

Geopolitics of Afghanistan

Course Teacher: Ambrish Dhaka

Master's Programme (PISM) - MONSOON SEMESTER

Instruction method: Lectures, Digital content, Seminars/Tutorials

Course duration: One semester

Contact hrs: 04 hrs per week

Credits: 04 (Four only)

Introduction

Afghanistan is a hotspot of varying geopolitical scales. It has affected the evolution of Afghan society's cultural and political organisation. The neighbours of Afghanistan have always walked into the troubled polity and were caught unaware of its geopolitical nature. It always had extraneous factors deeply embedded into ethno-political strife, taking aback a decade's progress into one backwash. Afghanistan's geographical setting has a significant bearing on its ethnicity and its geopolitics. The age of imperialism and the Cold War geopolitics has been descending upon the land of Afghanistan, riveting its significance for the World order. This course aims at understanding Afghanistan's regional and global geopolitical dynamics for the present century within the most current context.

Course Objectives

The students shall learn the application of geopolitical understanding as a spatial variable to the structural-functional aspects of international politics. The fundamental spatial understanding such as distribution, association and networked approach forms a part of learning for students who are essentially from a non-geography background.

Course Outcome

The student learns to develop reasoning in an inter-disciplinary framework. Their awareness of the geopolitical environment of South Asia concerning Afghanistan helps them understand the external linkages to national security. The Afghanistan situation shapes their ability to develop an Indian perspective of international politics.

Evaluation method

The student needs to complete at least six assignments that would carry a weightage of 60 percent score, and the Mid- & End- Semester Examination shall carry a weightage of 10 and 30 percent, respectively. Active participation in class discussions adds value to the assessment of performance.

UNITS

I - Geographical Setting: location & political frontiers, physiography, climate, natural resources & landuse.

II – Major Geopolitical Epochs: Anglo-Afghan Wars & birth of Great Game, the Cold War resistance and the post-Cold War Geopolitics.

III – Central Asian neighbourhood - Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Russia.

IV – South Asian neighbourhood - Pakistan, India and China. Ethno-geopolitical linkages with Pakistan.

V – West Asian neighbourhood - Iran, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

VI – Afghanistan as a geopolitical focus of the US's grand strategy

VII – Afghanistan as a geoeconomic of China's Belt and Road Strategy, Reinventing the Silk Route.

VIII – Afghanistan as a bearing of the South Asian regional geopolitics, the TAGP & TARR routes

Suggested Readings

1. Arjomand, S. A. (2009). *Constitutional politics in the Middle East: With special reference to Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan*. Hart Publ, **Ch 3, 7**.
2. Armitage, R. L., Berger, S. R., & Markey, D. S. (2010). *US strategy for Pakistan and Afghanistan: Independent task force report*. Council on Foreign Relations.
3. Barfield, T. J. (2017). *Afghanistan: A cultural and political history*, **full book**.
4. Bizhan, N. (2017). *Aid Paradoxes in Afghanistan: Building and Undermining the State*. Taylor & Francis, **Part 3**.
5. Braithwaite, R. (2013). *Afgantsy: The Russians in Afghanistan, 1979-89*, **Part 2**.
6. Burns, N., & Price, J. (Eds.). (2011). *American interests in South Asia: Building a grand strategy in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India*. Aspen Institute, **full book**.
7. Coburn, N., Larson, A. (2014). *Derailing Democracy in Afghanistan: Elections in an Unstable Political Landscape*. Columbia University Press, **Ch 1, 2, 3**.
8. Çolakoğlu, S., & Yegin, M. (2014). *The Future of Afghanistan and Turkey's Contribution*. International Strategic Research Organization (USAK).

9. Crews, R. D., & Tarzi, A. (2009). *Taliban and the Crisis of Afghanistan*. Harvard University Press, [Ch 2,3,4](#).
10. Dorani, S. (2019). *America in Afghanistan: Foreign policy and decision making from Bush to Obama to Trump*. IB Tauris, [Part 2](#).
11. Dupree, L. (2014). *Afghanistan*, [full book](#).
12. Emadi, H. (2013). *Dynamics of political development in Afghanistan: The British, Russian, and American invasions*. Palgrave Macmillan, [Ch 4, 5](#).
13. Haghirian, M., & Zaccara, L. (Eds.). (2023). *China's economic and political presence in the Middle East and South Asia*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, [Ch 10, 11](#).
14. Hayes, G., & Sedra, M. (2009). *Afghanistan: Transition under Threat*. Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
15. Hopkins, B. D. (2012). *The making of modern Afghanistan*. Palgrave Macmillan.
16. Hyman, A. (2016). *Afghanistan under Soviet Domination, 1964-91*. Palgrave Macmillan Limited, [full book](#).
17. Hynek, N., & Marton, P. (2012). *Statebuilding in Afghanistan: Multinational contributions to reconstruction*. Routledge, [Ch 6, 8, 11](#).
18. Kakar, A. (2014). *The US-Afghanistan Relations during Obama Era: Implications for Pakistan*.
19. Khan, Ijaz. (2012). *Pakistan's Strategic Culture and Foreign Policy Making: A Study of Pakistan's Post 9/11 Afghan Policy Change*. Nova Science Publishers, [Ch 2, 3, 4](#).
20. Krause, J & Mallory C.K. (2014). *Afghanistan, Pakistan and Strategic Change: Adjusting Western Regional Policy*. Taylor & Francis, [Part 1](#).
21. Lansford, T. (Ed.). (2017). *Afghanistan at war: From the 18th-century Durrani dynasty to the 21st century*. ABC-CLIO.
22. Laruelle, M., Ashkenova, G., Diener, A., Giustozzi, A., Kalinovsky, A. M., Pannier, B., Peyrouse, S., Raballand, G., Rakisheva, B., & Stepanova, E. (2017). *The Central Asia–Afghanistan Relationship: From Soviet Intervention to the Silk Road Initiatives*. Lexington Books.
23. Maley, W. (2018). *Transition in Afghanistan: Hope, Despair and the Limits of Statebuilding*. Taylor & Francis, [Part 3, 4](#).
24. Malik, I. H. (2016). *Pashtun identity and geopolitics in Southwest Asia: Pakistan and Afghanistan since 9/11*. Anthem Press, [Ch 4, 5](#).
25. Malkasian, C. (2021). *The American war in Afghanistan*. Oxford University Press, [Ch 17, 18, 19](#).

26. Mousavi, S. A. (2020). *The Hazaras of Afghanistan*, Ch 1,2, 7.
27. Nader, A., Scotten, A. G., Rahmani, A. I., Stewart, R., & Mahnad, L. (2014). *Iran's influence in Afghanistan: Implications for the US drawdown*. Rand Corporation.
28. Nawabi, S. M. (2013). *Future And Modernization Of Afghanistan*. Xlibris Corporation.
29. Qassem, A. S. (2016). *Afghanistan's political stability: A dream unrealised*. Ashgate, full book.
30. Rubin, B. R. (2020). *Afghanistan: What everyone needs to know*. Oxford University Press, full book.
31. Zhao, H. (2011). *China and Afghanistan: China's interests, stances, and perspectives*. CSIS. https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/publication/120322_Zhao_ChinaAfghan_web.pdf
