

Syllabus

Myanmar in the World

Tr. April and Tr. Rose

When & Where:	10 May- 19 July 2025 (13 weeks)	Off University Moodle
Hosted by:	Humboldt University with 3 ECTS Certification*	
Department:	Institute for Asian and African Studies	

***How to count your Off university course towards credit?**

Successful completion of a course at Off University is certified by the host university. This means that you are able to use these credits at any university in the EHEA in a programme you are enrolled in, or you may count this as previous knowledge in a future study programme. In order to be sure that you can transfer the credits, we suggest you get written confirmation by your home university's students' office. And if you are not enrolled in any university programme: You are very welcome to join! All our courses are free of charge and open to anyone: students, scholars, activists.

Digital Self Defense

Our platform is dedicated to spread knowledge threatened by authoritarian and right-wing populist regimes and to put measures in place that enable people to practice digital self-defense.

We encourage all users to sign up for the platform anonymously and respect others' preferences for staying anonymous. **Please do not force anyone to share personal information or take screenshots of others without their knowledge.**

The courses take place on Off University's Moodle. The platform includes an encrypted video-call option, a cloud storage, as well as a messaging system. We would like to remind all users that communication with other users outside of the platform (i.e. e-mail, Instagram, Facebook, Whatsapp or other video conferencing tools) may put them at risk.

Description

This course discusses the impact of geographical aspects such as location, resources and demography on (international) politics. Geopolitics is a method of studying foreign policy in order to understand, explain and predict international political behaviour. Geographical characteristics are closely related to a country's decision-making process in determining its foreign policy principles, they can influence a country's attitude towards other countries and are a strategic resource to enhance its geopolitical value.

Myanmar occupies an important geopolitical position when viewed from strategic, political and economic dimensions. At present, Myanmar's location is important not only for China but also for India; it has wider geopolitical implications for the whole region and beyond. In terms of geography, Myanmar occupies the tri-junction where China and India meet. Moreover, Myanmar's location is crucial for China's "Go West" and "Two Ocean Strategy" and India's "Look East Policy": it is a land bridge for them. In addition to its geographical location, Myanmar's abundant natural resources, especially in the area of energy sources, enhance its geopolitical importance.

In this seminar, students will learn about the main theories of geopolitics in international relations and apply their theoretical knowledge to the context of Myanmar.

ဤသင်တန်းသည် ကျောင်းသားများအား ပထဝီဝင်သွင်ပြင် လက္ခဏာ များဖော်ပြသည့် တည်နေရာ၊ အရင်းအမြစ်များနှင့် လူဦးရေ-တို့က [နိုင်ငံတကာ] နိုင်ငံရေးအပေါ် မည်သို့အကျိုးသက်ရောက်စေသည်ကို နားလည်ရန် ဖော်ပြပါသည်။ ပထဝီနိုင်ငံရေးသည် ပထဝီဝင် သွင်ပြင် လက္ခဏာ များမှတစ်ဆင့် နိုင်ငံ တစ်နိုင်ငံ၏ နိုင်ငံရေးအမူအရာများကို နားလည်ရန်၊ ရင်းပရိတ်နှင့် ခန့်မှန်းရန်လေ့လာသည်နည်းလမ်းတစ်ခုဖြစ်သည်။ ထို့အပြင် နိုင်ငံတစ်နိုင်ငံ၏ ပထဝီဝင်နိုင်ငံရေးတန်ဖိုးသည် ၎င်းနိုင်ငံ၏ အမျိုးသားအကျိုးစီးပွားကို မြှင့်တင်ပေးနိုင်သည်။

မန်ဗီမာနိုင်ငံ၏ မဟာဗျူဟာ၊ အနုအေးထားကို ရှုမငြိသောအခါတွင် ကြီးမားသော ပထဝီဝင်နိုင်ငံရေး သွင်ပြင် လက္ခဏာအနုအေးထားကို ပိုင်ဆိုင်ထားသည်။ လက်ရှိတွင် မန်ဗီမာနိုင်ငံ၏တည်နေရာသည် တရုတ်နိုင်ငံအတွက်သာမက အိန္ဒိယအတွက်ပါ အရေးကြီးပါသည်။ မန်ဗီမာနိုင်ငံသည် တရုတ်နှင့် အိန္ဒိယတို့ဆုံရာ လမ်းဆုံတွင်ရှိနေသည့်အပြင် မန်ဗီမာနိုင်ငံ၏ တည်နေရာသည် တရုတ်နိုင်ငံ၏ “သမုဒ္ဒရာနုစစ်စင်း မဟာဗျူဟာ” နှင့် အိန္ဒိယ၏ “အရေမျှော်မပါဒ” တို့အတွက် အရေးပါသော အခန်းကဏ္ဍမှ ပါဝင်နေပါသည်။ ထို့အပြင် စွမ်းအင်ရင်းမြစ်နယ်ပယ်တွင် ပါဝင်သော သဘာဝသယံဇာတများသည် မန်ဗီမာနိုင်ငံ၏ ပထဝီဝင်နိုင်ငံရေးအရ အရေးပါမှုကို မြှင့်တင်ပေးပါသည်။

