GIA/PSCI/UAP 5254: GLOBAL CONFLICTS

Dr Gerard Toal,
Government and International Affairs, Virginia Tech,
1021 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.
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Email: toalg@vt.edu. Phone: (703) 706 8113

It is a sad but undeniable fact of the contemporary world that thousands of people are displaced from their homes by conflicts. Thousands of others are murdered in routine recurrences of mass violence. This behavior has, unfortunately, characterized the interstate system since its origins. With civilization has come slaughter, with modernization more ambitious projects to displace, dispossess and dispose. Millions of people were the victims of genocide in the twentieth century. The most extreme case took place within space controlled by one of Europe's most advanced states in the 1940s. It recurred in southeast Europe and the Caucasus in the 1990s and, in Africa, the Caucasus and Syria today, forced displacement on group criteria persists. Neither intrastate not interstate wars but conflicts over territorial nation state formation in particular spaces, these instances of mass violence pose a persistent challenge to the international community, its institutions of global governance, and aspirations to global norms such as 'responsibility to protect.'

Not all conflict involves mass violence; sometimes conflict may not involve physical force at all but the structural violence of political marginalization, language discrimination, land seizures, and low-level harassment. Sometimes conflict is part of the banal functioning of everyday life in multiethnic states.

This course examines the academic debate over explanations for the 'global conflicts' we see across the globe today, conflicts that are typically and sometimes unhelpfully characterized as 'ethnic conflicts.' Many of the world's contemporary conflicts are not 'ethnic' in origins but produced and represented as such. Many involve the mobilization of nationalism but in ways that are not obvious. Identity is a complex notion and groupness not given and apparent. Nationalism is a very varied phenomenon; not all forms are ethnic nationalism.

This course is an introduction to the voluminous social scientific literature and debate on global conflicts (the field is too large to cover all aspects). Taught totally online, it is divided into five modules and requires students to write an assignment per module. The course provides an online discussion forum for students to help each other, and discuss the material, but the central emphasis in the course is on reading, conceptualization and writing analytically. The course is designed to move students from introductory conceptualizations about states, identity and territory to more advanced conceptualizations. The first module has a series of audio lectures that assume no

background but theorization quickly becomes advanced. The subsequent modules build on the theorization introduced at the outset.

As a political geographer, I am particularly interested in revealing the multidimensional geographic aspects and features of global conflicts, notions that I believe are not as sufficiently integrated, and not as theoretically nuanced as they should be in the prevailing literature on conflict analysis. This course, in other words, comes with a particular politico-geographical tilt. This begins with the first module. The course is built around the need to grasp *the triangle of global conflict*: population collective identity formation (as a 'nation' or a 'people'), power (struggles over control of the state, political authority, and violence) and geography (struggles over territory, resources and whose conception of homeland dominates over competing understandings). The territorial nation state, as the dominant organizational form of power on the world political map, represents this triangle: territory (geography), nation (population and identity) and state (power) in a synthesis that produces identity-territorial power complexes. This emphasis on the geographic components of conflict is neglected in sociological, anthropological and political science perspectives.

The subsequent modules pursue particular aspects of the general social science effort to develop comprehensive explanations that account for the diversity of global conflicts we see across the world political map.

The goals of this course are:

• To foster conceptual learning and knowledge of global conflict (questions concerning identity, the relationship of states to nations, the politics of nationalism, violence and peace) through the use of lecture notes, audio lectures, conceptual diagrams and visual images.
• To introduce the current state of scholarship and debates on conflict, violence in contemporary social science.
• To familiarize students with the circumstances and conditions of a few contemporary territorial conflicts.

This course is a core specialization course for graduate students taking the 'global security' track of the Masters of Public and International Affairs (MPIA). Students in the Online Masters in Political Science (OLMA) can also take the class for graduate credit towards their degree. The course has no prerequisite beyond a strong background in international affairs. Because each module requires the writing of an analytical assignment, an ability to write in an organized, coherent, precise and clear manner is necessary.

Course Texts

Each module last three weeks and requires a considerable amount of reading. As a rule of thumb you should be reading 5-6 journal articles, or a small book, per week for this course. We will use texts that you are expected to purchase as well as collections of

articles (recommended and supplemental) that are available online in the Scholar Resource folder.

<u>Required</u>

Ugur Umit Ungor, *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Stuart Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* (Cornell University Press, 2001). We will use four of the seven chapters in this book.

Tom de Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War* (New York University Press, 2013). Second edition.

Tom de Waal, *The Caucasus: An Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2010)

Philip Le Billion, *Wars of Plunder: Conflicts, Profits and the Politics of Resources*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

<u>Recommended</u>

Chip Gagnon, *The Myth of Ethnic War*. (Cornell University Press, 2004). This is a terrific book. We will use the Preface, first chapter and conclusion for modules two and three.

Umut Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*. Palgrave Macmillan, Second edition, 2010. This is a useful introductory book to have in one's library. We won't be addressing it specifically but you will find certain aspects of it very useful, especially for module's one and three.

Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge University Press, 1996. We will be reading three chapters from this book, which are available on Scholar. It is a useful book to have in one's library.

