Foundation of Geopolitics and Security Studies

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| **Credit level:**7 |
| **Length:** semester 1 |
| **ECTS credit value:** 8 |
| **College and School:** Lazarski University in Warsaw, Faculty of Economics and Management |
| **Module Leader:** Dr.Joshua P. Walcott |
| **Host Course:** MA International Relations |
| **Pre-requisites:**N/A |
| **Co-requisites:**N/A |
| **Special features:**N/A |
| **Access restrictions:**N/A |
| **Summary of module content:** The module "Foundation of Geopolitics and Security Studies" explores the strategic and theoretical underpinnings shaping global geopolitics and security. It delves into the evolution of geopolitical thought and its implications for national and international security, assessing the roles of major powers and regional dynamics. The module emphasizes the analysis of contemporary security issues and geopolitical tensions, highlighting the influence of state and non-state actors in global politics. By providing a thorough understanding of geopolitical factors, the module aims to equip students with insights into the complex landscape of international relations and security. |

**Assessment Methods**

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| Rank | Assessment type | Assessment name | Weighting | Qualifying set (where the minimum mark required applies across multiple assessments) |
| 1 | Presentation | Oral presentation | 50 |  |
| 2 | Essay | Geopolitical Essay | 50 |

**Study Abroad or Equivalent Assessment Methods**

Please contact the module leader for assessment details for study abroad students.

**Synoptic assessment**

N/A

**Learning outcomes**

By the end of the module the successful student will be able to:

1. Apply key geopolitical theories to the analysis of international relations and security policies, demonstrating critical judgement and theoretical understanding.
2. Critically assess the role of major powers and regional dynamics in shaping global geopolitics.
3. Analyse contemporary global security challenges and the factors contributing to international tensions and conflicts.
4. Evaluate the impact of state and non-state actors on international security and geopolitical strategies.
5. Develop and apply analytical skills to examine and interpret the complex interplay between geopolitics and security in the modern world.

**Course outcomes the module contributes to:**

* L7.2 Construct reasoned arguments, synthesize relevant information, and exercise critical judgment at an advanced level.
* L7.3 Undertake sustained research in the areas of international relations, democratic politics, security, and related areas.
* L7.5 Reflect on your own learning and seek and make use of constructive feedback.
* L7.7 Use acquired knowledge and understanding to initiate your own or your employer’s research projects in international relations, politics, or related fields.
* L7.10 Communicate effectively and fluently in speech and writing on a variety of topics in international politics at an advanced level.

**Indicative syllabus content**

* Introduction to Geopolitical Theories - covering classical and modern perspectives.
* Global Power Dynamics - examining the relationships and influence of major world powers.
* Security Challenges in the 21st Century - focusing on contemporary issues like cyber security and terrorism.
* Regional Geopolitical Strategies - studying strategies within key regions like the Middle East, Asia-Pacific, and Europe.
* Impact of Non-State Actors - exploring the influence of entities beyond government control on international security.
* Case Studies in International Relations and Security - applying theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios.

**Teaching and learning methods**

The module includes seminars and workshops, with students focusing on a research topic related to geopolitics or security studies. They will prepare a presentation, pitched as if to an expert panel, to demonstrate their ability to communicate complex ideas persuasively. Students will also write an essay to support their presentation, applying theoretical concepts to contemporary issues.

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| Activity type | Category | Student learning and teaching hours\* |
| Lecture | Scheduled |  |
| Seminar | Scheduled | 45 |
| Tutorial | Scheduled |  |
| Project supervisor | Scheduled |  |
| Demonstration | Scheduled |  |
| Practical classes and workshops | Scheduled | 15 |
| Supervised time in studio/workshop | Scheduled |  |
| Fieldwork | Scheduled |  |
| External visits | Scheduled |  |
| Work based learning | Scheduled |  |
| Scheduled online learning | Scheduled |  |
| Other learning | Scheduled |  |
| Total scheduled |  | 60 |
| Placement | Placement |  |
| Independent study | Independent | 140 |
| Total student learning and teaching hours |  | 200 |

\*hours per activity type are indicative and subject to change.

