

INSS 1302: Geography and SecurityUniversity of Texas, El Paso

INSS 1302 -001 CRN14628 3 Credit Hours

23 August to 10 October

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The preferred method of contacting me is using the Course Message feature on Blackboard, but my email is also a good alternate way to get in touch with me. I try to answer all email within 24 hours.

If you have questions you'd like to discuss in person, please contact me by email and we can arrange a time for a chat session through the course website.

My virtual office hours will be by appointment, and almost always in the evening due to my other obligations, but I am willing to accommodate mid-day or alternate hours provided you give me some lead time to de-conflict schedules.

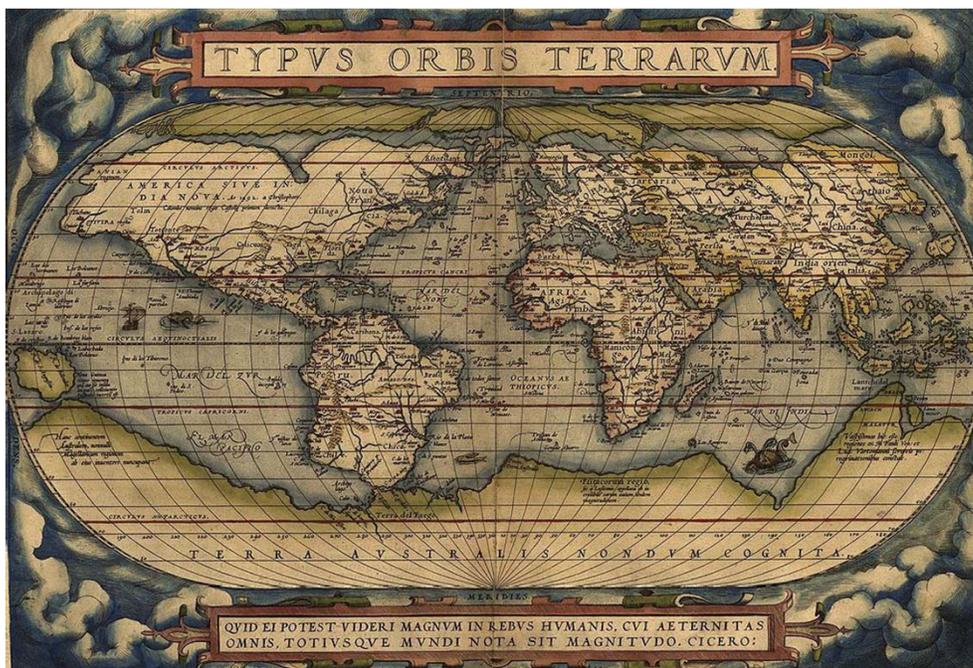


Welcome to INSS 1302! Since the wonders of modern technology allow us to learn together without ever being in the same room, or even the same city, let me begin with an introduction: My name is Al Roach and I have been a US Army Intelligence Officer for over 25 years. I have an Masters in Military Operational Arts and Sciences from the US Air Force's Air Command and General Staff College (ACSC) and a Masters in Military Arts and Science from the US Army's School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS). My thesis work in the USAF ACSC focused on Arab Studies, and my thesis work in US Army SAMS focused on Strategic Communications as an instrument to influence other nations. My areas of expertise run from military use of terrain, security studies, Napoleonic Campaigns, American Civil War Campaigns, International Terrorism, competition between great nations, the history of Air Power, colonialism, and insurgencies, among others, all of which have interesting examples of how Nations view Geography as decisive to their sense of security. I've been lucky enough in my academic career to be able to teach a lot of different courses that engage my various interests: I've taught courses ranging from Military Intelligence to US Army Officers, American Military History, surveys specializing in international relations, like this one, and more specialized courses in security and intelligence, as well as Military Science. I currently live in the El Paso area, and am still on active duty working as an Intelligence Officer in one of the Army's Modernization units – looking into the security issues ten years into the future!

