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
Foreign ministers of Association of Southeast Asian Nations meet, Singapore, 2018

Pro-Brexit protest, London, 2019
Judges of African Court on Human and People’s Rights, Arusha, Tanzania, 2016

Saudi airstrike, Sana, Yemen, 2015
ABOUT THE COURSE

Ours is an unsettled world. The post–Cold War vision of a Pax Americana, 24/7 and planetwide, is increasingly divorced from reality. Venerable hierarchies, rules, and norms are under fire from all sides. Prognosticating a future order, or conceivably disorder, has mushroomed into a cottage industry.¹

The world regions explored here are multi-country neighborhoods defined by physical proximity, and thus positioned midway between the global and the national level.² A proliferation of regional arenas and actors in decades past is cause enough to pay attention. Regions have mattered in international politics for some while now. A bigger challenge analytically are recent claims of a more radical shift – beyond a world with regions and toward a world of regions, where spatial clusters grouped around core states or coalitions become foundational to the whole system. An ambition of GOV 94CT is to test this intriguing notion, using a broad range of tools and data.

The narrative regarding regional communities long held them to a single gold standard, i.e., the expansive supranational project eventually named the European Union. Resort to a Eurocentric approach today promises to find as many doubters as devotees. In Europe itself, the EU is troubled by Brexit and by discord over centralization, the eurozone, migration, and rule of law. If a multiplicity of regions are scrutinized, it is immediately apparent that no one size fits all: stories converge in some respects and diverge in others. Nor are regional relations set in stone. On the contrary, the record shows them to be capable of changing in fine detail or even at root, for reasons imperfectly understood. Accordingly, GOV 94CT aims to acquaint students with this variation across space and time and to come up with explanations.

The course engages with large and diverse scholarly literatures. References to the canonic IR theories of neorealism, liberal institutionalism, and constructivism abound and provide much food for thought. Paradigms from comparative politics afford additional insight. The emphasis in GOV 94CT, however, is on overlapping perspectives or lines of attack which are tailored to be closer to the behavior at hand. They frame region as place, experience, choice, ideas, and outcomes; the accent is on the third and fourth.

¹ The industry has generated numerous labels for the budding state of affairs, led by the familiar multipolarity and the rather hackneyed “new world disorder.” One list of exotic tags includes plurilateralism, multimodal order, multiplex world, decentered globalism, polymorphic globalism, multi-order world, and deep pluralism. Taken 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).
Here is a quick sketch of the five perspectives and a sampling of the concrete items we will reckon with in discussion.

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

- mental maps of region – autonomous from geography and climate?
- precursors, e.g., civilizations, empires, tributary systems, Braudel’s Mediterranean world, the 19th century Concert of Europe, “pan” movements;
- perplexing regions – porous, nested, intersecting, competing, mega, extinct.

EXPERIENCE. Human experience brings regional place to life. It is embodied in trans-border connectivity and resonance. Some items of interest:

- connectivity with benign effects (e.g., supply chains, labor mobility, pop culture), harmful effects (e.g., terrorism, criminality), mixed effects (e.g., refugee flows, social media);
- shared practices, not necessarily coordinated, in daily affairs, business, politics, etc.;
- the weight of regional vs. global and national experience.

CHOICE. Political scientists are likely to care most about region when it is a platform for the exercise of power, the purposive choice of policy or partisan objectives, or the strategies to achieve them. Some items of interest:

- crafting cooperative regional institutions – why the contrast between, say, the oft-extolled EU and the “zombie” SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation)?
- geopolitics, role of the great powers (starting with the United States), local hegemons and would-be hegemons, hot and cold wars, conflict as potential region maker;
- the nexus between regional and national political agendas.

IDEAS. Taking cues from the constructivist school, this viewpoint focuses on identity, the imaginary, and socialization. Some items of interest:

- language, religion, and history as sources of regional and alternative identities;
- diffusion, adaptation, and localization of the ideology of regionalism;
- linkages between nationalism, populism, and anti-regionalism.

OUTCOMES. At the end of the day, what is the bearing of all this on the shape of the international order and on good governance? Some items of interest:

- is there indeed a trend 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 budgeted for familiarization with the knowledge base and with key puzzles and debates. Successive weeks examine the empirics of particular regional theaters, drawing thematic connections between them and reaching for macro generalizations and conclusions. Our designated areal targets, using the conventional (and disputable) toponyms, are:

- Europe;
- post-Soviet Eurasia;
- Northeast Asia;
- Southeast Asia;
- South Asia;
- the Middle East;
- Africa;
- Latin America.

Special note is made of heavyweight states in or in the vicinity of given regions, including China, Russia, Japan, India, Indonesia, and Brazil.

The center of gravity of the course, in sum, is the study of very specific places, comparatively and with rigor and a dose of empathy.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

Grades are assigned proportionally for:

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

PARTICIPATION: Students are expected to do the readings (see the description of the “minus three clause” below), have a say in the weekly meetings, and carry out a few low-key verbal contributions – ins and outs to be finalized once enrollment is known.

RESPONSE PAPERS: Students are to 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 or four pages (double-spaced, 12 font). The essays may either synthesize the readings or bear down on a selected aspect. Please email them to me by 9 a.m. on the day of class – in MS Word, for ease of commenting on the text.

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

BOOKSTORE AND READINGS

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


The Amrith, Usherwood/Pinder, and Charap/Colton texts can be viewed digitally through HOLLIS, the Harvard Library’s online catalogue.

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

Each Friday, I plan to 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 and relevance to essential stuff. For the copious articles and book chapters, students who have the study bandwidth to peruse them all are encouraged to do so. Students who are harder pressed are free under a GOV 94CT “minus three clause” to subtract up to three articles or chapters from their list that week. This still leaves us a robust representation of the full set when the group gathers at 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*.

OR Kaplan, *Revenge of Geography*.


3. THEORIES (FEBRUARY 12)


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*.


6. POST-SOVET EURASIA (MARCH 4)

Charap and Colton, *Everyone Loses*. This book for purchase is available with some difficulty via Hollis. Go to “Adelphi Series” and find issue 460, then download online chapter by chapter.


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. 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)


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”).

11. AFRICA (APRIL 15)


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


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*.


**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.”