HARVARD UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT

GOVERNMENT 94CT
THE GOVERNANCE AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS OF WORLD REGIONS
SPRING TERM, 2020 – WEDNESDAYS 9 TO 11 A.M.

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Office hours Wednesday 2 to 4 p.m., or by appointment
Gathering of foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Singapore, 2018
Pro-Brexit protest, London, 2019

In the trenches of the Iraq-Iran War, 1981
ABOUT THE COURSE

Ours is a world in flux. Post–Cold War notions of peace and prosperity forging ahead under a universal Pax Americana are increasingly divorced from reality. Events on all sides call longstanding equilibria, norms, and red lines into question. Prognosticating a future order, or conceivably disorder, has blossomed into a cottage industry.⁠¹

The world regions referred to in GOV 94CT’s course title are multi-country clusters defined by physical proximity, and thus positioned midway between the global and the national level.⁠² The fact that they have surfaced in international affairs as significant arenas, and in some cases agents, has been cause enough for observers to take notice. More compelling is a school of thought heralding what it claims to be a more dramatic shift – the emergence of a world “of” regions, where spatial groupings arrayed around core states or coalitions are building blocks of the whole system.

For years, the conventional narrative about regional communities held them to a single gold standard, namely, the supranational and moralizing project that in 1993 became the European Union. Eurocentrism today has as many doubters as devotees. In Europe itself, the EU is challenged by Brexit and by disputes regarding bureaucratic centralization, finance, migration, and rule of law. Across multiple regions (Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America, for example), the evidence indicates that one size does not fit all: their stories converge in some respects while diverging in others, due to reasons imperfectly understood. Regional relations, moreover, are often fluid even in the short run, and may well change fundamentally with the passage of time.

GOV 94CT draws on a diverse body of scholarship. Canonic IR theories of neorealism, liberal institutionalism, and constructivism crop up repeatedly, as do a scattering of others. The analytical perspectives emphasized in the class overlap and are tailored to be close to the subject matter. They approach region from the angles of place, experience, strategy, ideas, and outcomes, with the accent on the last three.

PLACE. A region is anchored in place, which is space infused with meaning. Any regional meaning is open to interpretation, contestation, and reinvention. Items of interest:

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¹ The industry has generated a plethora of labels for the budding state of affairs, led by the familiar multipolarity and the hackneyed “new world disorder.” More exotic tags include plurilateralism, multimodal order, multiplex world, decentered globalism, polymorphic globalism, multi-order world, and deep pluralism (list from Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, The Making of Global International Relations [Cambridge UP, 2019], 65).

² Do not confuse these with official subnational units of government (e.g., Bavaria, Gujarat) or with what geographers dub “vernacular” within-country regions (e.g., Silicon Valley, the British Midlands).
mental maps of region – how much autonomy from geography and climate?
precursors, e.g., civilizations, empires, tributary pacts, Braudel’s Mediterranean world, the 19th century Concert of Europe, “pan” movements;
problematic regions – porous, nested, intersecting, competing, mega, extinct.

EXPERIENCE. Regional experience brings place to life. It is embodied in cross-border connectivity and, for lack of a better word, resonance. *Items of interest:*

- connectivity with a positive sign (e.g., production value chains, voluntary migration, pop culture), a negative sign (e.g., terrorism, violent insurgency, criminality), a neutral or mixed sign (e.g., refugee flows, social media);
- regional experience vs. global or national;
- shared practices in daily affairs, business, politics, etc.

STRATEGY. Political scientist tend to pay most attention to region when it is considered as a platform for purposive, strategic choice of policy and political instruments. *Items of interest:*

- crafting cooperative regional institutions;
- geopolitics, regional hegemons and principals, the role of superpowers and great powers;
- regions bound together, paradoxically, by conflict;
- the nexus between regional and national political agendas.

IDEAS. Inspired by the constructivist branch of IR theory, this perspective highlights the attachments, imaginaries, and ideational formations in people’s heads. *Items of interest:*

- language, religion, and historical memory as sources of regional and alternative identities;
- the diffusion, adaptation, and localization of regionalist ideology;
- nationalism, populism, and anti-regionalism.

OUTCOMES. When all is said and done, how does all this bear on the international order and on good governance? *Items of interest:*

- is there indeed a drift toward a world “of” regions?
- the efficacy of regional vs. national or global responses to vital issues;
- a uniform governance formula or differentiation by issue area?