World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development*. Freely available as an ebook at http://go.worldbank.org/QLKJWJB8X0

The Five Modules

Module 1: Conceptualizing Global Conflicts

Module 2: Making States, Homogenizing Populations

Module 3: Greed and Grievance in Violent 'Ethnic' Conflicts

Module 4: The Conflict over Nagorny Karabakh

Module 5: Georgia's Territorial Conflicts

For a detailed outline of the reading for each module see below. Each module has a discussion Forum (see menu) to allow discussion of the course readings, lectures and texts should you wish to do so. There is no pre-established time of synchronous interaction. Discussion is student not instructor driven. In the discussion forum, I will try to answer any questions you might have, clarify conceptualizations, discuss expectations and generally work through the class material with you. Discussions will be informal but nevertheless serious, respectful and focused. Discussion is not required but you may wish to help each other out with clarifications and arguments. To participate in discussions, however, students need to read and review the course material first. There is no short cut to learning, no speed education on the material of this course. Read, read, read. Forums are not chat rooms. It is our classroom so do not say anything there that you would not in a normal classroom in front of the professor.

Detailed Module Readings

MODULE 1

Theorizing the Triangle:
State Power, Population Identifications, and Territory

This module is an introduction to the conceptual foundations of this course. The following is the order of audio lectures, lecture slides and readings for this module. Those readings marked supplemental are less central. Go to Modules in Scholar to access all audio lectures. All lectures have separate slide pdfs available for printing and note taking during the lecture. I created this module independent of Özkirimli's book but you will find it useful background for this and the following module.

Audio Lecture 1: Thinking Critically about Global Conflicts

This is the first lecture in GIA 5254: Global Conflicts. It introduces some definitions and the three key concepts, which are the subject of the rest of this module. Follow up on this lecture by reading the following:

1. Ernest Gellner, Extracts "Introduction" and "Conclusion" from *Nations and Nationalities* (Cornell, 1983).
2. Part 1: *World Development Report 2011*

Audio Lecture 2: From Identity to Identifications

Follow up with these readings:

3. Rogers Brubaker, "Introduction." *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Harvard University Press, 2004).

4. Chapter 1: "Ethnicity Without Groups"
5. Chapter 2: "Beyond "Identity."
6. Chapter 3: "Ethnicity as Cognition."

Audio Lecture 3: States

This lecture addresses the state. The readings are:

7. Charles Tilly's (1985) "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime."
8. Mohammed Ayoob's "State Making, State Breaking and State Failure," from *Managing Global Chaos*, eds., P. Aall, C. Crocker, F.O. Hampson, US Institute of Peace, 1996.
9. Benedict Anderson, "Census, Map, Museum." Excerpt from *Imagined Communities*. (Verso: London, 1991)
10. Mitchell Dean, "Chapter 1: Basic Concepts and Themes" from *Governmentality* (Sage, 1999).

Audio Lecture 4: Geo-Graphy as Geo-Politics

The readings for this lecture are:

11. David Kaplan, "Two Nations in Search of a State: Canada's Ambivalent Spatial Identities" *Association of American Geographers* 1994.
12. Rogers Brubaker, "National minorities, nationalizing states and external national homelands in the "New Europe"" Ch 3 of *Nationalism Reframed*.
13. Rogers Brubaker, "Nationalizing states in the Old Europe – and the New." Ch 4 of *Nationalism Reframed*.
14. Oren Yiftachel and Asad Ghanem, "Understanding Ethnocratic Regimes: the politics of seizing contested territories," *Political Geography*, 2004.

Audio Lecture 5: Nationalisms and Nations

The readings for this lecture are:

15. Loring Danforth, 'Ethnic Nationalism.' Chapter 1 of *The Macedonia Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World Problem* (Princeton, 1995).
16. Rogers Brubaker, 'Civic' and 'Ethnic' Nationalism. Chapter 6 from *Ethnicity without Groups*.
17. Rogers Brubaker, "Rethinking nationhood: nation as an institutionalized form, practical category, contingent event." Chapter 1 of *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

MODULE TWO: MAKING STATES, HOMOGENIZING POPULATIONS

In the last module, we introduced the triad of state authority, population and geography which since the age of nationalism has crystallized and congealed at different moments and places to re-make the world political map. What was once a prevalent political form – dynastic empires controlling imperial lands full of people with diverse faiths, identities and practices – began to come undone. The reasons for this are complex but the desire for modernization by revolutionary elites re-made the relationship between land, people and state authority. We are going to consider one example of this, the transformation of the Ottoman Empire into the state that is modern Turkey. In studying this process we will engage with the following themes:

- Modernization, westernization, internal colonialism and the state.
- Modern territorial ideologies and social engineering.
- The conditions under which mass population displacements occur.
- The conditions under which genocide take place.
- The remaking of places and people into new spaces and subjects.
- The contested nature of the process of state formation and place destruction.

The central reading for this module is Ugur Umit Ungor's award-winning book *The Making of Modern Turkey*. We will supplement this with the following readings:

- John McGarry (1998), "Demographic Engineering: The State-Directed Movement of Ethnic Groups as a Technique of Conflict Regulation." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*.

There are two video lectures available for this module.

- Making Nation-States
- Overview Lecture on *The Making of Modern Turkey*.

