

Course manual  
Joint Master's Programme in  
International Humanitarian Action

University of  
Groningen

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# Geopolitics in HA

Semester 1, block1

**Module coordinator:****Prof.Dr. A.J. Zwitter**

e-mail: a.zwitter@rug.nl

phone: +31-50-363.5991

office location: Faculty of Law, Political Science – Legal Theory

office hours: appointments via the NOHA Secretariat

**Lecturers:****Prof.Dr. J. Herman**

e-mail: j.herman@rug.nl

phone: +31-50-363.6014

office location: Harmony Building 13.15.0214

office hours: appointments via the NOHA Secretariat

**Credits awarded:** 5 ECTS, equivalent to 140 work hours (1 ECTS = 28 hours)**Period:** First semester, block 1.**Venue & hours:** See under section 5 for each lecture.

## 1. Introduction

The module is an element of the second component (Core Course, 25 ECTS) of the NOHA Joint Master's Degree in International Humanitarian Action to be completed during the first semester. It forms a recognised part of the curriculum and is a requirement for obtaining the NOHA Master's degree.

Geopolitics is essentially the study of the relationship between politics and territory, broadly speaking. As a branch of learning, the geopolitics of humanitarian action spans a range of subjects that are variously situated in relation to humanitarian action itself. Geopolitics looks at the way humanitarian action fits into the overall web of global, international and transnational relations. It seeks to inform, in geopolitical terms, about the humanitarian risk, i.e. the danger factors, and the way we respond to that risk, i.e. humanitarian action itself. This course aims further to deepen the insight into international relations of humanitarian action and the concepts developed by various actors to cope with difficulties faced in the field.

## 2. Learning outcomes

In conformity with the learning outcomes set out by the NOHA network, students should achieve the following learning outcomes by the end of this module:

- Has shown familiarity with the main approaches and concepts of international relations and geopolitics.
- Has shown the ability to anticipate new crisis situations in geopolitical settings.
- Has shown adequate capacity for (self-) reflection on academic argumentation.
- Has demonstrated the capacity to identify the roots and causes of conflicts/complex emergencies in a particular case.
- Has shown the ability to apply certain key concepts of International Politics and Geopolitics to concrete disaster situations.
- Has shown to be able to transfer acquired knowledge to other humanitarian situations.
- Has demonstrated a clear understanding of the international humanitarian system in its geopolitical context, with an emphasis on the power relations between actors.
- Has developed basic skills for acting in and reacting to intercultural contexts.

### 3. Course material

- Selected articles and book chapters (Online Reader on NOHA Blackboard)
- Suggested readings (also available on the NOHA Blackboard)

### 4. Programme and training activities

From week 5 onwards, every class consists of 2 hrs of interactive lecture and 1 hour student presentations (See below: essay idea presentation). The essay idea presentation is meant to guide the students in their essay writing process and train persuasiveness and eloquence in public speaking. Each week 5-6 students present their ideas and receive feedback for their essay topic.

#### Week 3

**Lecture: I. Foundations of Geopolitics: Concepts and perspectives**

Time: 15.09.2016 11.00-14.00

Room: H1313.0309

Lecturer: Prof. dr. J. Herman

Description: In this introductory meeting the technicalities of NOHA and the course will be discussed with the participants: presence, requirements and method of examination. Next, a characterization of this series of lectures is offered to the students, as well as its position amidst the other NOHA-modules. Furthermore, during this session the "art" of geopolitics will be presented to and discussed with the participants. As such an introduction to the most important concepts and perspectives will be provided. From the end of the nineteenth century up until now geopolitics has proven to be a tool for politicians and scientists alike to analyse world affairs and to formulate policy upon the results of such analysis. However, at what point in time did geopolitics meet with humanitarian assistance?

Readings: Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby and Paul Routledge, *The Geopolitics Reader* (2nd edition; Abingdon 2006), 1-32, 40-42.  
Halford. J. Mackinder, 'The Geographical Pivot of History', *The Geographical Journal* 23, no. 4 (April 1, 1904): 421-437.  
Theodore Roosevelt, 'The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine', White House (1905).  
O. Tunander, P. Baev and V.I. Einagel ed., *Geopolitics in post-Wall Europe* (London 1997) pp. 17-41.  
Henry A. Kissinger, 'Center of gravity of international affairs shifts', Tribune Media Services <www.latsi.com> (4 July 2004).

**University Peace Days: Information Warfare**

The University Peace Days is an initiative generously funded by the Faculty of Law of the University of Groningen since more than 30 years as an initiative to make knowledge and research in the area of peace and conflict accessible to a wider audience.

