HARVARD UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT

GOVERNMENT 94CT:
THE GOVERNANCE AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS OF WORLD REGIONS
SPRING TERM, 2019

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Gathering of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) foreign ministers, Singapore, 2018
Pro-Brexit protest, London, 2019

Vladimir Putin and leaders of the Commonwealth of Independent States, 2018
OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

Ours is a world in flux. National politics seems ever more disrespectful of national borders. The international system, for its part, grows in complexity and uncertainty as the unipolar Pax Americana of the post–Cold War era wanes, China rises, influential states and nonstate players proliferate, disruptive technologies bloom, and longstanding rules of the game come under fire. Some kind of multipolar world is apparently in the making.

Gov 94CT, an undergraduate seminar for Government Department concentrators, operates at an action level intermediate between the nation state and structures of global scope, a level often posited as foundational to a multipolar future. Its target is world regions – multi-country aggregations defined by spatial proximity or, if you like, international neighborhoods.¹ In terms of the conventional subfields of political science, the seminar is anchored in international relations but spills over the fuzzy line between IR and comparative politics.

An A list of principal topics will be tackled throughout:

- the origins and dynamics of contemporary world regions; imagining and contesting their identities and boundaries; nested, overlapping, and porous regions (the norm, not the exception);
- patterns of intra-regional cooperation, integration, and conflict control, including but not confined to security communities and regional institutions;
- geopolitics: regional hegemons; regions as proving grounds for emerging powers; regions and the grand strategies of great powers; the unique role of the United States, and whither that role;
- linkages between regional and domestic political agendas, cleavages, and coalitions – national politics from the outside in, regional politics from the inside out;
- the overall trend – a multipolar world? and if so, necessarily a world of regions?

In addition, we touch on a B list of topics that, due to time constraints, will be less prominent on the agenda:

¹ Barry Buzan offers a tighter description: “by ‘region’ I understand a geographically clustered subsystem of states that is sufficiently distinctive in terms of its internal structure and process to be meaningfully differentiated from a wider international system of society of which it is part.” “How Regions Were Made, and the Legacies for World Politics: An English School Reconnaissance,” in T. V. Paul, ed., International Relations Theory and Regional Transformation (Cambridge UP, 2012), 22. Such entities are not to be confused with the homonymous “regions” within countries, such as New England, Bordeaux, or Siberia.
Empires, deep geo-historical structures and civilizations (Braudel’s Mediterranean), and other antecedents to present-day world regions, and lessons to be learned from their fate;

- the relative efficacy of regional governance (as opposed to national or global governance) vis-à-vis vital issues of trade and development, migration, citizenship, crime, environment, democracy (and regimes generally), justice and human rights;
- non-institutionalized and under-institutionalized regions;
- the normative power of successful regional communities;
- the diffusion of models of regional governance and policies, inter-regionalism;
- border busters – cross-border regions, trans-state networks, transport corridors, regional supply chains, inter-regionalism, and the politics that accompanies them.

The literature we will tap is voluminous and heterogeneous. Theories about neorealism, rationalist institutionalism, constructivism, domestic drivers, second image reversed, multiple hierarchies, power transition, and world polity are just a few of those in play for our A list alone. Mapping this conceptual territory, let alone mastering it, is a challenge. Although students in Gov 94CT should become familiar with a wide gamut of approaches, most are likely to work in the one or several paradigms that pay dividends for them.

The majority of our class meetings will start with geographically-bounded empirics and join them to broader concerns. Knowledge of specific regions and their relations is of inherent value. So, it goes without saying, is theory. Accordingly, the readings by and large have an explicit theoretical thrust. Rationalist institutionalism and constructivism, for example, figure in virtually every week’s offerings. The seminar should equip students to make their own comparative judgments and generalizations, and to do so mindful of key particulars.

By far the prevalent regional narrative has been of the bold attempt since the 1940s to unite the nations of Europe. The penchant for seeing it as a gold-plated archetype gave a Euro-centric flavor to the academic, official, and media discourse about regions. Always problematic, this perspective has faded as the troubles of the European Union have escalated (think Brexit, the euro crisis, and the Schengen zone), and with them doubts about the exportability and even the sustainability of the EU’s supranational formula. Stories about regional identities, institutions, and behavior, while converging on certain points, turn out to diverge in fascinating ways from one site to the other – as you can count on encountering with reference to Eurasia, the Middle East, Southeast and South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America, and not only to Europe (which some still see as a beacon). Insights into how much, why, and with what consequences this has all come to pass, and into the dominant tendency worldwide, are the main takeaways from the class.
ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

Grades will be assessed on the basis of:

- Participation in and contribution to discussion – 30 percent;
- Response essays – 30 percent;
- Final paper – 40 percent.

**Participation:** Students will be expected to attend all weekly meetings and to take an active part. Everyone is to do the readings in advance and be prepared to discuss them and the issues they raise. Each student will be a designated conversation opener in several sessions – details to be settled once enrollment is known.

