

Faculty of Economic, Social and Political Sciences



IDRI2108

Geo politics

[30h] 3 credits

Teacher(s): Tanguy de Wilde d'Estmael
Language: French
Level: Second cycle

Aims

The course will teach the instruments necessary for a geo political analysis of the international scene. In particular, this will involve being able to:

1. define geo politics as a 'discipline';
2. explain the extent to which space is a factor in international relations;
3. situate geo politics in its historical development;
4. explain and criticise geo political conceptions prior to 1945;
5. explain the taboo affecting geo politics after 1945, and the reasons for its revival at the end of the 20th century;
6. establish the orogenesis, and explain a state's frontier zone developments;
7. carry out a geo political analysis of an international situation;
8. decipher international crises and disputes through a geo political analysis.

Main themes

The activity aims to provide geo political analysis tools for an approach to the international scene that is different from those traditionally employed. In particular, it involves answers to the following questions:

What is geo politics exactly? Where, when and how did it emerge in the field of politico academic reflection? How has it developed? Why was so little said about it after 1945? Why and how has geo-political thinking made a comeback with renewed vigour in the last 20 years? How does it help to understand international disputes?

Content and teaching methods

Content

The course is based on defined objectives, and is structured in five sequences that follow a general introduction to the concept of geo politics:

a short review of the role and importance of space as a factor in contemporary international relations;

an analysis of the concept of terrestrial boundaries (meaning, origin, types, functions, needs and crossing from one side to the other) in an international setting;

a survey of the history of geo politics from its inception (and particularly since the kind of original sin represented by German 'Geopolitik') to the subject's current renewal, or at least the resurgence of geo political thinking. The third part of the course is devoted to the historical development of geo politics before 1945; this sub division focuses on an analysis of the key players (precursors and classical geo politicians) in geo politics before 1945. The fourth part attempts to understand the resurgence and new importance of geo politics, and on the basis of a reading list, presents the present day geo political thinking that has emerged since the caesura, of 1989;

the last part is all about applied geo politics, and the course also includes an initial geo-political analysis of conflicts in the Balkans.

Methodology

The course alternates between lectures including visual data, and discussion sessions examining reading materials. The importance of cartographic support. Inclusion, where possible, of one or two lecturers on current affairs.

Other information (prerequisite, evaluation (assessment methods), course materials recommended readings, ...)

A little knowledge of the development of international relations since the end of the 19th century. (Reading, and links to be established with other courses, will be announced to deal with any lacunae.)

Choice of an oral or written examination. In addition to the compulsory examination, there may be optional work on a matter linked to the course, but not yet developed within it.

Syllabus and webpage for the most important slides