**Assessment rationale: why has this assessment been used for this module?**

**The oral presentation** assesses students' communication, analytical thinking, and ability to apply theoretical concepts to a selected case study. Students will present their findings in a 10–15-minute pitch to a panel of decision-makers, aiming to convince the panel that their idea is solid. This format mimics real-world scenarios where students must pitch their ideas persuasively and defend them under pressure, simulating decision-making environments in diplomacy, policy, and international relations. Students will be evaluated not only on the clarity and quality of their arguments but also on their ability to think on their feet and respond to questions in a high stakes setting.This type of assessment addresses LOs 2 & 4.

**Essay**  (2500 words) evaluates students' depth of understanding of core geopolitical concepts and theories, as well as their ability to apply these concepts to real-world events. The essay will require students to engage critically with contemporary geopolitical and security issues, navigating complex military, economic, and social topics. This assessment focuses on the student's ability to conduct research, synthesize information, and present a well-structured, analytical argument. By applying critical thinking to contemporary issues, students will develop problem-solving skills that are essential for strategy design and policy development in the field of security and geopolitics. This type of assessment addresses LOs 1, 3, & 5.

**Assessment criteria: what criteria will be used to assess my work on this module?**

**Presentation**: it is assessed on the following criteria, each worth 20%. Clarity: Clear explanation of the topic. Sources: Effective use of relevant sources. Argument: Strength and depth of analysis. Context & Accuracy: Understanding of the subject and factual accuracy. Q&A Response: Ability to engage with questions and demonstrate deeper understanding.

**Essay:** It is assessed on the following criteria, each worth 20%: Writing Quality: Clear and well-structured writing. Evidence: Appropriateness of sources used. Argument: Depth and clarity of analysis. Context & Accuracy: Understanding of context and factual correctness. Citations: Correct use of references and citation style.

The assessment(s) will examine to what extent the student has demonstrated the ability to:

* Analyze and apply geopolitical theories to contemporary global security issues.
* Critically evaluate the influence of major powers and regional dynamics on international relations.
* Assess the impact of state and non-state actors on global security environments.
* Synthesize complex information to construct coherent arguments on geopolitics and security.
* Demonstrate research proficiency by presenting findings clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing.

**Sources**

Peoples, C., Vaughan-Williams, N., 2021. Critical Security Studies. An Introduction. London: Routledge.

Williams, P.D., 2013 or later editions. Security Studies. An Introduction.

N.J.Spykman The Geography of the Peace, Harcourt, Brace and Company (1944)

Kevin R. Spiker James Biser Whisker Theories of Geopolitics Nova Science Pub Inc (2022)

**Recommended Reading List:**

S.B. Cohen Geopolitics: The Geography of International Relations 3rd ed. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers (2014)

G.Sloan, Colin S.Gray Geopolitics, Geography and Strategic History. Geopolitical Theory, Routledge 2017

P.Kelly Classical Geopolitics: A New Analytical Model, Stanford University Press 2016

Lizak, W., Zajączkowski, K., Kołodziejczak, M., 2021. Introduction to the Special Issue ‘Non-military aspects of security in the changing international order’. Security and Defence Quarterly, 33(1).

Solingen, E., 2021. Geopolitics, Supply Chains, and International Relations in East Asia. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

A.T. Mahan The Influence of Sea Power upon History, any edition, for instance Dover Publications (1987)

Swatek-Evenstein, M., 2021. A History of Humanitarian Intervention. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

H.J. Mackinder On the Scope and Methods of Geography Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography Vol. 9, No. 3 (1887)

An annually updated reading list including a list of other resources such as contemporary journal articles, reports, magazines and blogs will be provided.

In addition, students will be expected to carry out independent research to explore topics within contemporary publications in order to broaden their knowledge and understanding beyond the core content delivered in seminars.