Arctic Geopolitics (POLI 409)

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Online

Brian Grodsky

bgrodsky@umbc.edu

PUP 308 (office hours by appointment)

Course Description

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the rapidly evolving international competition over the Arctic. There are currently eight Arctic states that span from the enormous, including the United States and Russia, to the tiny, such as Denmark and its dependent territory, Greenland. But as global warming continues to transform the Arctic, new and formidable powers, from Europe to Asia, are expressing greater interest in the region. They are drawn by the promise of newly accessible resources, from oil and gas to shipping lanes. The frozen, inhospitable territory long overlooked by most of humanity is suddenly attracting enormous attention.

This course takes a broad approach to the human experience in the Arctic, beginning with an overview of the Arctic and its historic place in geopolitics, as well as the environmental changes that have begun to alter both the land and sea in profound ways. Next, we explore the central economic draw to the region, including oil, gas, and transportation networks, before exploring ethical and legal constraints on human activity there. Finally, we consider individual country interests and common attempts at international governance of the Arctic.

This course is designed to provide an overview of the various issues facing the Arctic, but also to expand your set of critical thinking skills more broadly. You will become adept at analyzing and writing critiques of arguments found in the academic literature, and you will also learn how to apply your newly acquired analytical abilities to the every day world. At the end of this course, students should walk out of the classroom with a heightened understanding of the changing Arctic's ramifications throughout the world and as a challenge and opportunity for our country. More concretely, students who have completed this course should be able to:

(1) relate theoretical political science literature to everyday political problems.

(2) navigate the complexities of the Arctic from a policymaker perspective.

(3) incorporate a broad range of readings and lectures to answer a complex question or set of questions.

Requirements and Grades

This course will be taught in an online format in which students are expected to complete daily readings, watch online lectures, and incorporate their knowledge into two open-note exams. Students must be highly organized and independent in a class like this.

All readings and online lectures for this course will be available on Blackboard. Please be sure to follow your syllabus when you are accessing readings for a given day, since they are not necessarily posted in order in the “Course Documents” folder. Your grades will be based on discussion board posts (30%), a mid-term exam (35%), and a final (non-comprehensive) exam (35%).

Discussion Posts

For participation, you are required to contribute to the discussion threads that will be posted on BB. Each thread will be based on a particular “Day” (total of ten) and will be accessible only until that Day closes (see dates for each day below). The questions are listed on the syllabus under each Day, so you have plenty of time to consider your response before posting.

The biggest downside of this course is procrastination – please be sure to stay on top of this and do not wait until the last minute to answer. Your post should incorporate readings and lectures to shed light on the issue (cite only parenthetically by name), and should be about two paragraphs in length.

I will grade you based on ten entries – five original posts and five responses, though of course you can post as much as you’d like. Each of these should be from a different day, so that all days are present. In addition, submissions must be screenshots, so please be sure to take a screenshot of every response for your records in case you choose to use that post as one of your best. I will not accept submissions that are not screenshots.

Screenshots should be sent to me in one email with ten separate files – due by midnight on the last day of class (January 24).

Exams

The goal of the two open-note exams is to give you an opportunity to make an argument and back it up with the material for the days in question (Days 1-7 for the midterm, and 8-12 for the final). These tests are not cumulative, but you are, of course, free to refer to earlier readings and lectures. At the same time, it is critical that you explicitly reference authors (by name, without dates and page numbers) and lectures (by lecture number) from the days covered by the test in your responses. This is another chance for you to demonstrate you can analyze the issue drawing from the various materials available. Typical responses are around three to four paragraphs long.

Your exam questions will appear at the bottom of the “Course Documents” folder on January 14 (midterm) and January 24 (final) from 6-8:30pm. This gives you 2 ½ hours to answer two out of the three questions on each of your exams. You will enter your responses into the space provided in the test link. However, I highly recommend that you draft your responses in a word document that you can continuously save. When you have completed the responses, you should copy and past them into the space allotted by Blackboard and submit.

A Note on Academic Honesty:

Be honest. Since you have all signed up for this course on your own free will, I am assuming you are interested and willing to do the work necessary to learn. If you have a question about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask. I subscribe to a zero-tolerance approach; if any students are caught cheating or plagiarizing, I will immediately fail them and then refer them to the Office of Undergraduate Education for possible additional consequences. There will be no discussion of mitigating circumstances. For the sake of clarity, I quote below from the UMBC Office of Undergraduate Education:

"By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal. To read the full Student Academic Conduct Policy, consult the UMBC Student Handbook, the Faculty Handbook, or the UMBC Policies section of the UMBC Directory [or for graduate courses, the Graduate School [website](http://www.umbc.edu/gradschool)]."

