

GEOG 401 Section 500  
**Political Geography**  
**MWF**  
Course Syllabus – Fall 2020

**Instructor:** Kathleen O'Reilly, Ph.D.  
**Instructor's Office Hours:** T 1:00 pm-4:00 pm over Zoom (see link on ecampus)  
and by appointment  
**Phone** 979-845-7141  
**E-mail** [koreilly@tamu.edu](mailto:koreilly@tamu.edu)

**Required course text:**

**Any current or previous edition:** Flint, C. and P. Taylor. (2018) *Political Geography: World-economy, nation-state, and locality*. (Seventh edition) New York: Routledge.

**Recommended podcast:**

*Missing and Murdered: Finding Cleo*

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/findingcleo/click-here-to-listen-to-missing-murdered-finding-cleo-1.4557887>

**Course description**

This upper-level, 3 credit, undergraduate course examines theories and concepts of political geography, with special attention to theories of power. The course covers the traditional concerns of political geography: state formation; nations and nationalism; core and periphery; geopolitics; electoral geography; sovereignty; power/empowerment; and colonialism/postcolonialism. We also give our attention to globalization; terrorism; and micropolitics. We will investigate a series of themes to add depth and breadth to our study: political struggles over territory; impacts of colonialism for conflict development; and gender. The course material includes a balance of theory and case study material, so that students can explore concepts through examples from geographic research. Our case studies will draw from both the global north and the global south, as well as explore this division of our world.

We will base our exploration on a single textbook, Flint, C. and P. Taylor. (2018) *Political Geography: World-economy, nation-state, and locality*, many supplementary readings, and some films. I intend this combination of materials to add to our understanding of political processes both in theory, and as case studies.

**Course prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

**Learning Objectives**

1. Strengthen student knowledge of key concepts in political geography
2. Provide a framework for understanding on-the-ground political conflicts
3. Facilitate critical thinking skills through group discussion and debate
4. Increase student confidence in their ability to summarize ideas and thoughtfully maneuver through complex issues
5. Recognize implications, envision alternatives, and think creatively about political geography debates

**Course Format**

This 3 credit course will be conducted at an advanced undergraduate level. This means that students are expected to come to class sessions prepared to discuss the readings in depth. There will be both lecture and discussion, and I will be ready at any time to answer questions and/or define terms that are troubling anyone about the readings, their themes or their implications. I will facilitate group discussion, although students will be expected to come to class with questions and thoughtful remarks about the materials covered for that day's class. Participation of students in discussion is expected regardless of whether you attend in person or online

**Course website**

This course will have an accompanying website that you can find by going to <https://ecampus.tamu.edu> Course readings and lectures can be found on the website.

**Course Requirements and Assessment**

*Readings, Films and Podcasts*

Because the discussion of readings, films, and podcasts form the core of the course, assignments must be read/viewed according to the schedule before coming to class.

*Module Assessment*

There will be seven module assessments that will cover all assigned readings and materials covered in class for the module. Prior to the assessment there will be a review of material covered. The purpose of this exercise is to strengthen student skills in critical thinking and increase student confidence in their ability to summarize ideas, thoughtfully maneuver through issues, ask questions, recognize implications, envision alternatives, and think creatively.

### Journal Entry

The journal entry assignments are intended to provide an opportunity for you to connect the class material to your own interests. The key is to take material from the assigned prompt and respond to it, *drawing on what you have learned in class*. Your entry should be *no fewer than 400 words*. The entries should be concise yet thought-provoking. Creativity and risk are encouraged. I want you to explore these topics from your own point of view. Within your entry, I look for thoughtfulness, coherence, demonstration of key concepts from class (use of appropriate terms) and critically minded thinking.

### Worksheet

Worksheets are to be completed by students as an element of engaging with course materials. Guided questions are intended to facilitate student learning of key ideas from specific materials.

### Quiz

There is one quiz in multiple choice format that covers an in-depth news report and Hollywood film based on the key figure in the news report.