Also see the You Tube lecture by Ugur Ungor on his research publications:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dymso_Wr5RM

MODULE THREE:
GREED AND GRIEVANCE IN EXPLAINING VIOLENT ETHNIC CONFLICTS

This module provides an introduction to the truly enormous literature on the causes of territorial and group conflicts in the post-Cold War era. Though vast, this literature tends to have a number of distinguishing features:
- Its focus is largely on contemporary ongoing and/or protracted unresolved conflicts.
- The focus tends to be on conflicts that feature considerable mass violence, including population displacement and egregious violations of human rights.
- It tends to be focused on so-called 'internal' and so-called 'ethnic' conflicts. Both are deeply problematic frames, as many conflicts have important international dimensions and causes. Nevertheless academic specialization and other factors produce meaningful distinctions between inter-state wars and civil wars, between supposed non-identity based conflicts and those where identity is salient.

- It is often organized around the glib but nevertheless useful starting conceptual distinction between 'greed' and 'grievance.' The former refers to the wide range of materialist motivations on the part of actors involved in mobilizing for 'ethnic conflict.' The latter refers to the causes and complaints that animate most 'ethnic conflicts.' Most conflicts involve both so the challenge is really to think at a deeper level about the interconnections between materialist conditions and ideological/experiential lifeworlds.

This module begins with an audio lecture on some of the competing explanatory frameworks across this multidisciplinary literature.

Simplifying somewhat, there are six distinct explanatory approaches to the question of seemingly collective group conflict:

1. Structural materialist, political economic and political ecology explanations for ethnicized conflicts like that of Collier and Le Billion.
2. Geopolitical explanations that emphasize great power competition, outside support for internal factions and the decisive power of intervention in tilting the balance of power in certain states.
3. Structural politico-institutional explanations, with particular emphasis on the constitutional and party systems within states as structures of opportunity and constraint.
4. Psychological and emotional explanations: these vary considerably, and we will read one example: the work of Roger Petersen.
5. Political entrepreneur explanations that emphasize the power of leadership in inciting, producing and enframing conflicts as 'ethnic'. Political mobilization or demobilization is key here. This is the argument of Chip Gagnon. Political entrepreneurs can be elites at the national and/or local level. They are distinct from violence entrepreneurs (criminals, thugs, mercenaries) but there are often connections between the two, as John Mueller argues.
6. 'Symbolic myth complex' and 'hate narrative' explanations: see the essays by Kaufman, which offer concepts for thinking about these concepts. The notion of performativity is key here.

Remember that these dynamics of ethnicization are connected to each other, and that their particular interaction has to be considered to provide a full and comprehensive account of ethnicized conflicts. This is the challenging part, figuring out the localized and regional congealments of these different factors. The essays by Brown and Gurr are accounts that seek to pull all these factors together.

There are three introductory audio lecture for this module, one a broad overview, the second a lecture on chapter 1 of David Romano's book on the Kurdish nationalist movement, and the third a discussion of Le Billion's book *Wars of Plunder*. Besides lecture notes for both these, there are also lecture notes on Ted Gurr's essay.

The following are the readings for this module:

1. Philip Le Billion, *Wars of Plunder: Conflicts, Profits and the Politics of Resources*.
2. Stuart Kaufman, Chapter 1 "Stories About Ethnic War" & Chapter 2 "The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War" in *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* (Cornell University Press, 2001).
3. Michael Brown, "Ethnic and Internal Conflicts: Causes and Implications," pp. 209-226 in Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*. US Institute of Peace, 2001.
4. Ted Gurr, "Minorities and Nationalists: Managing Ethnopolitical Conflict in the New Century," pp. 163-187, in Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*. US Institute of Peace, 2001.
5. Barry Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict." *Survival*, 35, 1 (1993), pp. 27-47.
6. David Romano, "Making Sense of Ethnic Nationalist Resurgence." Chapter 1 of *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Opportunity, Mobilization, and Identity* (Cambridge University Press). This has an accompanying audio lecture, and lecture slides.
7. Paul Collier, "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implications for Policy." pp. 143-162, in Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*. US Institute of Peace, 2001.
8. Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler (2004) "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers*.
9. V.P. Gagnon, "Preface," Ch 1 "The Puzzle of the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s" and "Conclusion" from *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s* (Cornell, 2004)
10. John Mueller, "The Banality of "Ethnic War." *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Summer, 2000), pp. 42-70 followed by Anna Simons and John Mueller, "Debate: The Dynamics of Internal Conflict." *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Spring, 2001), pp. 187-192
11. Roger Petersen, Chapter 1 "Introduction" and Chapter 2 "An Emotion-Based Approach to Ethnic Conflict" in *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hared, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

MODULE FOUR: THE CONFLICT OVER NAGORNY KARABAKH

The outbreak of conflict over the disputed enclave of Nagorny Karabakh, an autonomous oblast (NKAO) in the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan, was the first indication that Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika would unleash nationalist passions that would threaten the very existence of the Soviet Union. Between 1988 and 1994, armed Armenian and Azeribaijani forces fought over this region and its surrounding areas. The

result was the firm triumph of the Armenian forces and the displacement of almost a million Azerbaijanis, most not from the NKAO itself but from seven provinces surrounding it. This module provides an introduction and in-depth empirical investigation and analysis of this conflict.