Time: 19.30-21.30

Venue: [Marie Loke Room](#), Ground Floor, Harmonie building, University of Groningen

#### Week 3

**Lecture: II. International relations and crisis-management: Theory of International Relations**

Time: 16.09.2016 09.00-12.00

Room: Zernikezaal

Lecturer: Prof. dr. A. Zwitter

Description: Caught in the so-called third phase of geopolitical thought, international relations and traditional crisis-management were encapsulated by the quest for stability in a militarised environment (the absence of violence) instead of the search for structural peace. In the so-called fourth phase, many were the references to the major changes that occurred due to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the demise of the Soviet Union. What exactly have been the changes and to what extent have these changes influenced the general geopolitical setting for humanitarian assistance?

Readings: Joshua S. Goldstein, *International Relations* (7th edition; New York 2006), pp. 39-49.

Michael Cox, 'From the Cold War to the War on Terror' in John Baylis & Steve Smith, *The Globalization of World Politics. An introduction to international relations* (Oxford 2008), pp. 70-89.

Gareth Evans and Mohamed Sahnoun, 'The Responsibility to Protect' in *Foreign Affairs* vol. 81 No. 6 (November/December 2002), 99-110.

## Week 5

**Lecture: III. Geopolitical response: the pivotal role of the United Nations**

Time: 29.09.2016 11.00-14.00

Room: H1313.0309

Lecturer: Prof. dr. A. Zwitter

Description: From Cold War servant of the superpowers to autonomous actor in international relations? The pivotal role of the United Nations in the post-Cold War era: peace-keeping, peace building, peace enforcing and humanitarian assistance.

Readings: Paul Taylor and Devon Curtis, 'The United Nations' in: John Baylis & Steve Smith, *The Globalization of World Politics. An introduction to international relations* (Oxford 2008) pp. 312-329.

Thomas G. Weiss and Cindy Collins, 'Evolution of the Humanitarian Idea' in: *Humanitarian Challenges and Intervention* (Oxford 2000) pp. 13-38.

Nicola Reindorp, 'Trends and challenges in the UN humanitarian system' in: Joanna Macrae (ed.), *HPG Report 11, The new humanitarianisms: a review of trends in global humanitarian action*, Overseas Development Institute, Humanitarian Policy Group (London April 2002) pp. 29-38.

Fen Osler Hampson, 'Preventive Diplomacy at the United Nations and Beyond' in Fen Osler Hampson & David M. Malone, *From Reaction to Conflict Prevention* (Colorado, London 2002), pp 139-157.

## Week 6

**Lecture: IV. Humanitarian Coordination and Intervention (Transnational Dimensions)**

Time: 06.10.2016 11.00-14.00

Lecturer: Chris Hoffman, Regional Humanitarian and Emergency Affairs Director | World

Vision East Africa Regional Office  
Prof. dr. A. Zwitter

Room: H1313.0309

Description: This guest lecture will explore the transnational and geopolitical dimensions of humanitarian coordination and intervention in the practice of internationally operating humanitarian organizations. The guest lecture will be held by Chris Hoffman, Regional Director for East Africa, World Vision International. It will give insights into the intricacies of the convergence between policy and practice.

Readings: TBA

### Week 7

**Lecture: V. Consequences of growing transnationalism for humanitarian action**

Time: 13.10.2016 11.00-14.00

Lecturer: Prof. dr. A. Zwitter

Room: H1313.0309

Description: Next to the growing importance of intergovernmental organisations in the international arena the non-governmental community added to its weight after 1991. In fact, many intergovernmental humanitarian assistance operations depend on the support of NGOs. What is the place of NGOs nowadays in international relations and what are their approaches to international affairs?

Readings: Hugo Slim, 'By what authority? The legitimacy and accountability of Non-Governmental Organisations' JHA, (March 2002).  
Abby Stoddard, 'Humanitarian NGOs: challenges and trends' in: Joanna Macrae & Adele Harmer (eds.), *HPG Report 14, Humanitarian action and the 'global war on terror': a review of trends and issues*, Overseas Development Institute, Humanitarian Policy Group (London July 2003) pp. 25-35.  
David Rieff, 'Humanitarianism in crisis', *Foreign Affairs* vol. 81 (November/December 2002) no. 6, p. 111-121.  
Hugo Slim, Tony Vaux and Peta Sandison, *Key Messages from ALNAP's Review of Humanitarian Action*, Report prepared for the Active Learning Network on Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Assistance (2006).

### Week 8

**Lecture: VI. Geopolitical effects of conflict prevention, sanctions and humanitarian action**

Time: 20.10.2016 11.00-14.00

Room: H1313.0309

Lecturer: Andrej Zwitter

Description: During this lecture attention will be focused on the benevolence of conflict prevention as the earliest possible stage of humanitarian assistance. Failing this most cost-efficient method of dealing with humanitarian crises in statu nascendi, the applicability of sanctions will be dealt with in order to better the humanitarian situation in a given area (or not?).