### Grading

Module Assessments (7)	200
Quiz (1)	20
Worksheets (2)	50
Journal Entries (2)	80
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>

### Grading scale

In this course, a grade of “C” indicates average performance. This grade means that the work has accomplished the minimum expected outcome. A grade of “B” indicates above average performance, and a grade of “A” recognizes work that goes beyond the call of duty. A grade of “D” indicates below average performance, and an “F” grade indicates that the work does not merit full credit.

<u>A</u>	315 pts +
<u>B</u>	280 pts +
<u>C</u>	245 pts +
<u>D</u>	210 pts +
<u>E</u>	below 210 pts.

Note: Grades are not routinely rounded up. For example, 314 points is a B, not an A.

### Questions about assessment

Please feel free to contact me about assessment at any time throughout the semester. Please be aware that I cannot discuss grades over email per University policy. We will need to speak over Zoom.

### Email

**Send all emails to Dr. O’Reilly at the address above. An email is not a text, and I expect an appropriate level of formality.**

Please do not use the e-campus system to communicate with me as I do not check it for email with the same regularity as I do the email above. E-mail office hours will coincide with regular office hours. **Include GEOG 401 in the subject line**, as all emails are filtered and read from that folder.

### Classroom Policies

I have high expectations of my students. First and foremost is a conducive environment for learning, which involves: 1. be respectful of others. TAMU is committed to providing an educational and work climate that is conducive to the personal and professional development of each individual; 2. keep noise and other distractions to a minimum; 3. ask questions and listen to answers.

### Additional Readings

Berko, A. and E. Erez. 2005. “Ordinary People” and “Death Work”: Palestinian Suicide Bombers as Victimizers and Victims. *Violence and Victims*. 20(6):603-623.

Foucault, M. from *Foucault for Beginners*, by Lydia Fillingham (2007) Danbury: Beginners Books.

Gourevitch, Philip. 2005. Tides of War. *The New Yorker Magazine*. pp. 55-63  
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/08/01/tides-of-war>

Gourevitch, Philip. 1998. *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families: stories from Rwanda*. New York: Picador USA/ Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. pp. 15-62.

Hochschild, Adam. 1998. *King Leopold's ghost: a story of greed, terror, and heroism in colonial Africa*. Boston ; New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. Chaps 4, 7, and 8.

Landesman, P. 2003. Arms and the Man. New York Times. pp 1-11.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/17/magazine/17BOUT.html?ex=1168923600&en=d8acab24a5ee0221&ei=5070>

O'Reilly, K. (2016) "From toilet insecurity to toilet security: Creating safe sanitation for women and girls." *WIRES Water* 3: 19-24.

Rowlands, J. (1997) Questioning empowerment: working with women in Honduras. Oxfam Publications Department. Oxford, UK. pp. 1-27.

Scott, J. (1990). *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven, Yale University Press. pp. 136-182.

### **Films**

1. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*
2. *Five Broken Cameras*
3. *Lord of War*

### **Podcasts**

*Missing and Murdered: Finding Cleo*

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/findingcleo/click-here-to-listen-to-missing-murdered-finding-cleo-1.4557887>

### **University Policies**

#### **Attendance Policy**

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

#### **Makeup Work Policy**

Students will be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student's grade, for the reasons stated in Student Rule 7, or other reason deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1](#)).

"The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2](#)).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. (See [Student Rule 24](#).)

#### **Academic Integrity Statement and Policy**

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

"Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one's work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case" ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)).

As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of that person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, because it destroys trust among student cohorts, scholars, and colleagues. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the latest issue of the Texas A&M University Student Rules, <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/>, under the section "Scholastic Dishonesty."

Simply put, do not do it! In this course, you are expected to do your own, original work that has not been previously submitted for credit. If you have additional questions or concerns about academic integrity, please bring these to my attention.

As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of that person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated.

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at [aggiehonor.tamu.edu](http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu).

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy**

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact Disability Resources in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit [disability.tamu.edu](http://disability.tamu.edu). Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

### **Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality**

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, you will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University's goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS).

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University's [Title IX webpage](#).

