

**TROY UNIVERSITY**  
**TERM II, AY 2009-2010**

**IR 6602 GEOSTRATEGIC STUDIES**  
Independent Study

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Brendan M. Howe

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**AVAILABILITY:** By e-mail.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course examines the political, military, economic and cultural effects of geography in historical and contemporary terms. Specific emphasis is placed on the role of geography in the formulation of military-political policy in land power, sea power, airpower, and outer space. Comprehensive geopolitical theories will be employed as analytical tools in the course.

**OVERALL OBJECTIVE:** To provide the student with an introduction to analysis of the strategic operating environment of international relations. Geopolitics is defined for the purposes of this course as the analysis of the spatial patterns and structures of international power relationships. As such it introduces a notion of spatial determinism to the consideration of foreign policy formulation. Students will be introduced to a large body of theories about the structural arrangements of power and its global and regional distributions. Students will be encouraged systematically to dissect and analyze these theories in terms of their usefulness as frameworks for studying and understanding international power relationships in the post-Cold War world.

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:** Upon completion of the course, the student should be able to demonstrate an understanding of:

1. Geopolitical Orders, Transitions and Codes:
2. Power, Stability and International Change:
3. How and why states expand, the cycle of empires, the role of sea-power, economics and technology, the rise and fall of great powers and the succession of hegemonies:
4. Improved analytical and research skills:
5. Improved written communication skills:

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Open Book Exam: 40% of the Total Grade  
Research Project: 60%

**METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:** Guided readings, e-mail correspondence, open book exam, research paper. Students to complete assigned readings before each session date upon which the instructor will answer questions in an open forum and give direction regarding the most important issues raised in the readings.

**GRADE SCALE:**

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|----|--------|
| A: | 90-100 |
| B: | 80-89  |
| C: | 70-79  |
| D: | 60-69  |
| F: | 0-59   |

**TEXTS:** Zbigniew Brzezinski, *THE GRAND CHESSBOARD: AMERICAN PRIMACY AND ITS GEOSTRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS*, 1997, New York: Basic Books.  
Robert Gilpin, *WAR AND CHANGE IN WORLD POLITICS*, 1981, New York: Cambridge University Press.  
Karen A. Rasler and William R. Thompson, *THE GREAT POWERS AND GLOBAL STRUGGLE 1490-1990*, 1994, Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1994.  
Halford J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*. (Washington DC: National Defense University Press, 1996) – This book can be downloaded free from the internet.

**LIBRARY RESOURCES:** Students can access online information resources through Troy Library Services home page at <https://www.library.troy.edu>. These resources include a variety of full databases that provide complete article texts from thousands of journals, magazines and newspapers to aid students in their original research for class participation, presentations, and final research project. In addition, where necessary the Instructor will provide additional readings if they cannot be accessed through the Troy Library Service. Students are advised to read widely (beyond the set texts) and keep up to date on current affairs through multiple news media.

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:** Troy University supports Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which insure that post-secondary students with disabilities have equal access to all academic programs, physical access to all buildings, facilities and events, and are not discriminated against on the basis of disability. Eligible students, with appropriate documentation, will be provided equal opportunity to demonstrate their academic skills and potential through the provision of academic adaptations and reasonable accommodations. Further information, including appropriate contact information, can be found at the following link: <http://www.troy.edu/humanresources/ADAPolicy2003.htm>

**ACADEMIC ETHICS:** Details of “Ethical Standards of Reporting Information” can be found in the PUBLICATIONS MANUAL of the AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION. Troy University’s “Standards of Conduct,” published in the TROY UNIVERSITY GRADUATE CATALOGUE, also should be consulted by students.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECT**

1. Each enrolled student will complete a graduate level research paper of approximately 6,000 words of double-spaced text with appropriate citations and bibliography not included in the word count.
2. Use the PUBLICATIONS MANUAL OF THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION as your style guide for format and citations.
3. Papers are due 27 November 1700 Japan/Korea time via electronic submission.
4. During the third session students will select a theme for their project in consultation with the instructor.
5. The final Written Report will follow one of the two following structures: (1) A geostrategic analysis of the foreign policy of a great power; (2) A geopolitical predictive model of the future strategic operating environment of the world as a whole or a single region within it.
6. The Topic of the final Written Report must be cleared with the Instructor via e-mail before, during or after session # 5.