Readings

- Tom De Waal, *Black Garden*, all.
- Tom De Waal, *The Caucasus: An Introduction,* Ch 2-4.
- Stuart Kaufman, Chapter 3, "Karabagh and the Fear of Minorities," in *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* (Cornell University Press, 2001).
- Lawrence Broers, Gerard Toal, "Cartographic Exhibitionism? Visualizing the Territory of Armenia and Karabakh." *Problems of Post-Communism*, 2013.
- Gerard Toal, John O'Loughlin, "Land for Peace in Nagorny Karabakh? Political Geographies and Public Attitudes inside a Contested De Facto State." *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 2013.

Video Lectures

1. Locating the Nagorny Karabakh Conflict
2. Debating the Nagorny Karabakh Conflict
3. Tom de Waal in conversation on *Black Garden*, 2nd edition.
4. The British peace-building NGO Conciliation Resources produced a film called "Memories without Borders" that is useful visual background in the human aspects of this conflict.

Lecture Notes Only
5. The Karabakh Conflict Amidst Disintegration, Democratization and Demagoguery: Preconditions and Polarization, 1988-1991
6. The Karabakh Conflict: War and Displacement, 1991-1994
7. A Not-So Frozen Conflict: The Karabakh 'Peace Process'

Supplemental Readings

1. Anastasia Voronkova, "From Conflict to War: The Escalation of Violence in Ethno-National Struggles: Nagorno-Karabakh as a Case Study." Paper presented at the ASN 2011.
2. Razmik Panossian, "The Irony of Nagorno-Karabakh: Formal Institutions versus Informal Politics." In *Ethnicity and Territory in the Former Soviet Union,* Frank Cass, 2002.

MODULE FIVE: THE TERRITORIAL FRAGMENTATION OF GEORGIA

During the Soviet Union, the Soviet Georgia was one of the most prosperous and rich regions in the entire Soviet Union. All this came crashing down as *perestroika* and

glasnost created the opportunity for both anti-Soviet Georgian nationalist mobilization and longstanding aspirations by nations within regions of Soviet Georgia for greater autonomy and independence. This module examines the history, geography and particular conjuncture of structures and agency that gave rise to multiple violent conflicts across Soviet and then independent Georgia in the early 1990s. Your task is to understand the circumstances of these conflicts and demonstrate your grasp of the mix of structures and agency that gave them the particular form they took.

There is a substantial literature on Soviet Georgia but no single book that treats its conflicts in the early 1990s in a comprehensive way. High quality scholarship on the Georgian case is thin because they are relatively recent and ongoing. To supplement these readings we are going to use a series of readings on the Georgian state itself, on the regions and on the conflict. Some of these readings are 'historical' in that they were written before or just after the Soviet Union broke up. They are very useful for giving you a sense of what the thinking was among academic specialists at that time. Some are by scholars who are also advocates like Cornell and Hewitt. Together these will help you gain the comprehensive understanding you will need. To get you on your way I have recorded a series of video lectures, which should be helpful.

<u>Video Lectures</u>

1. Georgia's Historical Political Geography
2. The Loyalists of the Caucasus: Ossetia-Alania
3. Abkhazia to Perestroika
4. Georgia's Territorial Fragmentation
5. Georgia's Fragmentation: Chronology, 1988-93
6. Video: *Absence of Will*

<u>Readings</u> (not supplemental but required).

1. Stuart Kaufman, Chapter 4, "Georgia and the Fear of Minorities," in *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* (Cornell University Press, 2001).
2. Tom DeWaal *The Caucasus: An Introduction*, Ch 5, 6 and 7.
3. Jonathan Wheatley, Ch 1 Actors and Structures from *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the former Soviet Union* (Ashgate, 2005).
4. Jonathan Wheatley, Ch 2 The Soviet Legacy from *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the former Soviet Union* (Ashgate, 2005).
5. Jonathan Wheatley, Ch 3 Nationalist Mobilization in Georgia 1989-1991 from *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the former Soviet Union* (Ashgate, 2005).
6. Jonathan Wheatley, Ch 4 Shevardnadze's Return and its Aftermath, 1992-1995 from *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the former Soviet Union* (Ashgate, 2005).
7. Julie George (2009) Georgia Fragmented, 1990-2003. Chapter 3 of *The Politics of Ethnic Separatism in Russia and Georgia* (Palgrave Macmillan)

8. Arsène Saparova (2010) From Conflict to Autonomy: The Making of the South Ossetian Autonomous Region 1918-1922 *Europe Asia Studies*

9. Timothy Blauvelt (2007) Abkhazia: Patronage and Power in the Stalin Era. *Nationalities Papers* 35, 2.

10. Gerard Toal, "Russia's Kosovo: A Critical Geopolitics of the August 2008 War over South Ossetia." *Eurasian Geography and Economics*.

11. Julian Birch (1995) Ossetia: a Caucasian Bosnia in microcosm. Central Asian Survey 14(1), 43-74.

12. Julian Birch (1999) Ossetiya—land of uncertain frontiers and manipulative elites Central Asian Survey 18(4), 501−534.

13. Darrell Slider (1985) Crisis and Response in Soviet Nationality Policy: The Case of Abkhazia, Central Asia Survey 4, 4, 51-68.