The first few sessions of GOV 94CT are dedicated to getting acquainted with the knowledge base and with key puzzles and debates. After that, we delve into the empirics of particular
regional theaters in succession – Europe, post-Soviet Eurasia, Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America – and proceed outward to broader concerns. The nitty-gritty of the course, in other words, is the examination of very specific places, and of the lessons from looking at them in comparison.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

Grades are to be assessed on the basis of:

- participation – 30 percent;
- response papers – 30 percent;
- final paper – 40 percent.

PARTICIPATION: Everyone is expected to do the readings, attend weekly meetings, and partake in them. A few assignments will be given for verbal contributions—details settled when enrollment is known.

RESPONSE PAPERS: Students write brief responses to the readings for any three of weeks 4 through 13. A first response paper must be submitted by no later than week 6 (March 4). Length is three pages (double-spaced, standard margins, 12 font). The essays can synthesize the readings or bear down on one selected aspect. Email them to me by 9 a.m. on the day of class. MS Word, please—for ease of making comments on the text.

FINAL PAPER: The final assignment is a research paper of approximately fifteen pages due during the reading period on the date to be assigned the course by the Registrar.

BOOKSTORE AND READINGS

A half-dozen books are stocked for purchase at the Coop (see https://tinyurl.com/300-W20-GOVT-94CT-1). In the order of utilization, they are:

- Simon Usherwood and John Pinder, The European Union: A Very Short Introduction,
The Amrith, Usherwood/Pinder, and Charap/Colton texts can, if you wish, be viewed digitally through HOLLIS, the Harvard Library’s online catalogue.

Unless signposted to the contrary, journal articles and book chapters are accessible as pdf files through the GOV 94CT site on Canvas: look at the Files tab or by week under Modules. Some readings are tagged as viewable through HOLLIS, and a few as obtainable on the Internet by clicking the URL provided.

Each Friday, I will email students a short guide to the readings for the next Wednesday’s scheduled meeting.

THE MINUS THREE CLAUSE. Scan the books for their meat; seasoned undergrads recognize how to do this. As for the articles and book chapters, which can be quite voluminous, GOV 94CT has a “minus three” clause. Students who have the study bandwidth to read everything cover to cover are encouraged to do so. Those who do not are free to subtract up to three articles or chapters from their list that week. This still leaves us a robust sample of the full set when the group gathers around the seminar table.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND WEEKLY READINGS

1. INTRODUCTION (JANUARY 29)

2. THE BASICS – PLACE AND PEOPLE (FEBRUARY 5)


Amrith, Crossing the Bay of Bengal. A book for purchase; also viewable online via HOLLIS.

OR Kaplan, Revenge of Geography.


3. THEORIES (FEBRUARY 12)


Jon C. Pevehouse, Democracy from Above: Regional Organizations and Democratization (Cambridge UP, 2005), chaps. 1–2.


4. REGIONS AND THE INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF POWER (FEBRUARY 19)

Katzenstein, World of Regions. Concentrate on chaps. 1, 2, 3, 7.


5. EUROPE’S AMBITIOUS UNION AND ITS DISCONTENTS (FEBRUARY 26)

Usherwood and Pinder, *European Union*. A book for purchase; can be viewed online via HOLLIS.


6. POST-SOVIET EURASIA (MARCH 4)

Charap and Colton, *Everyone Loses*. This volume can be purchased or downloaded online chapter by chapter via HOLLIS – go to “Adelphi Series” first and find issue 460.


7. **CHINA, “NORTHEAST ASIA,” “GREATER EURASIA,” AND “BELT ROAD” (MARCH 11)**


Scott A. Snyder, *South Korea at the Crossroads: Autonomy and Alliance in an Era of Rival Powers* (Columbia UP, 2018), chap. 8.


**MARCH 18 – HARVARD SPRING RECESS**

8. **SOUTHEAST ASIA (MARCH 25)**

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


**9. India and South Asia (April 1)**


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.


**10. THE MIDDLE EAST (APRIL 8)**


**11. AFRICA (APRIL 15)**


Jeffrey Herbst, “Crafting Regional Cooperation in Africa,” chap. 4 in Acharya and Johnston, *Crafting Cooperation*. Access online via HOLLIS.


12. **LATIN AMERICA (APRIL 22)**


Olivier Dabène, *The Politics of Regional Integration in Latin America: Theoretical and Comparative Explorations* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), chaps. 1, 9, conclusion.


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

Tanja A. Börzel and Thomas Risse, “Three Cheers for Comparative Regionalism,” chap. 27 in *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism*. Access online via HOLLIS.


**HONOR CODE**

Lest anyone be unaware, GOV 94CT is guided by the College’s 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.”