UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Environmental Justice and Geopolitics of The Sea

2425-1-F7502Q039

Aims

Understanding of the main questions raised by studying oceanic and transnational spaces in a critical geopolitics / environmental geopolitics / environmental justice perspective

An advanced ability to critically analyze and interrogate scholarship and discourse framing the oceans, and the geopolitical dynamics underway to conquer sea-power.

An engagement with the challenges of inter-disciplinary study and research.

Contents

After a short introduction to the most recent theoretical approaches to political geography and critical geopolitics, the course focuses first on the historical representation of the ocean as a "political and social space" and on how the sea can be framed by international geopolitical discourse, in relation to the processes of territorialisation, geo-power and extra-territoriality of marine spaces.

The second part of the course deals with more specific issues of political ecology and covers the topics of environmental justice/injustice, with particular reference to the themes of protection/conservation of marine areas, ocean grabbing and the rights of indigenous peoples.

Detailed program

The political geography of the sea: the "classical" approach

A (critical) political geo-graphy of the sea? thinking about the sea / representing the sea / exploiting the “geopolitical features” of the sea

Geo-graphy and the power of representation /Dividing (and naming) the ocean sea: the East Sea/ Sea of Japan issue

The territorialisation of the sea /Territorial claims and islands disputes: the Dokdo-Takeshima issue

Geographical definitions and island disputes: the Sankeku-Diaoyu issue/ climate change and vanishing islands/reefs: Okininotori: a shima, or a reef’?

A classical approach to the geopolitics of the sea/ the myth of sea power: A.T. Mahan theoretical positions / China as a maritime power and the South China Sea competition (Spratly, Paracel and more)

Sea power, sea nodes and islands as U.S. bases: The Hawai’i and Pearl Harbor, Midway and Wake, Guam

Sea power, sea nodes and islands as overseas U.S. bases/ bases of empire and lily pads: Guantanamo, Micronesia and Marshall Islands, Okinawa, Diego Garcia

LSMPAs (Large Scale Maritime Protected Areas): conservation or geopolitics?

Extra-territoriality and Cruise tourism as an example of globalization

Geopolitics of the oceans and environmental justice

Prerequisites

none

Teaching form

42 hours / English / face to face lectures, in presence: 60% / interactive activities in presence: 40%

Textbook and teaching resource

Suggested readings:

Flint C. (2024). Near and far waters: the geopolitics of seapower, Stanford University Press.

De Santo, E. M. (2024). Securitizing Marine Protected Areas: Geopolitics, Environmental Justice, and Science. Taylor & Francis.

Semester

Second Semester

Assessment method

Two ppt presentations on a topic of the student's choice

Office hours

by appointment, in person or online
Room 358/U7 third floor

Sustainable Development Goals

GENDER EQUALITY | CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | CLIMATE ACTION | LIFE BELOW WATER | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS