In the past twenty years—in the era of globalization—countries around the world have dramatically expanded security and military practices at borders. On the one hand, the world is as connected as it has ever been through the internet, air travel, and the global production of consumer goods. On the other hand, we live in the most bordered period in history as countries around the world harden their edges to restrict the movement of unauthorized goods and people. These changes include dozens of fences and walls, substantial increases in funding, large deployments of troops, and the use of sophisticated monitoring technologies from drones to remote sensing.

This seminar in political geography, which is fulfills the elective requirement in the International Cultural Studies Certificate, considers this paradox by examining the history and contemporary practice of sovereignty in the state system. Do contemporary security practices represent a fundamental reconfiguration of the concept of sovereignty? Or are they simply the latest iteration of a long term process of enclosure that creates discrete bounded territories and peoples? We will consider the history of the idea of states, territories, borders, and nations before analyzing the contemporary organization of political space.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Critically engage different approaches to the state among various works and theorists, particularly those from geography
- Evaluate major trends in the study of borders, territory, and sovereignty
- Identify research questions and issues related to political geography
- Employ strategies for writing and publishing original research in appropriate academic forums

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1) Participate in weekly discussions of assigned readings (25%).

   Read assigned book, read discussion leader’s summaries and critiques on Laulima, write down several questions or comments before class.

2) Serve as discussion leader (25%).

   During the semester you will lead the weekly discussion twice. This will require you to:
Compose a short summary of the book, a critique or comment on the argument, and a list of questions for class discussion (1-2 pages, single spaced). Deadline: Post on Laulima by 6 pm Tuesday.

Initiate the class discussion with a 10-15 minute introduction. The introduction should provide a background on the author, summarize the major arguments of the book, draw out key analytical issues, note the similarities/differences in the approaches of previous authors, critique specific arguments, and/or analyze the writing style. You should not simply read your 1-2 page summary aloud.

Facilitate the discussion (with the instructor). Develop 4-5 discussion questions for the seminar. Some questions should delve into the specifics of the book. Others should attempt to draw out how the book fits within broader academic or public policy debates. What are the implications of this book? Does it change your view of a theoretical or empirical topic?

3) Write a seminar paper in your area of research (50%).

The final paper for this seminar could take many different forms. It could be a chapter for your thesis or dissertation (not something previously written), a new idea you would like to develop for publication, or something else chosen in consultation with the instructor. I am open to creative ideas that will help you further your academic goals. I prefer the (author date) citation method used in most of the social sciences, but you are welcome to use whichever style is standard for your discipline.

I am particularly interested in assisting graduate students in publishing their work and we will devote significant time to different strategies for navigating, and succeeding in, academic publishing.

A short proposal is due in the 5th week of class (February 08). This should be a 1/2 page single spaced description of your research question, thesis, data sources and methods, potential secondary sources, and targeted journal, if applicable. If you have questions about the research paper, please see me prior to turning in the proposal.

A first draft is due in the 15th week of class (April 18). We will do a peer review activity in class and we will discuss the progress of your paper.

The final paper should be approximately 20 pages of text, double spaced, and is due Friday May 06.
COURSE TOPICS AND READINGS:

Week 1 (01/11)  Introduction
Week 2 (01/18)  No class MLK Day

SECTION I: The History of States and Territory

Week 3: (01/25)

Week 4: (02/01)

Week 5: (02/08)

Note: Research paper proposal due in class

Week 6: (02/15)  No Class Presidents Day

SECTION II: Capital, Militarism, and the State

Week 7: (02/22)

Week 8: (02/29)

Week 9: (03/07)

Week 10: (03/14)
Week 11: (03/21)  
Spring Break

Week 12: (3/28)  
AAG Week

SECTION III: Borders and Migration

Week 13: (04/04)

Week 14: (04/11)

Week 15: (04/18)  
Peer review

Draft due in class for peer review.

Week 16 (04/25)

Week 17 (05/02)