Week 1. Introduction (January 2)

How can we define the Arctic and to what degree are definitions subject to perspectives (such as security versus environmental science)? Where does the Arctic fit into broader concepts of geopolitics?

Scott G. Borgerson, "Arctic Meltdown: The Economic and Security Implications of Global Warming," Foreign Affairs.87(2) (2008):63-77.

Wegge, Njord. 2011. The Political Order in the Arctic: Power Structures, Regimes, and Influence. Polar Record 47:(241), 165–176.

Medby, Ingrid A. "Articulating State Identity: 'Peopling' the Arctic State," Political Geography 62 (January 2018): 116-125.

Week 2. Arctic History (January 6)

How and why did humans come to inhabit the Arctic? How have the rationales changed over time and what has this meant for the types of settlement we see?

Oran R. Young, “Governing the Arctic: From Cold War Theater to Mosaic of Cooperation,” Global Governance 11 (2005): 9-15.

Carina Keskitalo, “International Region-Building: Development of the Arctic as an International Region,” Cooperation and Conflict 42, no. 2 (2007): 187-205.

Grant, Shelagh. Polar Imperative: A History of Arctic Sovereignty in North America. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2010. Chapter 3 (Merchants and Monarchs): 55-91.

Week 3. The Science of Climate Change in the Arctic (January 7)

How has global climate change impacted the environment in the Arctic? How is this physical transformation likely to look in the future?

Wolfson and Schneider, "Understanding Climate Science," CCP, p.3-51.

Paul Wassman, et al., “Footprints of Climate Change in the Arctic Marine Ecosystem,” Global Change Biology 17 (2011): 1235-1249.

Schuur, Ted, "The Permafrost Prediction," Scientific American, Dec2016, Vol. 315, Issue 6

Week 4. Human Security and Indigenous Issues in the Arctic (January 9)

How has climate change impacted the social, economic and political systems that exist in the Arctic? What are possible policies that might address these challenges?

Timo Koivurova and Leena Heina ̈ma ̈ki, "The participation of indigenous peoples in international norm-making in the Arctic," Polar Record 42(221)(2006): 101-109

Shadian, J.M. 2013. "Of whales and oil: Inuit resource governance and the Arctic Council," Polar Record 49(4), 392­405.

James D. Ford, Graham McDowell, and Julie Jones, “The State of Climate Change Adaptation in the Arctic,” Environmental Research Letters 9 (2014): 1-9.

Week 5. The legal-political regime in the Arctic (January 10)

How has the international community sought to regulate the Arctic through international law and treaties, and to what degree has it been successful?

Brian R. Israel, “International Law and Governance in a Changing Arctic,” American Journal of International Law 108(2): 2014, pp. 348-359.

Hoel, Alf Håkon. 2014. “The Legal-political regime in the Arctic.” In Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic: Regional Dynamics in the Global World, Rolf Tamnes and Kristine Offerdal (eds). London and New York: Routledge, 49-72.

Week 6. New Economic Opportunities in the Arctic: Energy Exploration (January 13)

Why has the discussion of natural resource exploration and development in the Arctic come to the fore of the agenda for Arctic states in the recent time? What are some challenges for resource extraction in the Arctic?

Dadwal, Shebonti Ray (2014): Arctic: The Next Great Game in Energy Geopolitics. Strategic Analysis, vol. 38, No. 6, pp. 812-824.

Offerdal, K. (2010). "Arctic Energy in EU Policy: Arbitrary Interest in the Norwegian High North." Arctic 63(1): 30-42.

Zentner, Emilie; Kecinski, Maik; Letourneau, Angeline; Davidson, Debra. "Ignoring Indigenous Peoples – Climate Change, Oil Development, and Indigenous Rights Clash in the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve," CLIMATIC CHANGE; AUG 2019; 155; 4; p533-p544.

Week 7. New Economic Opportunities in the Arctic: Shipping and Fishing (January 14)

What are the major drivers, and challenges, of Arctic marine shipping and fishing? How are these related to security?

Bai, J. Y. 2015. "The IMO Polar Code: The Emerging Rules of Arctic Shipping Governance." International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law 30 (4):674­699.

