

# Geography 316: Political Geography

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Teaching Assistants (TAs):  
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Fall 2023  
Lectures: Wednesday-Friday 10:05 - 11:35 a.m.  
Burnside 306

Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. and by appointment  
*Office hours can be in person or by Zoom with appointment (link on myCourses)*

**Course Description:** Political geography is fundamentally concerned with the geographic expression of power. The discipline has traditionally focused on boundaries and borders (*territoriality*), but more recent approaches address other types of spatial relationships as well, particularly in terms of surveillance, cartographic representation, and spatial ordering. This course explores both approaches through examinations of nationalism, the state, urban and global governance, federalism (particularly in multi-ethnic contexts), and political representation (particularly electoral redistricting). The class uses case studies drawn principally from Canada and the United States but includes some material from other areas of the world. In exploring such topics, the class addresses questions of power, identity, and democratic theory, as well as the relationship between the individual and the state.

**Note:** In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control (*e.g.*, pandemic, major political crisis, Faro plague, etc.), the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

## Requirements:

Assignment	Weight	Date Due
Weekly reading responses	15%	Weekly – submitted via myCourses
Mini-Midterm	5%	September 15
Discussion Activities	5%	September 29 & October 20
Midterm Examination	35%	October 27
Game of Votes	5%	December 1
Final Examination	35%	TBA – during finals period

**Generative AI and academic integrity:** Instructors have various policies regarding generative AI programs like chatGPT, so it is your responsibility to follow the rules for each course. In this class, I consider presentation of any work by a generative AI program as your own to be a violation of academic integrity. This includes using such programs to create initial drafts of essays that you then refine, or using them to refine your initial drafts. As a practical matter, the nature of the course assignments means that generative AI will be of little assistance, and you will be doing yourself a disservice if you try to use them. If you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to ask me.

**Weekly responses:** Most weeks, you are required to submit *questions* posted on myCourses based on the readings for the previous week. The questions should demonstrate *your knowledge of and engagement with the readings* and should be *short-answer type*: the kind one might find on an examination that call

for 400-600 words answers. For the first few weeks, you will need to submit responses to questions I post about the readings. There are further instructions on myCourses and in class. Your responses will be graded as full credit (100); half credit (50); or zero (0). In addition, your responses may form the basis of the midterm and final exam, so it is to your advantage to devote time and effort to them.

**Midterm Examinations:** The *mini-midterm* will cover material through Lecture 5. The primary purpose of the mini-midterm is to familiarize students with the style of questions and grading standards before the main examinations. The *regular midterm* will cover material through Lecture 14 but will not repeat questions from the mini-midterm.

**Discussion Activities:** You will be assigned full, half, or zero credit based on attendance, participation, and written material.

**Game of Votes:** The final class session will be devoted to a simulation requiring groups to design an electoral system for a hypothetical state. Instructions are on myCourses and will be discussed during the semester.

**Expectations:** Assignments, including the set reading, should be completed in a timely fashion. Generally speaking, *you will not receive credit for late assignments* unless you have good reasons and have made prior arrangements with me.

**Deferrals and Medical Notes:** Students who miss a test must notify me by email or phone within 24 hours of the exam (preferably before the exam begins), but do not need to provide the medical note per McGill's post-COVID policy. If this policy changes, I will require a signed note from a *medical professional (doctor or nurse)* attesting specifically that the student was too ill to take the exam on the scheduled day. Similarly, other requests to delay or defer submitting an assignment must state that the student was too ill on that specific day. All such notes will be verified by the instructor, and therefore must include a phone number.

Non-medical reasons, such as a death or serious illness in the family, will be handled on a case-by-case basis, but all cases must include satisfactory documentation.

**Grading:** The classes uses the standard McGill grading grid (A=100 to 85; A- = 80 to 84.9; etc.) Depending on the distribution of scores, I may elect to curve the final letter grades upwards (*e.g.*, A=100 to 83; A- = 78 to 82.9; etc.) However, I will not make this determination *until I have graded all assignments, including the final exam.*

**Readings:** All required readings and videos are available through myCourses (in compliance with copyright regulations).

#### **Other Policies and Notices:**

**Copyright:** © Instructor-generated course materials (*e.g.*, lectures, slides, notes, summaries, assignments, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

**(Re)assessment Policy:** Information on university and department policies concerning student assessment can be found at [www.mcgill.ca/geography/studentassessment](http://www.mcgill.ca/geography/studentassessment).

**Language:** Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant

être noté.

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

**Academic Integrity:** McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/) for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/)).