ဤသင်တန်းတွင် ကျောင်းသားများအနေဖြင့် ပထဝီဝင်နိုင်ငံရေး ၏ အဓိကသီအိုရီများ အကြောင်းကိုလေ့လာကွဲပြား ဖော်ပြပါသည်။ ကျောင်းသားများအားလုံး ၎င်းတို့၏ သီအိုရီဆိုင်ရာ အသိပညာကို လက်တွေ့ကျင့်သုံးနိုင်ရန်၊ အထူးသဖြင့် မန်ဗီမာနိုင်ငံသည် ၎င်း၏ ပထဝီဝင်ဆိုင်ရာ မဟာဗျူဟာဆိုင်ရာ အားသာချက်များကိုအသုံးပြု၍ ၎င်း၏အမျိုးသားအကျိုးစီးပွားကို ဖော်ဆောင်နိုင်ခြင်းရဲ့ မရှိ ကိုပထဝီဝင်နိုင်ငံရေး သီအိုရီများကိုအသုံးပြု၍ လေ့လာနိုင်မည်ဖြစ်သည်။

Timeline of the Course Schedule

Week -1	<p>In this part students will understand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the impact of geographical factors – location, resources, and demography – on [international] politics geopolitical struggle, geopolitical game, geopolitical competition à power competition offensive realism (IR Theory)/ authority and Influence 	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Lecture; What is geopolitics?</p>
Week-2	<p>In this part students will be able to understand;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the concepts of geopolitical theory evolution of theoretical thought theoretical tools for understanding the actions of the states 	<p>Theory</p> <p>Lecture; Geo-strategical fault line</p>
Week-3		<p>Theory</p> <p>Lecture; Ideological Fault line</p>
Week-4		<p>Theory</p> <p>Lecture; Cultural Fault line</p>
Week-5		<p>Theory</p> <p>Lecture; Geo-strategic players and geo-political pivots</p>
Week-6	<p>In this part, students will understand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myanmar's geostrategic location The competition of great power countries and Myanmar 	<p>Lecture; Myanmar as a Geopolitical Pivot in Indo-Pacific Region</p>
Week-7		<p>Lecture; Myanmar's geostrategic location and</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> China's competition on resources and power 	India's Myanmar policy
Week-8	Assignment; <u>during these weeks students are required to submit the geopolitics guidebook</u>	Lecture; India's Look East policy and Myanmar
Week-9		Lecture; China's "String of Pearls" strategy
Week-10	In this part students will be able to understand, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myanmar's role in the BRI The CMEC and China's determination to see it through The geopolitical value of Myanmar in China's BRI Cooperation through complexity: Myanmar and BRI 	Lecture; BRI and Myanmar
Week-11		Lecture; CMEC and Geopolitics of Myanmar
Week-12		Lecture; Myanmar in BRI: Cooperation or Contention?
Week-13	Course Evaluation	Course Evaluation

Aimed Outcomes

A general understanding of:

- the combination of geographic and political factors determining the condition of a state and emphasizing the influence of geography on politics.
- geographic features and its impact on the country's foreign policy.
- the action of world powers from a theoretical point of view

The skills to be gained upon active participation:

- Understanding the effects of location, resources, human ideology and human culture on local and international politics.
- Apply the geopolitics theory on Myanmar's geostrategic position.
- Supporting students to improve their critical and analytical skills.
- Ability to analyze Myanmar's geostrategic location, its importance for world powers and whether successive Myanmar governments have been able to exploit the location/resources of their country or not.

Course components

The methodology includes:

- Weekly readings
- Lectures
- Discussion
- Assignment: presentation of assigned texts OR reflection paper (5-10 pages, Times New Roman 12 point)

Successful students will receive a 3 ECTS Certificate if they:

- Watching the lecture videos (20%)
- Active participation in the weekly presentations and the course discussion (30%)
- Presentation or Assignment (50%)

Topic of the week & Reading List

Week 1: What is Geopolitics?