Supplemental Readings (if you have the time)

14. George Hewitt (1999) Abkhazia, Georgia and the Circassians (NW Caucasus). Central Asia Survey 18,4.

15. Julie George, "Minority Political Inclusion in Mikhail Saakashvili's Georgia." Europe-Asia Studies, Sept 2009.

16. Vicken Cheterian (2008) Georgia: From National Liberation to State Collapse and Back. Ch 4 of War and Peace in the Caucasus: Russia's Troubled Frontier (Hirst, London)

17. Svante Cornell (2001) From Unitary Dreams to an Asymmetrical Federation? Ch 4 of Small Nations and Big Powers (Curzon, London)

18. Catherine Dale (1997) The dynamics and challenges of ethnic cleansing: The Georgian-Abkhazia case. Refugee Survey Quarterly, 16, 3.

19. Human Rights Watch (1995) *Georgia/Abkhazia: Violations of the laws of war and Russia's role in the conflict.* Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, March 1995 Vol. 7, No. 7 [warning: this report contains graphic descriptions of violence]

20. Jonathan Wheatley, Ch 5 Profile of a Corrupt Regime from Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the former Soviet Union (Ashgate, 2005).

21. Jonathan Wheatley, Ch 6 Pressure from Below from Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the former Soviet Union (Ashgate, 2005).

22. Jonathan Wheatley, Ch 7 The Rose Revolution from Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the former Soviet Union (Ashgate, 2005).

23. Jonathan Wheatley, Ch 8 Conclusion from Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the former Soviet Union (Ashgate, 2005).

24. Stanislav Lakoba (1995) Abkhazia is Abkhazia. Central Asian Survey 14(1), 97-105

25. Kimitaka Matsuzato (2009) The Five-Day War and Transnational Politics: A Semiospace Spanning the Borders between Georgia, Russia, and Ossetia. Demokratizatsiya.

Course Organization and Expectations

This course is an asynchronous learning course that will be taught totally on-line using Scholar. There will be no regular class meetings and no regular scheduled interaction on the Internet. You are expected to do the following:

- Study this syllabus and how the course is organized.
- Log onto Scholar and familiarize yourself with its features.
- Click on the Resources button to access the module folders. Each folder contains an instruction file for the module and may have sub-folders: Readings, Lecture Slides and Audio Lectures.
- Click on the Modules button to access and listen to audio and video lectures.
- Click on the Assignment button to access your written assignments, to submit them and to receive your graded assignment.
- Click on Forums for access to the discussion threads on the modules. These forums are student-run and not graded per se though they may be used if a student is between two grades at the end of the course.

It is the responsibility of the student to make sure they have regular and reliable internet access. Internet Provider (IP) problems are not the responsibility of the instructor but the student. Students who cannot obtain regular and reliable access to the internet should not take this class. If IP problems develop, students may have to drop the class.

All students should have access to the following:

- an efficient Internet Browser like Chrome, Firefox, Explorer or Safari: This is to be used to obtain access to the course materials and our virtual classroom.
- a streaming audio player like RealOne Player (available for free at www.real.com) or Windows Media Player (which is included in Windows XP)
- a contemporary computer with a sound card and speakers for the streaming audio components of the course, and
- a printer: Students may want to download various reading materials, class notes and conceptual diagrams. The particular font size of these materials can usually be manipulated by end users. The size of this material will not be altered to suit the printer needs of particular individuals. If students feel they can manage without paper copies of the course materials, a printer is not absolutely necessary.

Students with particular temporary problems should direct questions to Virginia Tech's computer service center at 4help@vt.edu or computerhelp@vt.edu

The following are some ground rules for our course dialogues:

1. *Respectful communication at all times*. All course communications -- email or discussion forum postings-- should observe net etiquette. Conversation in this course should be serious and scholarly. The discussion forum is an intellectual forum and is not for personal chit chat. Use proper punctuation and capitalization not cheap cyber-speak ('hey u guys'). Write and speak as you would in a formal classroom not as you would in a hallway or bathroom. The purpose of conversation is to facilitate learning and the

communication of ideas. Flippant conversation is discouraged. Students are asked to think before they write. 'Flaming' is a serious issue and will be dealt with appropriately by the Dean of Students and others in your college. It can result in you being expelled from this class and brought before a university tribunal. Remember that what you write is a permanent record; in 'flaming' cases it can and will be used against you.

2. *Reading before posting on Forums*. Reading books not online chat is at the core of this course. Students thus should spend the bulk of their time reading. The Forums tool is a space to further conversation and exchange on the readings. Students should come to this after having read the course materials. Common evidence that students have not completed the reading are statements like "I believe this" or "I feel that" or "I agree or disagree with X." etc. It's easy to have opinions; what this class is interested in is *informed and substantiated positions* on the material under discussion.

3. *No anonymous questions*. Please use your full name when posting at all times. Anonymous comments and questions will not be answered, and removed.

4. *No personal grievance posts*. The discussion forum is not to be (ab)used for personal complaints about grading, assignments or similar issues. See 'Grade Questions and Disputes' below.

5. *No course questions via email*. Class conversations should be conducted using the web chat facility only. If you have a question ask it on the discussion forum so all can see it and see the answer. Email is ONLY to be used to communicate with the instructor about non-course content related matters (e.g. notice of illness, personal emergencies, etc.).