Yevgeny Aksenov, Ekaterina E. Popova, Andrew Yool, A.J. George Nurser, Timothy D. Williams, Laurent Bertino, Jon Bergh. "On the future navigability of Arctic sea routes: High-resolution projections of the Arctic Ocean and sea ice," Marine Policy 75 (2017) 300-317.

Njord Wegge, "The emerging politics of the Arctic Ocean. Future management of the living marine resources," Marine Policy 51 (2015) 331–338.

MIDTERM – JANUARY 15

Part III. Central Actors in the Arctic

Week 8. Arctic strategies of the US and Canada (January 16)

What has been the impetus for US and Canadian involvement in the Arctic, and what are the obstacles? What are the current priorities and (how) are these likely to change?

Knecht, S. and K. Keil (2013). "Arctic Geopolitics Revisited: Spatialising Governance in the Circumpolar North." The Polar Journal 3(1).

Mathieu Landriault, "Public Opinion on Canadian Arctic Sovereignty and Security," ARCTIC, VOL. 69, NO. 2 (JUNE 2016) P. 160-168.

Nilsson, Annika. "The United States and the making of an Arctic nation," *Polar Record* 54 (275): 95–107 (2018)

Week 9. The Russian Federation and the Arctic (January 17)

What are Russia's primary priorities in the Arctic? How is Arctic strategy relevant to Russia's broader role in the world?

Pavel K. Baev (2013) Sovereignty is the Key to Russia's Arctic Policy, Strategic

Analysis, 37:4, 489-493

Thomas E. Rotnem, "Putin’s Arctic Strategy Collaboration or Conflict after Ukraine?" Problems of Post-Communism, vol. 65, no. 1, 2018, 1–17

Pezard, Stephanie, *Maintaining Arctic Cooperation with Russia : Planning for Regional Change in the Far North* . RAND Corporation, 2017. Chapter 2.

Week 10. Europe/Greenland in the Arctic  (January 20)

How have European powers approached the Arctic? What is Greenland's unique place in this?

Page Wilson, "An Arctic ‘cold rush’? Understanding Greenland’s (in)dependence question," Polar Record 53 (5): 512–519 (2017).

Kamrul Hossain, "EU Engagement in the Arctic: Do the Policy Responses from the Arctic States Recognise the EU as a Legitimate Stakeholder?" Arctic Review on Law and Politics, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2015, pp. 89􏲻110

Honneland, Geir, " NORWAY AND THE HIGH NORTH: FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGIES SINCE THE COLD WAR," *Current Politics and Economics of Europe* 28(1) (2017): 31-53.

Week 11. The Arctic Council (I)  (January 21)

Who are the central actors in Arctic governance? What factors had the greatest impact on the evolution of Arctic governance as it exists today?

Wilson, Page. Society, steward or security actor? Three visions of the Arctic Council. Cooperation and Conflict 2016, Vol. 51(1) 55–74

Klaus Dodds, "Environment, Resources, and Sovereignty in the Arctic Region: The Arctic Council as Regional Body," Georgetown Journal of International Affairs Summer/Fall 2013, pp 29-38.

Spence, Jennifer, " Is a Melting Arctic Making the Arctic Council Too Cool? Exploring the Limits to the Effectiveness of a Boundary Organization," *Review of Policy Research* 34(6) (2017): 790-811.

Week 12. Arctic Council (II)  (January 22)

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Arctic Council as a governing body today? Given the changes we have seen to date, how might it evolve in response to changing conditions?

Matthew Richwalder, "THE ARCTIC COUNCIL: TWENTY YEARS IN THE MAKING AND MOVING FORWARD," 22 Ocean & Coastal L.J. (2017)

Bailes, Alison J.K. (2013): Understanding the Arctic Council: A ‘Sub-Regional’ Perspective. Journal of Military and Strategic Studies, vol. 15, No. 2.: p. 31-49.

Week 13. Arctic Security  (January 23)

Is there a relationship between the militarization of the Arctic and the various unresolved conflicts in the region? What might serve as triggers to open conflict in the Arctic and how likely is this?

Depledge, Duncan, "Hard Security Developments," in Arctic Security Matters, Issue Report no. 24, June 2015.

Closson, Stacy. "Russian Foreign Policy in the Arctic: Balancing Cooperation and Competition," Kennan Cable 24, June 2017.

FINAL EXAM – JANUARY 24