I am passionate about teaching and learning, and will strive to ensure your experience with this course is a positive and rewarding one that inspires you to continue exploring Intelligence and Security Studies!

This course will examine the ways in which Geography – and more precisely different forms of Geography – relate to issues of state security both historically and in our contemporary world. As the text by Harm de Blij makes clear, Geography is about more than state capitals and major rivers. Geography, for our purposes, might best be described as “different ways of knowing”, or “different kinds of knowledge”, all under a single umbrella category. Thus we’ll explore geographies of people, of politics, of resources, of climate, all of which are layered onto our map of the world, and we’ll investigate the ways in which these geographies create, exacerbate, or relieve security problems.

A quick word of advice: keep a map handy at all times. Whether that’s Google Maps open on your laptop or an old fashioned globe you found in the attic, it’ll make life easier for you.



This course was designed to be student-centric with the onus of learning on the student, but facilitated by the instructor. People in the field of Security Studies – Diplomats, Intelligence Officers, Political Leaders, Leaders of Industry, among others, are expected to be life-long learners who take responsibility and personal initiative for their learning. You must properly conduct your pre-class assignments in order to come to “class” with a foundation of knowledge on the subject taught by your instructor. Doing so will allow your instructor to spend the majority of the class time giving feedback on specific areas that are least understood from the pre-class assignment rather than your instructor re-teaching the subject from scratch. Your instructor has a wealth of experience and knowledge to share in the classroom—do your homework so your instructor can spend more time sharing his personal knowledge and experiences with your class. Class is conducted in an interactive manner with ample opportunities for small group discussions and practical exercises. Everyone will be responsible for contributing to the success of the learning experience.



At the end of this course students should be able to:

- Identify major geographic regions and their political boundaries
- Express familiarity with different forms of geographical knowledge, and explain the underlying security threats they pose
- Understand why maps sometimes “lie”, and
- Identify the historical and geographical causes of specific geographical “hot spots” around the globe
- Effectively assess geographical components of modern security problems

Course Materials

The primary text for this course is Harm de Blij, Why Geography Matters...More than Ever. Oxford University Press: 2012, ISBN-13: 978-0199913749

The book is available for purchase through the UTEP Bookstore, on sites like Amazon, Barnes and Noble.com, both in paperback and in e-book format.

Journal articles, videos, and other materials will also be posted (available for download through the UTEP Library) for each module online. Many modules will have online resources. These should be considered in a similar manner to course readings for the purposes of discussion responses.

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Assessment and Expectations

Discussion: 20%

Students are required to make a minimum of 1 discussion post and 2 replies in the designated discussion forums per Module. There are 2 modules per week.

NOTE: Replies must be substantive. Simply writing that someone wrote a great post or that you agree completely isn't enough to receive credit. Remember this is a conversation. Engage, ask questions, probe more deeply.

Reading Journal: 15%

Each student will be required to maintain a reading journal capturing the lessons learned from each article and video in the course modules. The journal will be graded at the end of each week and count at the end of the semester as a test grade. The format will be posted.

Essays: 45% (3 x 15%)

Students will be required to write a short essay, due in Weeks 2, 4, 5, related to the themes assigned in the Course Assignments portion of the website. All instructions for the essays are available there. Essays are due Sunday night at 11:59pm El Paso time at the end of the designated weeks.

Final Exam: 20%

The exam will aim to test a broad knowledge of geography, and test your ability to draw together themes and patterns from the course material.

All late assignments will be penalized 3% per CALENDAR DAY unless individual permission for extensions has been arranged PRIOR to the due date. Extensions will NOT be granted except in special circumstances. If you think you will need an extension, please speak to me ASAP. Grades will be given numerically according to the UTEP grading scale.

How to navigate this course.

To complete each module, you will be responsible for reading the assigned chapters in the text, the articles posted for study, and watching the videos for that topic. All of these materials will be used in the discussion boards. I have included this Syllabus and the Course Map on the Announcements page so that you can find it quickly and refer to it for upcoming assignments and prepare yourself for each week.

