Far Western University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Bachelor of Arts

Course Title: Strategic Geography and Geopolitics	Full Marks: 100
Course Code: GBS 121	Pass Marks: 45
Level: Undergraduate	Credit:3
Semester: Second	Teaching Hours: 48
Nature of Course: Theory	Nature: Compulsory

1. Course Description

Geopolitics is one of the principal buzzwords in Nepal's foreign policy and domestic politics. The key questions that students will address through this course are as follows: Does geography shape (or limit) a state's choices? In what ways are nations prisoners of their own landscapes, where mountains, rivers, deserts, and climate constrain leaders' decisions and influence war, politics, and development? How does geopolitics explain global affairs through the lens of geography? How can we understand the geographical shaping of relations between Nepal's neighbours, China and India? Finally, how is the rise of these powers influencing Nepal's relations with them?

Examining how contemporary global politics is shifting from traditional geopolitics—focused on territory, military power, and state rivalry—toward geoeconomics, in which economic instruments such as trade, investment, finance, and infrastructure play a central role in power competition, will be a key theme of this course. Students will also critically examine Nepal's contemporary position and strategies within these changing dynamics.

2. Course Objective

The primary objectives of this course are to:

- enhance understanding of strategic geography and geopolitics;
- describe and compare the strategic geography of major states;
- identify and explain major theoretical approaches to geopolitics and global geopolitical shifts;
- explain and compare the positions of landlocked countries in Asia and the world;
- examine the key opportunities and challenges that Nepal may face in the emerging global order;

- examine the causes and consequences of the "Asian century," with particular reference to Nepal's position; and
- apply these insights to everyday public discourse as responsible citizens.

3. Specific Objectives and Course Contents

Specific Objective	Course Contents	HR
Understand and Explore	**Russia & China** a) Geography limits political choices b) Nations are "Prisoners" of their landscape c) Geopolitics of global affairs d) Geography and conflict	10
Understand and Explore	**USA & Europe** a) Geography limits political choices b) Nations are "Prisoners" of their landscape c) Geopolitics of global affairs d) Geography and conflict	10
Discuss	**Middle-East, India and Pakistan** a) Why frequent war in Middle East? b) Conflict between India and Pakistan c) Kashmir conflict d) China as factor in India-Pakistan relations	10
Analyze	**Theories of Geopolitics and Geoeconomics** a) Theories of geopolitics b) Different approaches c) From geopolitics to geoeconomics	6
Examine	**Geopolitics of Land Locked Country** a) New geopolitics b) Landlockedness and foreign policy decisions c) Geopolitics in South Asia d) Over-dependence and reliance e) Soft power f) Comparative analysis g) Asia vs. Europe	6
Apply	**Asian Era and Nepal's Strategic Choices** a) Define the new Asia era b) Asia centric new world order c) Nepal's strategic choice	6
TOTAL TEACHING HOURS		48

4. Evaluation

International Evaluation	40 Percent (%)	External Evaluation	60 Percent (%)

Essential Reading

Unit I: Russia and China

- Marshall, T. (2016). *Prisoners of geography: ten maps that explain everything about the world* (Vol. 1). Simon and Schuster (pp. 11-63)

Reference Materials

- Power, M., & Mohan, G. (2010). Towards a critical geopolitics of China's engagement with African development. *Geopolitics*, *15*(3), 462-495.

Unit II: USA and Europe

- Marshall, T. (2016). *Prisoners of geography: ten maps that explain everything about the world* (Vol. 1). Simon and Schuster (pp. 64-109)

Reference Materials

Mercille, J. (2008). The radical geopolitics of US foreign policy: Geopolitical and geoeconomic logics of power. *Political Geography*, *27*(5), 570-586.

Unit III: Middle-East, India and Pakistan

- Marshall, T. (2016). *Prisoners of geography: ten maps that explain everything about the world* (Vol. 1). Simon and Schuster (pp. 134-193)

Reference Materials

- Samaddar, T., & Mahanta, T. (2025). Global Geopolitical Power Shifts: The Role of India, Pakistan and China. *Global Geopolitical Power Shifts: The Role of India, Pakistan and China-Bharti Publications, Edition*, *1*, 191-205.
- Chand, H. P. (2025). Geopolitics of South Asia: Historical Analysis and Contemporary Debate. *JANUS. NET*, *16*(1), 218-240.