Five Written Assignments

This course is structured around five modules and five assignments. Clicking on the 'Assignments' menu in Scholar allows access to assignments. These will be released according to a programmed calendar, and not all at the outset. Submission after the deadline is possible but such works will suffer a grade penalty.

Students are expected to complete their assignment by **9am of the due date** (normally a Friday morning). *All assignments have a 1500 word limit*. You must indicate the word count at the outset in the first line of the assignment. My expectation is that assignments will come just under this limit. The 1500 word limit is sufficient space for the concise & precise analytical assignments required in this class. If you are 100 words or more under it, you are not writing enough whereas if you exceed it you are not showing sufficient discipline in your writing. The assignment questions in this course are open-ended so they require clear arrangement, advanced argument and economy in citation of readings (bibliographical references to assigned readings are not required). Keep a copy of all your assignments and be prepared to produce these if asked. Time management skills are essential to your success in this course.

Here are the steps you need to follow to submit your assignment correctly:

- Use the Scholar Assignment submission box. Attachments are not accepted.
- Do not post directly into Scholar from regular Word files, as this will import unwanted code. To avoid this, first save your assignment as Plain Text. Always preview your assignment to make sure it looks the way it should.
- All assignments should be presented as follows: Style: Big. Format: Normal. Font: Arial. Size: Large. The assignment text should look very large. This makes it easier to grade and avoids the instructor having to reformat the text so it is easily legible (Note to self: causing instructor frustration at the outset of grading is not a good idea!).
- Indicate the word length of the assignment at the top. Do not reproduce the assignment question. Do not include a bibliography.

Grades

The course grade will be determined by the five written assignments. Each is worth 20% and will be graded out of 100 (see Grading Scale below). Forum discussion will be used to determine borderline final grades. Detailed personalized feedback is not always possible in online classes.

Assignment deferrals will be granted in cases of personal emergencies if (1) the instructor is notified before the examination and (2) credible proof of the personal emergency is demonstrated before the assignment is due. 'Credible proof' will be determined by the professor and may require official documentation. In such rare cases the assignment deadline will be rescheduled. If neither or only one of these conditions is met, students shall receive zero points. Note that pre-established commitments (e.g. a skiing holiday) are not considered personal emergencies. Students who have pre-established commitments during the course of the semester which might interfere with their assignments should not take this course.

The University Honor system is in operation in this course. Any cutting and pasting, or use of material that is not a student's own work will be dealt with severely. This includes any use of material from earlier versions of this course. Assignments, contemporary and historic, may be compared for the possibility of cheating. Any impersonation or misrepresentation of identity will also result in severe university disciplinary action.

Grading Criteria for Assignments

- Quality of Conceptualization: Ability to assimilate and use concepts developed in the readings and course notes.
- Quality of Argumentation: Ability to make an informed and persuasive argument using the readings and course materials. Documentation of points made by explicit references to passages in the texts.
- Organization: clear set of points, clear introduction and conclusion.
- Quality of the writing: clarity, grammar, spelling, referencing (open parenthesis, author, date, page number, close parenthesis and then period), etc. Use single spacing with line breaks for paragraphs. There is no need to include a bibliography.

- Length: keep it under 1,500 words; this is deliberately short to force you to learn what to leave out, to make your words count, to work out your arguments clearly before writing. You should indicate the word count at the outset of the assignment. Word counts below 1300 words are not likely to be sufficient in length. It is your choice to write less but the expectation is for you to write to but not over the word limit. Do not repeat the question in the assignment and do not count this as part of the word total. As mentioned, there is no need to include a bibliography after the assignment as what readings you are referring to will be clear from the module.

How to Write Analytical Assignments

- HAVE AN ORGANIZATIONAL LOGIC: Assignments should not be a series of points flung together in an ad hoc way, with lots of repetition and skipping from historical period to period or case study to case study without consequence. Generally respect chronology but do not arrange your assignment around so simple a notion (see the point below about narrative). Instead organize by concept or theorist or country or argument. Make it explicit. Use headings if necessary (avoid subheadings since this is overkill on such a short assignment). Describe your organizational logic in the opening paragraph – your 'road map' -- in one sentence or two without repeating the assignment question (I already know this). Use devices like explicit announcements of your structure and points– e.g. "Firstly…", "Secondly…", "Thirdly/Finally…" or "The arguments that logically follows from the master claim are three" – and always devote one paragraph to one point. Never stuff paragraphs with two or more points or change focus in the middle of a paragraph. There is no shortage of paragraphs! Use them to explicitly signal your organizational structure. Most importantly, if you don't begin with an organizational structure it will show. Assignments should be well ordered buildings with points per room/floor not a garbage can of observations and thoughts.
- AVOID NORMATIVE TALK; This is NOT a class where you are asked for your personal opinion, feelings or beliefs. It does not value confessional or normative discourse but analytical understanding and argumentation. You are asked to formulate arguments based on the readings and our classroom interaction. Anyone can have an opinion or editorialize about the state of the world. Only those who have first undertaken the hard work to become informed through reading and develop understanding can begin to formulate a coherent and logical argument and set of positions. Thus no "I believe" or "I feel" or "I agree with Foucault" since this class is not about your personal beliefs or feelings but about your ability to analyze issues and concepts. If you need political or personal affirmation, you might want to check out a church or a political rally or tune into your favorite television pundit. There is no place for such discourse or political/religious/nationalist dogma in a university graduate social science course.
- ENGAGE THE READINGS: Refer specifically to the texts under consideration (cite author, date and page); use detail in the service of argumentation. Never include a quotation without citation. Avoid outside texts. References at the end are unnecessary since I already know this information. Your assignment should demonstrate that

you've read the text and understood it. If you've completed the assignment and not discussed most or all of the texts, you have not written a good assignment.