**Response essays:** Students will write brief responses to the readings for any three of weeks 4 (February 18) through 12 (April 22). Length is three pages, give or take (double-spaced, standard margins, 12 font). The essays can either synthesize the readings or bear down on an aspect of them – in light of the whole picture, and not in isolation. They are to be emailed to me by 9 a.m. on the Monday of the given session.

**Final paper:** The final assignment will be a longer research paper of approximately fifteen pages, due in May at the appropriate deadline to be published by the Registrar’s office. A list of topics will be posted at the GOV 94CT page on Canvas. Tackling a topic not on the list is an option, provided the student clears it with me (which will depend on feasibility).

In case anyone needs a reminder, GOV 94CT is guided by the Harvard College Honor Code. The code reads: “Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity – that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one’s own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs.”

BOOKSTORE AND MATERIALS

Five books are stocked for purchase at the Coop (see the link at [https://tinyurl.com/300-W19-GOV-94CT-1](https://tinyurl.com/300-W19-GOV-94CT-1)):

The books can, of course, be obtained elsewhere. They will be on reserve at Lamont. The Amrith and Charap/Colton texts can alternatively be viewed online through Hollis, the Harvard Library’s online catalogue.

Students with funds to spare may consider acquiring the exorbitantly priced *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism* (Oxford UP, 2016; ISBN-13: 978-0199682300), edited by the German scholars Tanja A. Börzel and Thomas Risse. We will read several chapters in this book, but it is most valuable for bibliography and for exhaustive discussion of regional institutions. The library does have it as an eBook, readily viewable online.

Unless otherwise indicated, journal articles and book chapters on the syllabus are accessible electronically, as pdf files, through the Files tab on the GOV 94CT Canvas page. Some readings are tagged below as viewable through Hollis. A handful will be read directly from the Internet via the URL provided.

The minus 2 rule: I am well aware that there is no small amount of reading for this course. Experience suggests that most students will welcome and handle it. The books assigned can be read with an eye for their “meat,” as seasoned undergrads know how to do. As for the articles and book chapters, for weeks 4 through 12 we will have a “minus 2” provision. Those who have the inclination and the time are encouraged to read everything. Those who lack one or the other are free to subtract any two items (articles or chapters) from the list. This will still leave us with a good representation of the available readings when we meet that week.

### CLASS SCHEDULE AND WEEKLY READINGS

1. **INTRODUCTION (JANUARY 28)**
2. ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS – PEOPLE AND PLACE (FEBRUARY 4)

Jean Gottmann, *The Significance of Territory* (UP of Virginia, 1973), chap. 5.

Amrith, *Crossing the Bay of Bengal*. A book for purchase, but can be viewed online through Hollis.


3. SOME OVERVIEWS AND THEORETICAL LENSES (FEBRUARY 11)


4. REGIONS AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF INTERNATIONAL POWER (FEBRUARY 18)


Katzenstein, *A World of Regions*.

5. **EUROPE’S AMBITIOUS SUPRANATIONAL PROJECT (FEBRUARY 25)**

Moravcsik, *Choice for Europe*.


6. **THE EU IN CRISIS (MARCH 4)**


7. POST-SOVET EURASIA (MARCH 11)

Charap and Colton, Everyone Loses. This volume can either be purchased or downloaded as a series of chapter pdf files through Hollis – go to “Adelphi Series” first and find issue 460.

John J. Mearsheimer, “Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West’s Fault,” Foreign Affairs 93 (September/October 2014), 77–89.


Gerard Toal, Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus (Oxford UP, 2017), chap. 8.

MARCH 18 – HARVARD SPRING RECESS

8. THE MIDDLE EAST (MARCH 25)


Michael Barnett and Etel Solingen, “Designed to Fail or Failure of Design? The Origins and Legacy of the Arab League,” chap. 6 in Acharya and Johnston, Crafting Cooperation. Access online through Hollis.

Louise Fawcett, ed., International Relations of the Middle East, 4th ed. (Oxford UP, 2016): chap. 1 (Fred H. Lawson, “International Relations Theory and the Middle East”); chap. 5 (Giacomo Luciani, “Oil and Political Economy in the International Relations of the Middle East”); chap. 8 (Peter Mandaville, “Islam and International Relations in the Middle East: From Umma to Nation State”); Chap. 9 (Fawcett, “Alliances and Regionalism in the Middle East”).


9. SOUTHEAST ASIA (APRIL 1)


Ba, *(Re)Negotiating East and Southeast Asia*.


10. SOUTH ASIA AND BEYOND (APRIL 8)


Arndt Michael, *India’s Foreign Policy and Regional Multilateralism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), chaps. 1, 3, 4. Access online through Hollis; whole book can be downloaded as a pdf file.


S. D. Muni, “Narendra Modi’s Foreign Policy: Rebuild South Asian Neighbourhood,” Centre for Land and Air Warfare Studies (New Delhi), Summer 2015.


Rahul Roy-Choudhury and Kate Sullivan de Estrada, “India, the Indo-Pacific and the Quad,” *Survival* (June 2018), 181–94.

11. SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (APRIL 15)


12. LATIN AMERICA (APRIL 22)


13. WRAPUP DISCUSSION – A WORLD OF REGIONS? (APRIL 29)