Readings: Donald Rothchild, 'Third-party incentives and the phases of conflict prevention' in: Chandra Lekha Sriram, *From promise to practice: strengthening UN capacities for the prevention of violent conflict* (Boulder & London 2003) pp. 35-62.

Larry Minear, 'Coercive Humanitarianism' in: *The Humanitarian Enterprise: Dilemmas & Discoveries* (2000) pp. 99-118.

Mary B. Anderson, 'Humanitarian NGOs in Conflict Intervention' in: C.A. Crocker, F.O. Hampson and P. Aall eds. *Turbulent Peace, The Challenges of Managing International Conflict* (Washington 2001) pp. 637-648.

Hadewych Hazelzet, 'Assessing the suffering from "successful" sanctions: an ethical approach' in: W.J.M. van Genugten and G.A. de Groot, *United Nations Sanctions* (Antwerp 1999) pp. 71-96.

Willem van Genugten, Gerard de Groot and Saskia Lavrijssen, 'Guidelines on the future use of sanctions; an evaluation' in: W.J.M. van Genugten and G.A. de Groot, *United Nations Sanctions* (Antwerp 1999) pp. 135-152.

## Week 9

### Lecture: VII. Humanitarian Diplomacy

Time: 29.10.2016 11.00-14.00

Room: H1313.0309

Lecturer: Mike Clark, Senior Policy Director of Convoy of Hope  
Prof. dr. A. Zwitter

Description: To be a humanitarian is to be a diplomat. Without diplomatic function, humanitarian action could not exist. Much of humanitarian effectiveness depends on humanitarian diplomacy. Over its 125-year history, this particular type of diplomacy has evolved into a complex system of official and informal interaction on local, national and global levels. The practice of humanitarian diplomacy is not limited to those directly providing humanitarian assistance. In fact, much of its success depends on the sustained involvement of state actors. Although humanitarian diplomacy is widely practiced (and greatly depended on), actors use diplomatic tools intuitively and spontaneously. Most humanitarians do not identify with the role of a diplomat, but much of their work depends on diplomatic success. This guest lecture will be held by Mike Clark, Senior Policy Director of Convoy of Hope.

Readings: TBA

## Examination

### Written essay

Time: Deadline: 20.11.2016: 11.59 pm

***The written essay must be uploaded to the NOHA Blackboard (Ephorus assignment) before 11.59 pm on 20.11.2016; failure to submit by the stated deadline will result in an automatic fail.***

***Ephorus automatically checks all submissions for plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious academic crime and is dealt with by the examination board. According to Dutch law, plagiarism is punished with exclusion from academic studies for up to one year.***

- Active participation in class. → obligatory
- Written essay exam at the end of the course in which knowledge, analytical skills as well as academic writing skills will be tested. → 80%
- Prepare for and conduct a presentation of the essay idea. → 20%

**6. Assessment criteria**

**Essay exam:** this will be a ‘take-home’ exam; answer 1 of 2 questions in form of a scientific essay using annotations (MLA style, in-text quotation); total amount 2,500 to 3000 max. excluding bibliography and annexes; use proper primary and secondary sources;

Criteria:

<b>Format and Formatting</b>
1. Cover page with title, author, etc.
2. Organization of paper (sections, chapters, paragraphs)
3. Use of annotation (accuracy, consistency)
<b>Language</b>
4. Academic Writing Style
5. Spelling and Grammar
<b>Quality of the Literature Review</b>
6. Discussion of problems in literature
7. Discussion of solutions in literature
<b>Structure of the Argument</b>
8. Case selection (sufficiently problematic)
9. Case presentation (lucid illustration & elaboration)
<b>Persuasiveness of arguments</b>
10. Logical (overall)
11. Empirical (overall)
12. Solution coherent & convincing

**Essay idea presentation:** prepare and present your idea for the essay in an elevator pitch of max. 5 minutes. Either PowerPoint slides or hand-outs to everyone are necessary. After the presentation follows the question and answer session of also max. 5 minutes, which is meant for feedback and clarification of the idea.

Criteria:

<b>Format and Formatting</b>
1. Slides clear and structured.
<b>Language &amp; Rhetoric</b>
2. Clear Language

### 3. Persuasiveness and engagement

Students who fail the written exam are required to take a resit exam. Only insufficient scripts may be resubmitted. Students who fail the presentation exercise will have to do an extra assignment.

Full attendance is mandatory. However, if there are extenuating circumstances, students may be permitted to miss one lecture with the advance permission of the coordinator. This does not apply to the simulation exercise which is a mandatory and assessed part of the course.