.9
≥ 95% = 3.6	≥ 73% = 1.8
≥ 93% = 3.5	≥ 72% = 1.7
≥ 92% = 3.4	≥ 70% = 1.6
≥ 91% = 3.3	≥ 69% = 1.5
≥ 90% = 3.2	≥ 68% = 1.4
≥ 89% = 3.1	≥ 67% = 1.3
≥ 87% = 3.0	≥ 66% = 1.2
≥ 86% = 2.9	≥ 64% = 1.1
≥ 85% = 2.8	≥ 63% = 1.0
≥ 84% = 2.7	≥ 62% = 0.9
≥ 83% = 2.6	≥ 61% = 0.8
≥ 81% = 2.5	≥ 60% = 0.7
≥ 80% = 2.4	≥ 59% = 0.0
≥ 79% = 2.3	

Cheating and Plagiarism: Plagiarism, cheating, and other misconduct are serious violations of your contract as a student and will negatively impact your grades in this course. You are expected to know and follow the [University’s policies regarding the student conduct code](#). I acknowledge that plagiarism can be understood differently in various cultures; however, we will be following the UW definition of academic dishonesty in this course. Always cite your work when using other people’s ideas or words. I will discuss this more in class and give you instructions on avoiding plagiarism. If ever in doubt if something is considered plagiarism or cheating, please ask. Students caught cheating or committing plagiarism on an assignment or exam will be given a reduced grade on the assignment

the first time. The second offense will result in an automatic zero on the assignment and the third offense will result in a zero for the course. All incidents of plagiarism or cheating will be reported to administration.

Inclusivity: In this course we will discuss research tied to social problems and politics, sometimes these issues will be controversial in nature. This classroom aims to be a safe space for both students and the instructor. Please be respectful to the instructor and your fellow classmates. This includes all interactions digitally via email, Canvas, and other platforms. I strive to make my classroom a place where each of us contributes to this by fostering a climate of inclusiveness that respects all points of view, facilitates constructive dialogue across the full spectrum of community membership, and serves to enhance everyone's learning and understanding. You are a tremendously diverse group of people with respect to race, gender, religion, age, citizenship status, first language, ability, sexuality, socio-economic status, veteran status and much more. Each of you is a welcome and invaluable part of this community. I expect you to treat one another with respect. No vulgarity; no personal attacks; no hostile, discriminatory, or stereotyping remarks about other social groups – race, ethnicity, gender, age, class, housing status, and so on. Any student deemed to be breaking this policy will be limited in their class communications.

English as an Additional Language: If English is an additional language for you, please let me know so that we can work together to make the course as accessible as possible for you.

Religious Accommodations: “Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW’s policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](#). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form](#).” However, if you do not feel comfortable with this form please meet with me and I will accommodate as needed.

Disability Resources: To request academic accommodations due to disability, please contact Disability Resources for Students (DRS) as soon as possible: 011 Mary Gates, Box 352808, 206-543-8924 (Voice and Relay), uwdrs@uw.edu.

Remote learning: Faculty members at U.S. universities – including the University of Washington – have the right to academic freedom which includes presenting and exploring topics and content that other governments may consider to be illegal and, therefore, choose to censor. Examples may include topics and content involving religion, gender and sexuality, human rights, democracy and representative government, and historic events. If, as a UW student, you are living outside of the United States while taking courses remotely, you are subject to the laws of your local jurisdiction. Local authorities may limit your access to course material and take punitive action towards you. Unfortunately, the University of Washington has no authority over the laws in your jurisdictions or how local authorities enforce those laws. If you are taking UW courses outside of the United States, you have reason to exercise caution when enrolling in courses that cover topics and issues censored in your jurisdiction. If you have concerns regarding a course or courses that you have registered for, please contact your academic advisor who will assist you in exploring options.