### **Statement on Mental Health and Wellness**

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in proper self-care by utilizing the resources and services available from Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS). Students who need someone to talk to can call the TAMU Helpline (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255) or at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

### **COVID-19 Temporary Amendment to Minimum Syllabus Requirements**

The Faculty Senate temporarily added the following statements to the minimum syllabus requirements in Fall 2020 as part of the university's COVID-19 response.

### ***Campus Safety Measures***

To promote public safety and protect students, faculty, and staff during the coronavirus pandemic, Texas A&M University has adopted policies and practices for the Fall 2020 academic term to limit virus transmission. Students must observe the following

practices while participating in face-to-face courses and course-related activities (office hours, help sessions, transitioning to and between classes, study spaces, academic services, etc.):

- Self-monitoring—Students should follow CDC recommendations for self-monitoring. **Students who have a fever or exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should participate in class remotely and should not participate in face-to-face instruction.**
- Face Coverings—[Face coverings](#) (cloth face covering, surgical mask, etc.) must be properly worn in all non-private spaces including classrooms, teaching laboratories, common spaces such as lobbies and hallways, public study spaces, libraries, academic resource and support offices, and outdoor spaces where 6 feet of physical distancing is difficult to reliably maintain. Description of face coverings and additional guidance are provided in the [Face Covering policy](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) available on the [Provost website](#).
- Physical Distancing—Physical distancing must be maintained between students, instructors, and others in course and course-related activities.
- Classroom Ingress/Egress—Students must follow marked pathways for entering and exiting classrooms and other teaching spaces. Leave classrooms promptly after course activities have concluded. Do not congregate in hallways and maintain 6-foot physical distancing when waiting to enter classrooms and other instructional spaces.
- To attend a face-to-face class, students must wear a face covering (or a face shield if they have an exemption letter). If a student refuses to wear a face covering, the instructor should ask the student to leave and join the class remotely. If the student does not leave the class, the faculty member should report that student to the [Student Conduct office](#) for sanctions. Additionally, the faculty member may choose to teach that day's class remotely for all students.

### *Personal Illness and Quarantine*

Students required to quarantine must participate in courses and course-related activities remotely and **must not attend face-to-face course activities**. Students should notify their instructors of the quarantine requirement. Students under quarantine are expected to participate in courses and complete graded work unless they have symptoms that are too severe to participate in course activities.

Students experiencing personal injury or illness that is too severe for the student to attend class qualify for an excused absence (See [Student Rule 7, Section 7.2.2](#).) To receive an excused absence, students must comply with the documentation and notification guidelines outlined in Student Rule 7. While Student Rule 7, Section 7.3.2.1, indicates a medical confirmation note from the student's medical provider is preferred, **for Fall 2020 only, students may use the Explanatory Statement for Absence from Class form in lieu of a medical confirmation. Students must submit the Explanatory Statement for Absence from Class within two business days after the last date of absence.**

### *Copyrights*

All course materials are copyrighted. These materials include but are not limited to syllabi, quizzes, exams, lab problems, in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these materials are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless permission is expressly granted. Taping and reproducing of course material for other than personal use will be regarded as copyright infringement and referred to University lawyers for action. Before tape recording, ask me first. Professional note-takers must be enrolled in this course (university policy) and receive my permission prior to any commercial transaction involving course notes (state law).