- AVOID HISTORICAL NARRATIVE; Assignments should be an organized series of argumentative points. Avoid lazy organization of assignments as historical chronologies..."in 1898 this happened, then in 1945 this happened, then in 1963 this happened..." Assignments that merely recite one event after another is not what is required. What is required is the ability to use historical events and details as part of an organized argument. These events and happenings are important because of the general argument you are making. Remember, nevertheless, to respect historical chronology. Assignments that switch back and forth historically are usually not well organized.

- AVOID TRITE CONCEPTUALIZATION; the object of this course is to provide you with analytical concepts that will help you grasp and make sense of international affairs. This requires you to move beyond simpleminded and crude conceptualizations, for example explaining conflict in terms of 'pride,' 'stupidity,' 'hate' or 'ancient hatreds that go back thousands of years.' All of these concepts are flawed and ultimately explain nothing; deeper, more refined ones concerning identity, territory and power do. Other examples of trite conceptualizations include stating the obvious – "the Nazi state was an expansionist state that hated the Jews" – or truisms. If you find yourself using clichés, then you are probably engaged in trite conceptualization.

- AVOID SUPERFICIALITY: Assignments that collapse important distinctions, that homogenize a diversity of arguments in a single notion, that assume states are coherent homogeneous actors, that refuse to acknowledge complexity and leave out complicating details are engaged in superficial writing. This style is the result of intellectual laziness, a product of the three S syndrome: speedy sweeping summaries. Always acknowledge complexity and depth. This will make generalizations difficult. View this as progress, as moving beyond 'soundbite' culture towards a degree of intellectual depth, maturity and sophistication.

- KNOW HOW TO DESCRIBE DISCOURSE (WHICH DESCRIBES): Much of the course work you will be undertaking involves the analysis of discourse, much of which involves motivated description. This requires you to switch from a 'natural attitude' towards descriptions – they merely state the way the world is – towards a 'critical attitude' towards descriptions – they are discourses which are actively involved in the geo-graphing, the scripting, the social construction and constitution of the world. The difference is this. "The Heartland was the strategic prize in international affairs" (naturalizing the description) vrs "Mackinder claimed that what he constructed as the "Heartland" – an area of territory corresponding to part of the Russian state – was a strategic prize in international affairs" (critically describing a discourse). The latter de-naturalizes descriptions in international affairs. This is progress towards analytical thinking. The same is the case with nationalist discourse. Don't naturalize it; deconstruct it.

- AVOID 'ENGLISH COMPOSITION ESSAY' ASSIGNMENTS: essays that begin with sweeping truisms or grand declarations about the human condition are not the way to go. Start at depth and detail: this is for a university class not a 12th grade level newspaper reader (the average pitch of the New York Times or Washington Post).

Dive in deep and don't assume a naïve reader who has never taken the class. You're writing for a busy instructor and you've got to make an immediate impression. Don't bury the lead: the organizational logic should be in the first paragraph.

- GET TO THE POINT! Don't beat around the bush. Get to the point and state your overall thesis at the outset and then use points or subheadings to organize your answer. Do not repeat the assignment question in the opening paragraph (yes, I'm repeating, to drill home the point across). Vague abstract airy description is merely evidence that you have not done the readings. Get to the core of the question under consideration and make a robust defensible argument.

- COMPOSE CLEAR SENTENCES: There are three sentence types and you should know how to use them well. Every sentence has to have a subject and verb. Without these, it is a mere sentence fragment. First, there is a simple sentence which contains a subject and a verb, and expresses a complete thought. Second, a compound sentence contains two independent clauses joined by a coordinator. The coordinators are as follows: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. Never begin a sentence with these. Third, there are complex sentences. A complex sentence has an independent clause joined by one or more dependent clauses. A complex sentence always has a subordinator such as because, since, after, although, or when or a relative pronoun such as that, who, or which. A problem arises when students have two independent clauses and use 'however' as a connector to make one sentence. Avoid this. There is no shortage of sentences in the world: use lots of them! If it doubt, break the sentence into two. Avoid at all costs long cumbersome sentences. If it has more than 10-15 words, it is too long!

- AVOID THE LATE NIGHT DULL HEAD SYNDROME! One consistent pattern that has emerged from this course over the years is that assignments that are submitted closest to the deadline tend to be the weakest and most incoherent. Assignments that are submitted early tend to be stronger (there are exceptions but the pattern is remarkably consistent). Organize your time and get your assignment done in regular working hours. Staying up all night to get your assignment done is not effective time management. Not surprisingly, it doesn't help with logical and coherent assignments either.