**SYLLABUS**

**Texts:** **B:** Zbigniew Brzezinski, *THE GRAND CHESSBOARD: AMERICAN PRIMACY AND ITS GEOSTRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS*, 1997, New York: Basic Books.  
**G:** Robert Gilpin, *WAR AND CHANGE IN WORLD POLITICS*, 1981, New York: Cambridge University Press.  
**R&T:** Karen A. Rasler and William R. Thompson, *THE GREAT POWERS AND GLOBAL STRUGGLE 1490-1990*, 1994, Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1994.  
**M:** Halford J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*. (Washington DC: National Defense University Press, 1996) – This book can be downloaded free from the internet.

The sessions listed in the outline below are meant to encourage the students to be on the same page of the readings, so if they have questions for me, my answers may be of benefit to all the students. It is also a structure designed to keep students current in their research rather than leaving to great an amount of reading to the final part of the course.

| <b>Session</b>  | <b>Theme</b>   | <b>Assignment</b>   |
|---|--|---|
| <i>SESSIONS</i>   |  |   |
| <b>Session # 1</b><br><b>Geopolitical Orders, Transitions and Codes</b> | The emergence of a new international economic system, the limits of globalization, pan-regions, Monroes and hegemonic trading blocks. Hegemonic cycles, geopolitical world orders, geopolitical codes as the output of practical geopolitical reasoning. | Peter J. Taylor, <i>Political Geography: world-economy, nation-state and locality</i> . (Harlow: Longman 1993) pp49-102 (will be scanned & sent to students)<br>Start reading <b>B</b> to be completed by Session # 7 |
| <b>Session # 2</b><br><b>Power, Stability and International Change</b>  | The establishment of international systems through power, their maintenance through consent or hegemony (equilibrium), and the conditions and consequences of change. Change in the modern world.  | <b>G</b> pp ix-105  |
| <b>Session # 3</b><br><b>Geopolitics of Domination</b>                  | How and why states expand, the cycle of empires, triumph of the nation state, the role of economics and technology and the succession of hegemonies. The future.   | <b>G</b> pp106-155  |
| <b>Session # 4</b><br><b>Long-Cycle Theory and Sea</b>                  | The rise and fall of great powers, as well as their relative decline over time, and the effect that this has upon the  | <b>R&amp;T</b> pp xv-37 & 200-225   |

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|---|--|--|
| <b>Power</b>  | likelihood of global war. In particular, this topic focuses on the role of sea power in providing the conditions necessary for power concentration.  |  |
| <b>Session # 5<br/>Hegemonic,<br/>Transitional<br/>and Systemic<br/>War</b> | If disequilibrium in the international system due to increasing disjuncture between the existing governance of the system and the redistribution of power in the system is not resolved, then the system will be forcibly changed by revisionist powers resulting in a global confrontation for hegemony. This section examines the mechanics of this process in theoretical and historical context. | <b>G pp186-210<br/>R&amp;T pp38-72<br/><br/>Final Paper Topic<br/>Selection.</b>   |
| <b>Session # 6<br/>The Rise and<br/>Decline of States<br/>and Empires</b>   | Why does the disequilibrium occur? Why do hegemonic states and empires lose their dominance, and how do revisionist states and empires rise up to replace them?  | <b>G pp156-185<br/>R&amp;T pp73-156<br/><br/>Take Home Examination<br/>Due Sunday 17:00]</b>   |
| <b>Session # 7<br/>Heartland<br/>versus Rimland</b>                         | The classic geopolitical debate concerning the struggle between land-based heartland powers and sea based rimland powers, including important explanations of terminology in historical and theoretical context.   | <b>See Topic 1.</b> Plus: Halford J. Mackinder, Democratic Ideals and Reality. (Washington DC: National Defense University Press, 1996) pp. 175-205. |
| <b>Session # 8<br/>Sunday @ 17:00</b>                                       |  | <b>Papers Due</b>  |