Student Care + Safety: It is important that we take care of ourselves inside and outside of class and in our professional life by learning how to work through stress and other obstacles and by caring for our mind, body, and spirit. Towards that end, there are many different kinds of support services on campus such as the Counseling Center, Hall Health, and the IMA. If you are concerned about yourself or a friend who is struggling, SafeCampus is a very helpful resource to learn more about how to facilitate access to campus-based support services. Please save the number for SafeCampus, [206.685.7233](tel:206.685.7233), into your cell phones. I cannot emphasize enough how important is that you communicate with us if you are experiencing difficulties with the class or in your personal life that prevent you from making the most out of the lectures, readings and activities. The sooner you let me know, the better I will be able to figure out alternatives to help you. I want you to be able to enjoy and excel in this course. I will be very happy to help as much as I can to make it happen.

Student Resources

UW ASP-Online Learning: Academic Support Programs has created a one stop page with various resources and programs centered on online learning. These includes best practices, technology access, wellness, time management, and more. [Click here](#) for the resource page.

Student Technology Loan Program (STLP): “The Student Technology Loan Program allows students to borrow laptops, cameras, projectors, and other equipment for free. To be eligible for our program you must be enrolled for the current quarter at the Seattle campus.” For more information including a list of equipment and reservation form please visit: <https://stlp.uw.edu>. The program is still operational Autumn Quarter with some changes, for more information see announcements on their website.

Writing and Learning Support Resources: The Odegaard Writing and Research Center (OWRC) offers free, one-to-one, 45-minute tutoring sessions for undergraduate writers in all fields at the UW. They will work with writers on any writing or research project, as well as personal projects. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please see their website (<https://depts.washington.edu/owrc>). For Autumn Quarter, all appointments are online.

CLUE Writing Center: “If you are an undergraduate student at the UW Seattle campus, we are available to work with you. We can be of help during any stage in the writing process, including: Starting, Drafting, Revising, Researching, and Polishing. We will not proofread or edit a paper for you, but we will either teach or help you learn how to find and correct errors in punctuation, usage, and grammar. Whether you need help talking through ideas, honing an outline you've been working on, evaluating a draft mid-composition, or looking through a final draft—we're confident we can help you write more efficiently and effectively.” For more information please see the [CLUE Website](#). For Autumn Quarter, all appointments are online.

English as an Additional Language: Please let me know if English is an additional language for you so that together we can figure out how to make the course as manageable as possible for you. Also please consult this [helpful guide](#) from the UW Center for Teaching and Learning for resources.

Disability Resources: Your experience in this class is important. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your approved accommodations at your earliest convenience so I know your needs in this course.

If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or uwdrs@uw.edu or disability.uw.edu. DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

Counseling Center: The Counseling Center offers short-term, problem-focused counseling to UW students who may feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities of college, work, family, and relationships. Counselors are available to help students cope with stresses and personal issues that may interfere with their ability to perform in school. The service is provided confidentially and without additional charge to currently enrolled students. The Counseling Center is providing all services via secure Zoom. Please call 206-543-1240 during regular business hours to access services. Additional information can also be found by visiting <https://www.washington.edu/counseling>.

Library Resources:

- [UW Libraries Search](#)- find and get items from the UW Libraries and its SUMMIT partners.
- [Borrowing information \(Links to an external site.\)](#) - learn about loan periods, check out policies, and more.
- [UW GIS Resources](#)- guide to geospatial data and GIS resources at UW
- [Audio & Video](#)- guide to media resources within the collection.
- [Find It \(Links to an external site.\)](#) - guide to finding other types of information in the Libraries
- [Ask Us \(Links to an external site.\)](#) - get in touch with UW librarians by phone, email, or 24/7 chat.
- [Articles & Research Databases \(Links to an external site.\)](#) - browse a full list of UW Libraries databases by title.
- [E-Journals \(Links to an external site.\)](#) - search for UW Libraries e-journals by title, title keyword, or subject.
- [E-Newspapers \(Links to an external site.\)](#) - guide to electronic newspapers within the UW Libraries collection.
- *COVID-19 Outbreak Resources*. For COVID-19 Outbreak resources, please see the COVID-19 Outbreak Resources document on the course Canvas page.

Other Resources: For a more extensive list of UW resources, please see the UW Resources for Students document on the course Canvas page.