In addition to discussion board requirements, you will be responsible for maintaining a reading Journal which is essentially a brief analysis by you of the relevance of each article and video presented in the course. The value of the journal is it will help you build understanding of the course themes that you can use to write your final exam paper. The reading Journal format will be posted with instructions in the first week's module.

Discussion board and Journal entries will have a specific submission deadline in order to help you manage the material in the course and keep you on target to complete each assignment. Deadlines will be listed in the instructions for each Discussion.

Online courses provide a great opportunity for learning at your pace and under your terms. That said, there is an inherent danger of getting behind and overwhelmed with competing requirements (life, work, other classes, favorite TV show, any number of reasons). Do not wait until you are crushed before reaching out to me for help. Clearly you are responsible for your work in this course, but I am responsible for setting the conditions of your success, and I take that responsibility seriously. Let's work as a team to ensure you get the most out of your time and effort.

As a UTEP student, you are expected to demonstrate academic integrity. In particular, you must properly identify and provide references for all material that you quote or paraphrase.

Cheating, plagiarism and collusion are all violations of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action.

Disabilities and Special Considerations

Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. If you have a condition which may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, it is your responsibility to contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services at (915) 747-5148 (voice or TTY) or cass@utep.edu. You are also encouraged to discuss this in confidence with your instructor, preferably before classes begin.

Students who are required to perform military service that conflicts with course deadlines and assignments are entitled to special consideration. Please familiarize yourself with UTEP's policy on military service before asking for any extensions.

<http://catalog.utep.edu/undergrad/academic-regulations/curriculum-and-classroom-policies/>

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Netiquette and Email

Because this course takes place entirely online, it presents both challenges and opportunities for discussion. On the one hand, body language and tone of voice are enormously important to understanding someone's speech. The absence of those things from this forum means that everyone must be careful with their remarks. Sarcasm doesn't always translate online. On the other hand, the online discussion gives everyone the opportunity to weigh their words carefully before posting or responding. Think it through carefully before you post. Keep the conversation respectful. Disagreements are fine – they're part of intellectual discourse after all – but inflammatory speech, trolling, or other offensive online behavior will not be tolerated. **I will issue one warning or corrective action if I identify abusive behavior or other misconduct, then I will refer violators to the UTEP Office of Student Conduct.**

The prevalence of text messages and social media that limits discourse to memes, links, and 140 character discussions has rendered email something of a lost art. Emails are letters, not text messages. Please avoid excessive or colloquial abbreviations like "r u serious". Start your email with a salutation. Have a real communication with a real person, whether you're emailing your instructor, or a classmate, or posting in a discussion forum. The course website is not a Twitter feed or a Facebook wall.

Time Management

This is a seven-week course that covers the same material found in the 14 week semester course. There is a lot of material to cover both chronologically and in terms of the reading you are expected to do. It is important that you budget your time carefully so that you do not fall behind. Seven weeks is a sprint. If you are going to miss assignments or deadlines for any reason, please contact me as soon as possible. I can help you find a solution to your problem in advance. I cannot do so retroactively. Lastly, don't underestimate the time it will take you to complete readings and assignments. Get started early and begin thinking about future assignments now. Scrambling at the last minute is not going to help you succeed.

UTEP Library

The Online Library Resource Center is available to enrolled students from inside the electronic campus. Here you will find online books, subscription periodicals, and Web resources that are designed to support your classes.

The short video tutorials at <http://libguides.utep.edu/research> provide an overview of library resources and how best to navigate them.

For the INSS Library Guide, please go to: <http://libguides.utep.edu/inss>. The INSS librarian, Angela Lucero, can be contacted at ajmartinez5@utep.edu.

UTEP Writing Center

The University Writing Center offers both online and face-to-face consultations; online consultations require a reservation.