The education programme of the course

**Critical Geopolitics**

*(41.03.05: School of Government and International Relations)*

The Programme «Government and International Relations»

(code - Б 029)

Qualification - The bachelor

The form of study - full-time education

The course program developed by Igor Okunev, 2018

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The course “Critical Geopolitics” is elaborated in accordance with the MGIMO Educational Standard for the Bachelor’s Program in International Affairs (program track “Government and International Affairs”).

Author_________________________________________ Prof. Igor Okunev
Director of the MGIMO library______________________ Marina Reshetnikova
The program is approved by Department of Comparative Politics on

_______________________________________________
Head of Department______________________________ Prof. Oxana Gaman-Golutvina
PART 1: INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION, COURSE DESCRIPTION AND TEACHING METHODS

1.1 General information

Template

- Full course title: Critical Geopolitics
- Type of course: Elective
- Level of course: B.A.
- Year of study: 4<sup>th</sup>
- Number of ECTS credits allocated: 2
- Name of lecturer(s) and office hours:
  
  Dr. Igor Okunev, PhD
  
  Associate Professor, Department of Comparative Politics
  
  Office hours: Tuesday-Friday 10 AM-6 PM, office 3032
  
  E-mail: iokunev@mgimo.ru

1.2 Course aims and learning outcomes

The aims of the course are to provide students with foundational knowledge and solid understanding of geopolitics schools in a critical perspective and to introduce students to analysis of world politics history in XX century through the development of geopolitical thought.

Learning outcomes:

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

- know basic school in geopolitics, their main leaders and ideas,
- critically interpret main geopolitics theories and concepts,
- evaluate the main events in XX century history through the development of geopolitical thought,
- compare and contrast interpretation of the contemporary issues through the different school of geopolitics.

1.3 Course requirements and grading plan

Course requirements

Students will be required to attend not less than 90% of classes and be prepared for class discussions. Conscientious reading of the assigned materials is compulsory.

Grading plan

- Class participation – 20 %
  Students are expected to attend all the lectures and seminars and participate in class discussions; since the course is highly interactive, it is essential that students attend the seminars having read the materials for that day’s class.
- In-class tests – 60 %
  Students will write three tests during the semester. Dates of test classes are defined by the instructor and communicated to the students at the first class of the respective course.
- Issue essay – 20 %
  Such an essay (up to 10 pages including literature) is written by each student at the end of the term (it should be handed in at the last but one seminar so the lecturer has enough time to check the works and to provide feedback). The topic will be chosen from the list given at the end of this program and may be based on readings included in reading list, as well as the sources
chosen by the student. The author should supply his view of a problem and a critical interpretation of the existing sources (preferably those used in the course). The author should also attempt to consider how the existing arguments could be framed differently. The author will be given a short written feedback in a week after the work is handed in, including the grade, which can be followed up by consultation during office hours.
PART 2. COURSE CONTENT

2.1 Types of work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of work</th>
<th>Academic hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total for lectures, seminars and written exam</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminars</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written tests and/or exam</td>
<td>Written test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written and oral home assignments</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for lectures, seminars and written tests</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2. Course content and readings by topic

**Lecture 1. The origins of geopolitics. Social Darwinism in geopolitics.**

Influence of space on the development of mankind until the end of the XIX century. The international system by the end of the XIX century: the completion of the division of the world by colonial empires. The new system requires comprehension: The geographic factor of international relations. Social Darwinism in the science of the late XIX century.


**Lecture 2. Realism and neo-realism in geopolitics: geographical determinism and revisionism.**

Realistic concept of international relations and its relation to geographical determinism.

The concept of confronting land and sea K. Ritter.
A. Mahan: biography. The concept of sea power. Criteria for the state’s planetary status, the parameters of sea power. The principle of anaconda.


K. Haushofer: biography, the question of the connection with Nazism. The theory of the continental bloc. Lebenstraum and natural boundaries. The concept of panregions. Development of ideas in K. Schmitt and in German and Japanese geopolitics. The result of realism in geopolitics.


Seminar 1. Imperialist Geopolitics.

Literature:


Seminar 2. Cold War Geopolitics.
Literature:


Seminar 3. New World Order Geopolitics.

Literature:


Literature:


Lecture 4. Russian geopolitical thought.


Seminar 5. Final Test.

2.3. Essay topics/Exam Questions

1. The origins of geopolitics. Social Darwinism in geopolitics.

2. Criticism of social Darwinism in geopolitics: autarky, expansion, violence.

3. Realism and neo-realism in geopolitics: geographical determinism and revisionism.

4. The concept of confronting land and sea

5. The Great game and its influence on the views of Mackinder.

6. Revision of the ideas of the Heartland in later Mackinder works.

7. Imperialist Geopolitics.

8. The result of realism in geopolitics at WWII.


10. Rimland theory.


13. Polycentricity and hierarchy of the geopolitical structure of the world.

15. New World Order Geopolitics.
17. Spatial myths.
18. Schools of critical geopolitics.
19. Radical geopolitics
20. The difference between the geopolitics of modernity and the geopolitics of postmodernity.
22. Postcritical geopolitics.
23. Russian geopolitical thought.
24. Westernism and Slavophilism.
25. Russian geopolitical code.

2.4. Exam timing
Last week of May.

2.5. Consolidated reading list (in alphabetic order)

- **Basic readings**

- **Additional readings**


Available from: eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost)


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[https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-organization/article/anarchy-is-what-states-make-of-it-the-social-construction-of-power-politics/B03BC7C9AAC5211B6DC319C077C1A854](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-organization/article/anarchy-is-what-states-make-of-it-the-social-construction-of-power-politics/B03BC7C9AAC5211B6DC319C077C1A854)
PART 3. FINAL REMARKS

• Plagiarism is considered as a severe violation and as an indication of incompetence in the course. Plagiarism is understood as making of one’s text using compilation method for other people’s publications, even connected with own phrases and sentences. Collective performance of individual tasks is also unacceptable. Proved plagiarism an F-mark is given regardless of the fulfillment of all other requirements.
• Assignments are to be handed in on the due date. Late submissions will translate into the lowering of the grade by 1/3 of a grade for each day of delay.
• Students are asked to keep a copy of all work submitted for evaluation.