

Natural Resources and Geopolitic Strategies

UGRA_011245

Departments	Department of International, European Union and Comparative Law, Global Governance
Teaching Languages	English
ECTS	6
Teacher responsible	Jorge Molina Alsina - jordi.molina2@esade.edu

Course Goals

- Learning how the control and management of natural resources helps to explain historical events and shape today's world politics and current geopolitical trends
- Assessing foreign policy, economic dynamics and corporate agendas in a context of growing competition for natural resources
- Further develop academic background and train both analytical skills and critical thinking
- Linking concepts and theories from the past courses "Geopolitics" and "Geoeconomics" and linking them to the obtention, transportation and consumption of natural resources

Previous knowledge

The student's background in the courses "Geopolitics" and "Geoeconomics" is recommended.

Prerequisites

No previous course is a must to enroll.

Teaching methodology

The teaching and learning dynamics gravitate around presential sessions, complemented with autonomous work. The last sessions of the course will include teamwork presentations by students. During the class sessions, student participation is encouraged. Every session is designed to foster participation through firechats, debates, opinions and other contributions. Each session will require a complementary autonomous work in order to prepare specific topics that are part of the exam content. This will imply reviewing the session materials (slides) as well as selected articles and other resources (available via Moodle or recommended in class). Further code of conduct guidelines, recommendations and information about the teamwork presentations will be provided in the course's syllabus and in class.

Description

Course contribution to program

This course assesses how the discovery, access, transportation, management and consumption of natural resources has been (in history and nowadays) a source of economic, political and social power. It complements the previous courses of "Geopolitics" and "Geoeconomics".

Short description

Historical and present case studies will be discussed and analysed. Some examples include, among others, silk, gold, coffee, diamonds, oil, coltan, uranium and rare earths. The impact of the supply and demand of such commodities goes well beyond geopolitics and economy, as they also produce externalities at social level as well as the environment, which will also be considered. The syllabus will also pay special attention to the consequences of the invasion of Ukraine that started in 2022, the latest geopolitical confrontation in the Middle East and the ascending "Technological Cold War", including "Chip Wars".

Bibliography

Daniel Yeguin, The New Map. Energy, Climate and the Clash of Nations, Penguin Books (Book)

Javier Blas and Jack Farchy, The World for Sale: Money, Power, and the Traders Who Barter the Earth's Resources, Oxford University Press (Book)

Helen Thompson, Disorder. Hard Times in the 21st Century, Oxford University Press (Book)

, Guide to Commodities: Producers, players and prices; markets, consumers and trends, The Economist (Book)

Activities

In-class discussions and debates

Written and/or oral exams

Teamwork

Group presentations

Readings

Presentations

Interaction with visiting guest professionals

Research work and projects

Content

#	Topic
1	Natural Resources (NRs) and Industrial Revolution(s)
2	NRs in Antiquity and Medieval Age
3	NRs and the Rise of European Empires
4	Congo and NRs: study case
5	Water governance
6	Critical Minerals and Rare Earths
7	Precious metals and Diamonds
8	Energy: fossil fuels
9	Energy: non fossil fuels and sustainability
10	NRs and geopolitics of Space

Assessment

Tool	Assessment tool	Category	Weight %
Written and/or oral exams	Midterm Exam	Retake and ordinary round	40.00%
Written and/or oral exams	Final written exam	Retake and ordinary round	40.00%
Group project	Teamwork and group presentation	Retake and ordinary round	20.00%

PROGRAMS

113S-Law Exchange Program (Undergraduates: Law)
 113S Year 1 (Optative)

G114S-Global Governance Exchange Program (Undergraduates: Law)
 G114S Year 1 (Optative)

GDL20-Double Degree in Law and Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order (Undergraduates: Law)
 GDL20 Year 4 (Optative)

GEL19-Bachelor of Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order (Undergraduates: Law)
 GEL19 Year 3 (Optative)

GEL23-Bachelor of Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order (Undergraduates: Law)
 GEL23 Year 3 (Optative)