Unit IV: Theories of Geopolitics and Geoeconomics

- Whisker, J. B., & Spiker, K. R. (2022). *Theories of geopolitics*. Nova Science Publishers (1-19).
- Cowen, D., & Smith, N. (2009). After geopolitics? From the geopolitical social to geoeconomics. *Antipode*, *41*(1), 22-48.

Unit V: Geopolitics of Land Locked Country

- Bhatnagar, S., & Shahab Ahmed, Z. (2021). Geopolitics of landlocked states in South Asia: a comparative analysis of Afghanistan and Nepal. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, *75*(1), 60-79.

Reference Materials

- Plottka, J. (2025). Geopolitics in Central Asia: The European Union Participating in a New Great Game over Land-Locked Countries?. In *The European Union's Geopolitics: The Lackluster World Power* (pp. 241-262). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Pant, R. (2025). Soft Power of Asian Land-Locked Countries: A Comparative Study of Nepal and Mongolia. *Journal of Political Science*, *25*, 201-213.
- Karki, S., & Thapa, G. S. (2023). Assymteric Dependence between Small and Landlocked States and Maritime Neighbours. *Walking among Giants*, 79.

Unit VI: Asian Era and Nepal's Strategic Choices

- Duara, P. (2010). Asia redux: Conceptualizing a region for our times. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, *69*(4), 963-983.
- Acharya, A. (2011). Can Asia lead? Power ambitions and global governance in the twenty-first century. *International affairs*, *87*(4), 851-869.

5. Methods and Techniques of Instruction

a) Lecture and interactive discussion
b) Home assignment
c) Student's presentation (individual and group)
d) Class discussion
e) Guest lectures

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Course Title: Foreign Policy Analysis	Full Marks: 100
Course Code: GBS 122	Pass Marks: 45
Level: Undergraduate	Credit:3
Semester: Second	Teaching Hours: 48
Nature of Course: Theory	Nature: Compulsory

6. Course Description

The role of domestic politics in foreign policy has been increasing over time. Until the 1970s, academic inquiries into foreign policy were largely focused on structural theories of international relations, such as realism and Marxism. However, with the advancement of globalization and the growing complexity of interdependence among states, the roles and interactions of various domestic actors in foreign policy have become increasingly significant. Consequently, consideration of these complexities has become essential for explaining the foreign policy of nation-states. The development of neoclassical realism—which explains a state's foreign policy by combining system-level pressures from the international system with domestic-level factors within the state—serves as a prime example of this shift.

Foreign policy analysis is concerned not only with the actors involved in a state's formal decision-making apparatus but also with the diverse subnational sources of influence on foreign policy. The interactions among these actors in the foreign policy decision-making process constitute a central focus of this course. To examine these dynamics, the course introduces a range of methodological approaches in foreign policy analysis, including rational choice, psychological, and organizational perspectives. It also covers Nepal's major foreign policy priority areas, such as security, economy, energy, environment, migration, and foreign aid. Moreover, how Nepal **needs to improve its image in international forums** is also an important concern of this course.

7. Course Objective

The primary objectives of this course are to:

- enhance understanding of foreign policy analysis;
- describe and compare two major concepts: national interests and state preferences;

- identify and explain major theoretical approaches to examine the decision-making process of foreign policy;
- explain and critically examine Nepal's contemporary foreign policy priorities and diplomatic practice;
- examine Nepal's major foreign policy priority areas, such as security, economy, energy, environment, migration, and foreign aid; and
- apply the critical understanding in Nepal's foreign policy.

8. Specific Objectives and Course Contents

Specific Objective	Course Contents	HR
Understand and Explore	**Understanding Foreign Policy** e) Decision making process f) Behaviour analysis g) Foreign policy outcomes	9
Understand and Explore	**Determinants of Foreign Policy** e) International political sphere, domestic political sphere and foreign policy f) Do leaders shape foreign policy? g) IR theories and foreign policy	6
Discuss	**National Interests and State Preferences** e) Realism: power and interest f) State preferences and liberalism g) Construction of national interest h) Neo-classical realism	9
Analyze	**Major Approaches to Foreign Policy** d) Group decision making e) Organizational process and bureaucratic politics f) Psychological and Societal Milieux of Foreign Policy Decision Making	7
Examine	**Nepal's Foreign Policy -I** h) Nepal's foreign policy 2077 i) Migration and public diplomacy j) National security k) Economy l) Energy m) Foreign Aid	10
Apply	**Nepal's Foreign Policy -II** d) Overcoming the a balancer or hedger e) Nepal's undiplomatic practices in global environmental justice forums	7
TOTAL TEACHING HOURS		48

9. Evaluation

International Evaluation	40 Percent (%)	External Evaluation	60 Percent (%)

Essential Reading

Unit I: Understanding Foreign Policy

- Breuning, M. (2007). *Foreign policy analysis: A comparative introduction*. Springer. (pp. 1-26)

Reference Materials

- Kaarbo, J., Lantis, J. S., & Beasley, R. K. (2013). The analysis of foreign policy in comparative perspective. *Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective–Domestic and International Influences on State Behavior. CQpress: Sage Publications*, 1-21.
- Hudson, V. M., & Vore, C. S. (1995). Foreign policy analysis yesterday, today, and tomorrow. *Mershon International Studies Review*, *39*(Supplement_2), 209-238.
- Hudson, V. M. (2005). Foreign policy analysis: Actor-specific theory and the ground of international relations. *Foreign policy analysis*, 1-30.
- Hudson, V. M., & Day, B. S. (2019). *Foreign policy analysis: classic and contemporary theory*. Bloomsbury Publishing PLC. (p. 28)

Unit II: Determinants of Foreign Policy

- Breuning, M. (2007). *Foreign policy analysis: A comparative introduction*. Springer. (pp. 27-52)
- Fearon, J. D. (1998). Domestic politics, foreign policy, and theories of international relations. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 1(1), 289-313.

Unit III: National Interests and State Preferences

- Pham, J. P. (2008). What is in the National Interest? Hans Morgenthau's realist vision and American foreign policy. *American Foreign Policy Interests*, *30*(5), 256-265.
- Moravcsik, A. (1997). Taking preferences seriously: A liberal theory of international politics. *International organization*, *51*(4), 513-553.

Reference Materials

- Weldes, J. (1996). Constructing national interests. *European journal of international relations*, *2*(3), 275-318.
- Lobell, S. E., Ripsman, N. M., & Taliaferro, J. W. (Eds.). (2009). *Neoclassical realism, the state, and foreign policy*. Cambridge University Press (pp. 1-31).
- नीति अनुसन्धान प्रतिष्ठान। (२०८१)। *राष्ट्रिय हितः सैद्धान्तिक अवधारणा, आयाम र अभ्यास*। काठमाडौं: नीति अनुसन्धान प्रतिष्ठान।

Unit IV: Major Approaches to Foreign Policy Analysis

- Hudson, V. M. (2005). Foreign policy analysis: Actor-specific theory and the ground of international relations. *Foreign policy analysis*, 1-30.

Reference Materials

- Redd, S. B., & Mintz, A. (2013). Policy perspectives on national security and foreign policy decision making. *Policy Studies Journal*, *41*, S11-S37.
- Alden, C., Aran, A., & Alves, A. C. (2016). *Foreign policy analysis: new approaches*. Routledge.

Unit V: Nepal - I

- Government of Nepal. *Nepal's Foreign Policy – 2077*
- Adhikari, K.N. & Nyaichyai, L. (2022), Effective Use of Public Diplomacy in the Context of Nepal. [PRI Publication No. 053]. Kathmandu: Policy Research Institute.

Reference Materials

- Pandey, N. N., & Delinic, T. (Eds.). (2011). *Nepal's national interest: Foreign policy, internal security, federalism, energy-economy*. Centre for South Asian Studies & Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
- Dangi, M. B., Schoenberger, E., Boland, J. J., & Chaudhary, R. P. (2021). Quest for development: An examination of more than a half-century of national planning and foreign aid practice in Nepal. *Sustainable Futures*, *3*, 100051.

Unit VI: Nepal - II

- Johny, E. (2024). Foreign policy strategies of Nepal between China and India: bandwagon or hedging. *International Politics*, 1-19.
- Pandey, C. L., & Dahal, N. (2022). Rethinking climate diplomacy gains: Strategic benefits to Nepal. *Journal of Foreign Affairs*, *2*(01), 69-87.

10. Methods and Techniques of Instruction

f) Lecture and interactive discussion
g) Home assignment
h) Student's presentation (individual and group)
i) Class discussion
j) Guest lectures