**Indigenous Land Statement:** McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.

L'Université McGill est sur un emplacement qui a longtemps servi de lieu de rencontre et d'échange entre les peuples autochtones, y compris les nations Haudenosaunee et Anishinabeg. Nous reconnaissons et remercions les divers peuples autochtones dont les pas ont marqué ce territoire sur lequel les peuples du monde entier se réunissent maintenant.

## Schedule of Classes

Read the assigned material *BEFORE* you view the corresponding lecture in the order listed below.  
**Note: Recordings of Lectures 1-4 (during the Add/Drop period) will be available on myCourses.**


### Part I: History and Basic Concepts

Week 1	August 30	Lecture 1: <b>Introduction</b>
	September 1	Lecture 2: <b>Traditional Political Geography</b>  Diener, A. C. and Hagen, J. 2009. Theorizing Borders in a 'Borderless World': Globalization, Territory and Identity. <i>Geography Compass</i> , 3: 1196-1216.  Wastl-Walter, D and L. A. Staeheli. 2004. Territory, Territoriality and Boundaries, in <i>Mapping women, making politics: Feminist perspectives on political geography</i> , eds.: Lynn A Staeheli, Eleonore Kofman, and Linda Peake. New York: Routledge: 141-151.

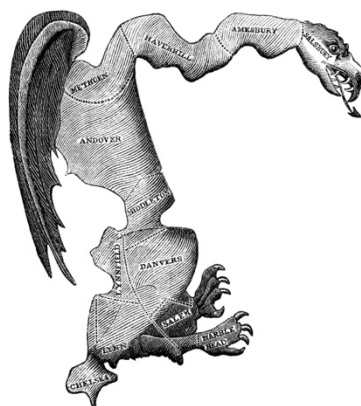
Week 2	September 6	<b>Lecture 3: States, Governance, and Collective Action</b>  Tilly, C. 1985. War Making and State Making as Organized Crime. In <i>Bringing the State Back In</i> , eds., Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 169-187.
	September 8	<b>Lecture 4: The State in Political Geography</b>  Taylor, P. J. 1994. The State as Container: Territoriality in the Modern World-System. <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> , 18, 151-162.  Kuus, M. and J. Agnew. 2008. Theorizing the State Geographically: Sovereignty, Subjectivity, Territoriality. In <i>The Sage Handbook of Political Geography</i> , eds. K. R. Cox, M. Low, and J. Robinson. London: SAGE Publications: 95-106.
Week 3	September 13	<b>Lecture 5: The State: Territoriality and Spatial Ordering</b>  Scott, J.C. 1998. Cities, People, and Language. In <i>Seeing Like A State</i> . New Haven and London: Yale University Press: 53-83.
	<i>Tuesday, September 12: Add/Drop deadline</i>	
	September 15	<b>Lecture 6: Mini-Midterm Examination</b> (no lecture) <i>Includes material through lecture 5.</i>

## Part II: Organizing the State: Nationalism, Federalism, and Beyond

Week 4	September 20	<b>Lecture 7: Nations and Nations-States</b>  <i>Note: Mayer (2004) discusses the use of rape as a weapon of war</i>
		Penrose, J. and R. C. M. Mole. 2008. Nation-States and National Identity. In <i>The Sage Handbook of Political Geography</i> , eds. K. R. Cox, M. Low, and J. Robinson. London: SAGE Publications: 271-283.  Mayer, T. 2004. Embodied Nationalism, in <i>Mapping women, making politics: Feminist perspectives on political geography</i> , eds.: Lynn A Staeheli, Eleonore Kofman, and Linda Peake. New York: Routledge: 153-167.

Week 4	<p>September 22    <b>Lecture 8: Nationalism Through WWII</b></p> <p>Antonsich, M. 2015. Nation and Nationalism, in <i>The Wiley Blackwell companion to political geography</i>, eds: John Agnew, Virginie Mamadouh, Anna J. Secor, and Joanne Sharp. Chichester, UK: John Wiley &amp; Sons: 297-310.</p>
Week 5	<p>September 27    <b>Lecture 9: From Nation to State?</b> Video: <i>The Referendum: A Nation in Question</i></p> <p>Beaudreau, S. M. 2002. Quebec (1995). In D. Leyton-Brown (Ed.), <i>Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs: 1995</i>. Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 124-140.</p> <p>Gagnon, A. 2019. Competing Claims for Federalism in Complex Political Settings. A Canadian Exploration. In A. López Basaguren &amp; L. Escajedo San Epifanio (Eds.), <i>Claims for secession and federalism</i>. Cham, Switzerland: Springer: 85-96.</p> <hr/> <p>September 29    <b>Lecture 10: Activity 1: Quebec is a ... ?</b> <b>Discussion activity</b></p> <p><i>House of Commons Hansard</i>, November 27, 2006. Pages 5350-5361; and 5375-5412</p> <p><i>The French version of the Hansard is also available on myCourses.</i></p>
Week 6	<p>October 4        <b>Lecture 11: State Fragmentation and Federalism</b></p> <p>van der Wusten, H. 2015. Federalism and Multilevel Governance, in <i>The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Political Geography</i>, eds. John Agnew, Virginie Mamadouh, Anna J. Secor, and Joanne Sharp. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley &amp; Sons: 73-85.</p> <p>Hale, H. E. 2004. Divided we Stand: Institutional Sources of Ethnofederal State Survival and Collapse. <i>World Politics</i>, 56, 165-193.</p>
<p>Fall Reading Break Friday October 6 – Thursday October 12</p> 	