- CONCISE AND PRECISE: Concentrated analytical writing is a skill this class is designed to engender. Your space is limited so make every sentence count. Demonstrate that you have grasped the material and worked out what you want to argue before writing rather than trying to figure out what you want to say as your write. Verbose writing will not be tolerated in this class.

- PURE PERFORMATIVITY! In writing an assignment you cannot 'fake it until you make it.' Your assignment and discussion forum participation are your work. You have either done it or not. So if you want to do well in the class, you have to do the reading and show it in your written work!

Grade Questions and Disputes

Students who have questions about their grade should do the following:

- outline in detail the question and/or dispute. Make the inquiry as clear as possible.

- email this directly to the professor with a request for a re-grading.
- wait patiently for a response (it may take some time to re-check everything).

Students who are found to have grounds for their complaint will have their grades adjusted. Students who do not may suffer a grade penalty if their complaint is frivolous (this has happened). This will be decided on an individual basis. Web chat is <u>never</u> to be used as a forum for grade dispute resolution. Students who violate the rules will be removed from the class.

How to Make a Good Impression on Forum Discussion

Forum discussions are a resource for you to seek clarification and depth on the reading materials from your classmates and the instructor. You should get in the habit of reading the module course material, listening to the audio/video lectures, and then formulating any questions or arguments you have on the material. Quality not quantity counts above all else. Posted comments will be distinguished using the following criteria:

- Relevance; is the comment relevant to the discussion or way off topic? Is the comment a procedural question that is already obvious from a close reading of the web page or not? Procedural course questions are allowed but only if they are directly relevant. Personal questions (questions that apply only to your case) should be asked by using email and not the web chat.
- Engagement; does the posted comment provide an argumentative perspective on the readings, weekly topic and texts or not? Does it raise an important issue, a key debate, an important supplemental question?
- Clarity; is the posted comment clear and well expressed, or meandering, ad hoc and "off the top of the head"?
- Open dialogue: does the person demonstrate a good faith effort at dialogue on an issue or does dogmatism predominate?
- Etiquette: is netiquette observed at all times or not?

Note: students will not be penalized for spelling mistakes arising from typing difficulties and typing induced errors.

Grading Scale and Grade Determination

100-90: A; 90-85 A- ; 85-80 B+ ; 80-75 B ; 75-70 B- ; 70-65 C+ ; 65-60 C ; 60-55 C- ; 55-50 D+ ; 50-45 D ; 45-40 D- ; 39-0 FAIL.

A assignments:

- answers all aspects of the assignment comprehensively.
- is an argument and not a descriptive narrative: has a clear organization of its points.

- demonstrates a full conceptual and empirical understanding of the topic under investigation.
- demonstrates a strong grasp of the readings.
- uses detail effectively.
- organizes answers in a logical and explicit manner.
- is written in a clear and coherent way, without vague sentences, awkward constructions and incomplete sentences.
- is precise and concise: uses up to but not beyond 1,500 words.

B assignments:

- answers assignment clearly though not comprehensively.
- reasonable clear organization of points but with room for improvement.
- good overall understanding of concepts and empirical details but still too much narrative not argument.
- good grasp of the readings; some evidence of minor errors of understanding.
- some vague passages and trite explanations; over-emphasis on marginal issues and concepts.
- sometimes prolix thus exceeding the 1,500 word limit.

C assignments:

- somewhat confused structure and coherence.
- relies too much on descriptive historical narrative.
- trite concepts ("these people have hated each other for thousands of years")
- evidence of incomplete reading.
- vague understanding of key concepts.
- errors of detail and information.
- poor composition.
- short assignments or rambling incoherent assignments.
- needlessly verbose and unnecessarily long.

D assignments:

- historical narrative only ("this happened, then this...")
- little evidence of reading.
- incomplete answers
- poor explanations.
- serious errors of understanding.
- incoherent sentence construction and writing skills.

FAIL assignments:

- no evidence of any reading.
- unusually short or vague assignments.
- fundamental errors of understanding and knowledge.

Common marking symbols

? = unclear.
C = confusing or confused.
FRAG = incomplete sentence fragment.
W = wrong on facts or detail.
R = evidence of reading needed.
EX = excellent.
AWK = awkward expression or poorly expressed argument.
ARG = argument needed or argument in need of work.
DET = details needed; cite reference, page of reading(s).
ORG = poor organization; organization needed.
CON = poor conceptualization; more advanced conceptualization needed.
SMPL = simplistic reasoning or explanation.

Note that all assignment feedback should be in red text or capitalized to distinguish it from the original assignment text. The capitalization is NOT an indication of shouting! Assignment feedback comments are designed to get the student to the next grade level (unless the assignment obtains the top grade). If you have difficulty accepting feedback criticism and/or you always require positive reinforcement then you should think carefully if an online writing intensive class like this one, where there is no personal interaction with the instructor, is right for you. Ask about this at the outset if you have questions. Feedback comments *will always be critical but constructive*. Feedback comments should not be interpreted as 'negative' or 'personal': I only know your work. They are professional comments designed to encourage you to become even better at writing assignments and making arguments. This course sets high expectations for its students. Because of this, you will learn a great deal in it if you accept that it will be challenging and work hard.