**Introduction to Geopolitics and Geo-Strategy from a National Security Perspective**  
Prof. Yossi Ben-Artzi , Amb. Merav Zafary-Odiz

**Purpose and Essence of the Course**: The purpose of the course is to shed some light on the fields of geopolitics and geo-strategy as significant components in understanding the texture of national security. The course will reveal to participants the traditional and contemporary role of geography (physical and human) in the formation of national security perceptions, in the consolidation of the whole of international relations, and in shaping the strategy of states and other forces in the global arena.

**Sub-Goals:**

* Familiarity with the different definitions of geopolitics and geo-strategy, and their implications for national security.
* Knowledge of the changes that have taken place in the study and research of these areas, and in issues that are affected by geographical considerations in national security.
* Understanding the relationship between international relations, political science, national security policy, history, political and economic geography, geopolitics and geo-strategy.
* Raising awareness of the consequences of the geo-strategic implications on contemporary international issues in geographical spaces such as space, energy, and the sea.

**Method**: A seasonal course of 14 sessions guided by the course instructors, and with the participation of guest lecturers from various fields of specialization in geopolitics and geo-strategy.

**Course Program**

* Session 1 (22.9): Prof. Yossi Ben-Artzi: Basic Concepts: Geography, Geopolitics, Geo-Strategy
* Session 2 (22.9): Ambassador Dennis Ross 1: The Rise of the US as a Global Power
* Session 3 (23.9): Prof. Uzi Arad: Changes in Geopolitics
* Session 4 (23.9): Ambassador Dennis Ross 2: Geo-Strategic Interests in the Middle East
* Sessions 5-6 (30.9): Dr. Deganit Paikowsky: Geo-strategy in space: on Earth and in general
* Session 7 (30.9): Ambassador Dennis Ross 3: Geo-Strategy in the Gulf
* Session 8 (11.10 as part of the Iran Day): Amb. Merav Zafary-Odiz: Iran's Nuclear Program from a Geo-Strategic Perspective
* Session 9 (13.10): Amb. Zvi Magen: Putin's Doctrine in Geo-Strategic Contexts
* Session 10 (13.10): Dr. Asi David: The Middle East as a Geo-Strategic Area
* Session 11 (14.10): Captain Yigal Maor: China's Geo- Marine Economic Strategy
* Session 12 (14.10): Team preparation for a summary discussion, and preparation for the final assignment
* Session 13 (20.10): Dr. Elai Rettig: Global and Regional Energy and Geo-Strategy
* Session 14 (20.10): Summary and plenum discussion: How do we see the world now? Team presentations on a geo-strategic issue.

**Course Requirements**

• Full attendance

• Perform reading tasks and preparation for meetings

• Team summary exercise

**Course Assignment**

The course assignment is in teams, and requires integrated and coordinated work from all its members.

Each team will select a topic or an issue with geo-strategic characteristics, and will analyze it using the tools and terms learned in the course. The theme will be a kind of "window opening" for sites from all over the world, reflecting geographical focal points of conflict or tension between several parties, related to the site or the event around it. The sites and events will be contemporary, and their investigation will be based on open source, accessible materials. Examples: the dam on the Nile; Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh); the islands of dispute between China and Japan; Nicaragua Canal. Another topic or event that the team is interested in can be suggested, with the approval of the course instructors.

Work Method:

- Once the chosen topic has been approved, the team will define the research purpose and split into subgroups with learning tasks according to the components of the issue: the regional and the geographical conditions; political history; the strategies of different parties.

- In the second phase, the team will convene to formulate the learning, and prepare a presentation (in a designated meeting on 14.10), which will be held in the plenum (in the last meeting of the course) to allow the team to receive feedback from participants and the instructors.

- In the third stage, the presentation will be edited and improved following the previous stages, and will be submitted as a summary of the team’s work.

Presentation Structure:

- Scope: about 12 to 15 slides.

- About a third: the geographical and conceptual background to the study of the phenomenon.

- About a third: the positions of the parties, their interests, and their historical development.

- About a third: the strategies designed by each partner.

- Summary slide.

**Reading Materials for Morning Coffee & Reading, and the Course Sessions**

)The mandatory reading materials in the list are included in the course reading book)

Session 1: The introductory lesson of Prof. Yossi Ben-Artzi:

Halford J. Mackinder, 'The Geographical Pivot of History', Geographical Journal 1904

For enrichment: Colin S. Gray, 'In Defence of the Heartland', Comparative Strategy 2008

Session 2: Ambassador Dennis Ross' lesson:

Robert Kagan, 'The world America made—and Trump wants to unmake', Brookings Publication, 28.9.2018

Session 3: The lesson of Prof. Uzi Arad:

Anne-Marie Slaughter, 'Power Shifts', on: 'The Revenge of Geography,' by Robert D. Kaplan - <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/07/books/review/the-revenge-of-geography-by-robert-d-kaplan.html>

Sessions 5 + 6: Dr. Deganit Paikowsky's lessons:

Moltz, J., 'The Changing Dynamics of Twenty-First-Century Space Power', *Journal of Strategic Security*, Vol 12, no. 1, (2019) pp. 15-43.

Session 7: Ambassador Dennis Ross' lesson:

'The Middle East', in: Richard Haass, *The World*, Chapter 2, pp 111-130

Session 8: The lesson of Amb. Merav Zafary-Odiz:

'Nuclear proliferation', in: Richard Haass, *The World*, chapter 3, pp. 173-182

Session 10: Dr. Asi David's lesson:

Teams 1+2:

Nick Danforth, 'Stop Blaming Colonial Borders for the Middle East's Problems', *The Atlantic*, SEPTEMBER 11, 2013

For enrichment:

Raffaella A. Del Sarto, 'Contentious borders in the Middle East and North Africa: context and concepts', *International Affairs* 93: 4, 2017,767-787

Session 11: The lesson of Captain Yigal Maor:

Teams 1+2:

China is Not As Threatening As You Think', <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/reboot/china-not-threatening-you-think-167058>

Session 13: Dr. Elai Rettig's lesson:

Clayton, Blake, and Michael Levi, 'The Surprising Sources of Oil's Influence', *Survival* 54, no. 6 (2012), pp.107-122.

**Additional Sources for Enrichment and Reading**

Blacksell Mark, *Political Geography*, Routledge, Abingdon and NY 2006

Blouet W. Brian (ed.), *Global Geostrategy – Mackinder and the defence of the West*, Frank Cass, London and NY 2005

Dittmer Jason and Sharp Joanne, *Geopolitics, an introductory reader*, Routledge, London/NY, 2014

Dodds Klaus, *Geopolitics in a Changing World*, Pearson Education Ltd., 2000

Gray S. Collins & Sloan Geoffrey (eds.), *Geopolitics, Geography and Strategy*, Frank Cass, London and Portland 1999

Gray S. Collins, *Perspectives on Strategy*, Oxford UP, Oxford 2013

Gray S. Collins, *The future of Strategy*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2015

Guzzini Staefano (ed.). *The return of Geopolitics in Europe*, CUP, Cambridge 2012

Wallerstein Emmanuel, *Geopolitics and Geoculture*, CUP, Cambridge 2001

Kaplan D. Robert, *The revenge of Geography*, Ny 2012

Brzezinski, Zbigniew *The Geostrategic Triad: Living with China, Europe, and Russia*, CSIS Press, Washington, D.C., 2001