<p>Week 7</p>	<p>October 13</p>	<p>Lecture 12: <b>Race and Nation</b></p> <p>Fong, E. 2008. Reconstructing the “Problem” of Race. <i>Political Research Quarterly</i>, 61: 660-670.</p> <p>Weiner, M.F. 2012. Towards a Critical Global Race Theory. <i>Sociology Compass</i>, 6: 332-350.</p>
<p>Week 8</p>	<p>October 18</p>	<p>Lecture 13: <b>Rethinking Nationalism</b></p> <p>Getachew, A. 2019. A Political Theory of Decolonization, in <i>Worldmaking after Empire</i>. Princeton: Princeton University Press: 14-36.</p> <p>Stark, H. 2012. Marked By Fire: Anishinaabe Articulations of Nationhood in Treaty-Making with the United States and Canada. <i>American Indian Quarterly</i> 36(2): 119-149</p>
<p><b>Discussion activity</b></p>	<p>October 20</p>	<p>Lecture 14: <b>Activity 2: Canada 2.0</b></p> <p>Harris, C. 2001. Postmodern Patriotism: Canadian Reflections. <i>Canadian Geographer</i> 45 (1): 193-207.</p> <p>Roeder, Philip G. 2009. Ethnofederalism and the Mismanagement of Conflicting Nationalisms. <i>Regional &amp; Federal Studies</i>. 19 (2): 203-219.</p>
<p>Week 9</p>	<p>October 25</p>	<p>Lecture 15: <b>Introduction: Game of Votes</b></p> <p>Bird, Karen. 2014. Ethnic quotas and ethnic representation worldwide. <i>International Political Science Review</i> 35 (1): 12-26.</p>
	<p>October 27</p>	<p>Lecture 16: <b>Midterm Examination (No Lecture)</b> Includes material through lecture 14.</p>



**Part III: Political Representation: Power and Identity within the State**

	November 1	<p>Lecture 17: <b>Political Representation and Electoral Systems</b></p> <p>Horowitz, D. L. 2003. Electoral Systems: A Primer for Decision Makers. <i>Journal of Democracy</i> 14 (4): 115-127.</p> <p>Forest, B. 2008. The Territorial Politics of Representation. In <i>The Handbook of Political Geography</i>, ed. K. Cox, M. Low, and J. Robinson. SAGE Publications: 375-388.</p>
Week 10	November 3	<p>Lecture 18: <b>Political Representation in Canada I</b></p> <p>Johnston, R., and C. Pattie. 2003. Representative Democracy and Electoral Geography. In <i>A companion to political geography</i>, eds. J. A. Agnew, K. Mitchell and G. Toal. Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Publishers: 337-355.</p> <p>Courtney, J. C. 2001a. Drawing the Maps. In <i>Commissioned Ridings: Designing Canada’s Electoral Districts</i>. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press: 74-93.</p>
Week 11	November 8	<p>Lecture 19: <b>Political Representation in Canada II</b></p> <p>Courtney, J. C. 2002. Reforming Representational Building Blocks: Canada at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century. In <i>Political parties, representation, and electoral democracy in Canada</i>, ed. W. P. Cross. Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press Canada: 115-131.</p> <p>Courtney, J. C. 2001b. Community of Interest and Effective Representation. In <i>Commissioned Ridings: Designing Canada’s Electoral Districts</i>. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press: 204-234.</p>
	November 10	<p>Lecture 20: <b>Political Representation in the US: 1800-1965</b></p> <p>Keyssar, Alexander. 2000. “Breaking Barriers” (chapter 8), in <i>The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States</i>. New York: Basic Books: 256-315.</p>
Week 12	November 15	<p>Lecture 21: <b>The Voting Rights Act of 1965</b>  <i>Video: Eyes on the Prize series: Bridge to Freedom</i></p> <p>Monmonier, Mark. 2001. Twist and Clout (chapter 1) and Gerry’s Legacy (chapter 2). In <i>Bushmanders and Bullwinkles</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1-30.</p>