Instructor: Tr April

Week 2: Geostrategical fault line

Instructor: Tr April

Reading materials: Saul Bernard Cohen: *"Geopolitics: The Geography of International Relations"* Third Edition, The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., UK, 2015. Chapter 2 (Stages of Modern Geopolitics), pp.13-33

Week 3: Ideological Fault line

Instructor: Tr April

Reading materials: Francis Fukuyama; *"The end of History and the Last Man"* (Review by Pierre Lemieux, *Regulation*, Fall 2022, pp.48-53.)

Leonardo Viera, "The Future of International Relations after the Return of Autocracies and Geopolitics", pp. 1-7.

Week 4: Cultural Fault line

Instructor: Tr April

Reading materials: Samuel Huntington; "Clashes of civilization?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol-72, no-3, 1993, pp.22-49.

Week 5: Geostrategic Players and Geopolitical Pivots

Instructor: Tr April

Reading Material: Zbigniew Brzezinski; *"The Grand Chessboard; American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives"*. Basic Book, New York, 1997. Chapter 2 (geostrategic players and geopolitical pivots), pp. 30-48.

Week 6: Myanmar as a Geopolitical Pivot in Indo-Pacific Region

Instructor: Tr April

Reading materials: Thi Thi Soe San; "The role of Myanmar in the Sino-India competition; Pawn or Pivot?, *University of Research Journal*, Vol-11, no-2, May 2020.

Tutorial: Presentation on Week 6 Readings by assigned student.
Discussion of the presentation led by Tr April.

Week 7: Myanmar's geostrategic location and India's Myanmar policy

Instructor: Tr April

Reading materials: Balachander Palanisamy; "Geostrategic explanation of India-Myanmar bilateral relations since the 1993", March 31, 2020, pp. 1-8.

Tutorial: Presentation on Week 7 Readings by assigned student.
Discussion of the presentation led by Tr April.

Week 8: India's Look East policy and Myanmar

Instructor: Tr April

Readings: Thi Thi Soe San; "The Role of Myanmar in India's Look East Policy", *Journal of DJS*, Vol-1, no-1, January 2022.

Tutorial: Presentation on Week 8 Readings by assigned student.
Discussion of the presentation led by Tr April.

Week 9: China's "String of Pearls" strategy

Instructor: Tr April

Reading materials: Kim, S. (1998) "The South China Sea in China's strategic thinking; *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 19(4).

Tutorial: Presentation on Week 9 Readings by assigned student.
Discussion of the presentation led by Tr April.

Week 10: BRI and Myanmar

Instructor: Tr. Rose

Reading materials: Kyi Mar (Research draft). "The Role of Myanmar in the Belt and Road Initiative: China-Myanmar Economic Corridor"
Mi Mi Gyi (2019). "The Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) and Its Implication on Myanmar".
Mandalay University of Foreign Languages Research Journal 2019, Vol. 10, No. 1, P.106-113.

Tutorial: Presentation on Week 10 Readings by assigned student
Discussion of the presentation led by Tr. Rose

Week 11: CMEC and Geopolitics of Myanmar

Instructor: Tr. Rose

Readings materials: Sreeparna Banerjee (2022). "Revamping BRI in post-coup Myanmar", *Dec 08, 2022*.

Riccardo Rossi (2022). "The geopolitical value of Myanmar in China's Belt and Road Initiative", *Geopolitical Report ISSN 2785-2598 Volume 24 Issue 1*. October 11, 2022.

Nyi Nyi Kyaw (2020). "Sinophobia in Myanmar and the Belt and Road Initiative", *ISEAS Perspective*. ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, ISSUE: 2020 No. 9 ISSN 2335-6677. Singapore. 13 February 2020.

Lucas Myers (2020). The China-Myanmar Economic Corridor and China's Determination to See It Through, May 26, 2020.

Tutorial: Presentation on week 11 Readings by assigned student

Discussion of the presentation led by Tr. Rose

Week 12: Myanmar in BRI: Cooperation or Contention?

Instructor; Tr. Rose

Readings materials: ABB, P., SWAINE, R., & JONES, I. (2021). COOPERATION THROUGH COMPLEXITY: MYANMAR AND THE BRI. In *ROAD TO PEACE OR BONE OF CONTENTION? THE IMPACT OF THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE ON CONFLICT STATES* (pp. 13–18). Peace Research Institute Frankfurt.

Thant Aung (Victor) Paing (2024). China in Myanmar: How the Game-Changing Neighbor Would Continue to Maintain Its Influence, August 26, 2024.

Tutorial: Presentation on week 13 Readings by assigned student

Discussion of the presentation led by Tr. Rose