Week		Monday	Wednesday	Friday
1	Aug 19, 21		First Day: Syllabus handed out	Lecture Zero <i>Introduction to the sub-discipline of Political Geography</i> No reading
2	Aug 24-28	Discussion Zero <i>Suicide Bombers</i> Berko and Erez pp. 603-623 <b>Ecampus discussion during class time</b>	<i>World systems analysis</i> Flint & Taylor pp. 12-18	<i>Dimensions of a historical system: core and periphery</i> Flint & Taylor pp. 18-28
3	Aug 31 Sept 2,4	<i>Power</i> Flint & Taylor pp. 29-38	<i>Power and politics in the world economy</i> Flint & Taylor pp. 38-45	Chapter 1 Review <b>Online Assessment (40 pts)</b> over Flint & Taylor pp 12-45 <b>(due by 11:59pm)</b>
4	Sept 7-11	<i>Disciplinary Power</i> Foucault pp. 112-130	<i>Informal Power: Resistance</i> Scott pp. 136-182	<i>Informal Power: Resistance (continued)</i> Scott Introduction to Film: <i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i>
5	Sept 14-18	Film: <i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i> <b>Ecampus discussion during class time</b> <b>Worksheet (20 points) due by 11:59pm</b>	<i>Empowerment</i> Rowlands pp. 9-27	<i>Power to the People: Social Movements</i> Flint & Taylor pp. 262-263
6	Sept 21-25	<i>Power</i> Review <b>Online Assessment (40 pts) (due by 11:59pm)</b>	<i>Borders and Boundaries</i> Gallaher et al. Chapter 17	<i>Borders and Boundaries: Israeli-Palestinian conflict</i> No reading
7	Sept 28, 30 Oct 2	Film: <i>Five Broken Cameras</i> View on your own before class <b>Ecampus discussion during class time</b> <b>Journal entry assignment (20 points) (due by 11:59pm)</b>	<i>Borders and Boundaries</i> Review <b>Online Assessment (20 pts) (due by 11:59pm)</b>	TBA
8	Oct 5-9	<i>Imperialism: core and periphery</i> Flint & Taylor pp. 104-108	Film: <i>The Africans: Tools of Exploitation</i> <b>Ecampus discussion during class time</b> <b>Worksheet (20 pts) (due by 11:59pm)</b>	<i>Colonialism: creating the semi-periphery</i> Gourevitch <i>We wish to inform...</i> pp. 15-62
9	Oct 12-16	<i>Colonialism: organization of space</i> Hochschild Chapters 4, 7, 8	<i>Representation: Orientalism</i> No reading	<i>Colonialism: written on the body</i> Gallaher et al. pp. 119-123
10	Oct 19-23	<i>Colonialism</i> Review <b>Online Assessment (40 pts) (due by 11:59pm)</b>	<i>Indigenous Nationalism: the rights of indigenous populations</i> Flint & Taylor pp. 190-193	<i>Indigenous Nationalism: Finding Cleo</i> Episode 8 Season Two: Salesperson of the Year <a href="https://www.cbc.ca/radio/finding-cleo/click-here-to-listen-to-missing-murdered-finding-cleo-1.4557887">https://www.cbc.ca/radio/finding-cleo/click-here-to-listen-to-missing-murdered-finding-cleo-1.4557887</a> <b>Ecampus discussion during class time</b> <b>Journal entry assignment (20 pts) (due by 11:59pm)</b>

11	Oct 26-30	<i>Nationalism</i> Gallaher et al. Chapter 23	<i>Nationalism case study: Sri Lanka</i> Gourevitch <i>Tides of War</i> pp. 55-63	Review of Nationalism <b>Online Assessment (20 pts)</b> <b>(due by 11:59pm)</b>
12	Nov 2-6	<i>Electoral Geography</i> Flint & Taylor pp. 234-241	<i>Election Results and Process</i> No reading <b>Ecampus discussion during class time</b>	<i>Informal imperialism</i> Flint & Taylor pp. 112-120
13	Nov 9-12	<i>Informal imperialism and gender</i> Flint & Taylor pp. 120-122	<i>Informal imperialism</i> Review <b>Online Assessment (20 pts) (due by 11:59pm)</b>	<i>Intimate geopolitics, feminist scholarship and the interrogation of security</i> Flint and Taylor pp. 82-87
14	Nov 15-19	<i>Gender and Security</i> O'Reilly pp. 19-24	<i>Globalization and gender</i> Flint & Taylor pp. 116-122	<i>Gender and Security</i> Review <b>Online Assessment (20 pts)</b> <b>(due by 11:59pm)</b>
15	Nov 22	<i>Globalization and Outlaws</i> Landesman <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/17/magazine/arms-and-the-man.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/17/magazine/arms-and-the-man.html</a> Film: <i>Lord of War</i> <b>Online Quiz (10 pts) over reading and film (due by 11:59pm)</b>	READING DAY	NO CLASS THANKSGIVING
16		NO FINAL		