



College of Europe
Collège d'Europe



NatoLin

ECTS CARD

STUDY PROGRAMME(S) / STUDY TRACK(S)

Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies (Study Track: European Security and Strategy)
Master of Arts in Transatlantic Affairs (Study Track: European Interdisciplinary Studies - European Security and Strategy)

YEAR

2026-2027

COURSE TITLE

Geo-politics

SEMESTER

1

PROFESSOR(S)

SLOAN Geoffrey

ACADEMIC ASSISTANT(S)

SACCO ZAUT Andrea

COURSE TYPE

Core Course

MAJOR(S)

Not applicable

ECTS CREDITS

4

TEACHING HOURS

20

INDIVIDUAL & GROUP STUDY TIME

80

TUTORIAL(S)

COEFFICIENT

1

LANGUAGE(S)

EN

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The aim of this course is to provide students with an understanding of classical geopolitical theories and concepts. This will enable them to give judgement in practical conduct to the issues pertaining to European security and Strategy. Furthermore, will enable them to explore and appreciate how states leverage and transform geography into an environment favorable to their interests and survival.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, the students will be able to:

- 1) Understand the unique perspective of classical geopolitics that treats geographical space as an existential pre-condition for all politics (ESSST4, MATA1.1);
- 2) Gain an insight into the unique methodology of geopolitics as a synthetic approach that fuses geography, history, and strategy. Furthermore, it provides a way to assess how changes in transport and weapons technology can affect the present and future strategic and political pertinence of certain geographical locations and configurations (A7, ESSST3, ESSST4, MATA1.4);
- 3) Gain an understanding of the unique methodology of geopolitics. First, it will demonstrate how it uses both particularizing and generalizing forms of inquiry. Furthermore, it will enable an insight into the singularities of locations. Second, it will provide an appreciation of how it works taxonomically, populating categories and facilitating reasoned comparisons within and across regions (B6, ESSST2, MATA2.4).

RECOMMENDED PREPARATION

Students are encouraged to read some key references mentioned in the bibliography (see below).

TEACHING METHOD(S)

The course will be lecture-based, with group presentations and seminar debates.

ASSESSMENT METHOD(S)

Assessment will be based on the following elements:

- 1) Final examination (80%): 2-hour, written, digital, closed-book, on-site examination. Students will be required to answer one question from a choice of 5;
- 2) Presentations and debate (20%): Students will be asked to form groups and select one topic from a list of seminar questions. The number and size of the groups will be determined at a later stage, based on the final number of students enrolled in the course. Each presentation will be followed by a discussion, during which students who are not presenting will be expected to challenge and critically engage with the arguments presented. Both the quality of the presentation and each student's contribution to the subsequent discussion, including their ability to critically challenge and engage with the arguments presented, will form part of the final assessment.

COURSE CONTENTS

Six sessions will be organized around formal lectures, where students will be familiarized with the key concepts, theories, and debates in geopolitics. Primary source material and selected key texts will be discussed and critically examined in class.

Session I: Definition and Origins of Geopolitics;

Session II: Halford Mackinder and The Heartland;

Session III: The Geopolitics of Europe and the British Isles;

Session IV: China and the Geopolitics of the Belt and Road Initiative;

Session V: The United States: Geopolitical Reality and the Trump Rhetoric;

Session VI: A Geopolitical Outlook for the 21st Century.

The remaining two sessions will be dedicated to student presentations and subsequent seminar sessions, providing students with the opportunity to apply the concepts and theoretical approaches explored during the course.

COURSE MATERIALS (readings and other learning resources/tools)

See Course Outline, Section V, Bibliography.