

Course Title: Maritime Geopolitics and the Indian Ocean (MA optional)

Number of Credits: 4

Course Instructor: Prof. Sanjay Chaturvedi

Course Description: The Indian Ocean and its regional seas have become pivotal to an increasingly ocean-centric, ocean-driven regional and global geopolitics. The Indian Ocean Region—with its complex, cultural, socio-economic, and political diversity— appears to be the fulcrum of globalizing international geopolitical economy. The major shifts in geopolitical tectonic plates (e.g. simultaneous rise of Euro-Asian Rimland) and the imperatives of multi-faceted maritime security have resulted in high stakes of state as well as non-state actors and agencies in securing the uninterrupted flows of ship-borne international trade passing through the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs) in the Indian Ocean and the larger Indo-Pacific maritime domain.

South Asia—comprising three littoral states namely India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, two island states of Sri Lanka and Maldives and three ‘landlocked’ states of Afghanistan, Nepal and Bhutan with transit rights under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea—is one of the most diverse and complex sub-regions of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Geopolitically, it is profoundly impacted by the shifting alliances, strategic partnerships, and new forms of alignment in the Indian Ocean and the larger Indo-Pacific. Central to contemporary Indian Ocean maritime geopolitics today are the issues related to maritime security, which include securing Indian Ocean/Indo-Pacific sea lanes of communication (SLOCS), the challenge of piracy and maritime terrorism, complex interplay between China’s Belt & Road Initiative and the Indo-Pacific strategic narratives of connectivity, environmental degradation and climate change, irregular migration and human security at sea.

Minimum prerequisites for this course, if any: This course would be offered to MA IInd year students, with background in social sciences.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the course, students would be able to:

- (i) Better understanding of the multiple geographies and social constructions of the Indian Ocean as a maritime space-place, the Indian Ocean Region and maritime South Asia, and the intersection of classical and critical perspectives on maritime geopolitics.
- (ii) A critical appreciation of the need to pluralize the concepts of maritime security and maritime order.
- (iii) Developing insights into the complex interplay between the strategic narratives of the Indo-Pacific and China’s Maritime Silk Route strategy and its implications for South Asia.
- (iv) A critical understanding of the Indo-Pacific dimension of Indian Ocean geopolitics.

Course Structure (with units):

I. Indian Ocean and Maritime Geopolitics: Classical and Critical Perspectives

The objective of this unit is two-fold. First, to provide a brief overview of physical, historical (Indian Ocean World), socio-economic, human-cultural, legal and strategic geographies of the vast and diverse Indian Ocean and its sub-regional seas, including maritime South Asia.

Second, to elucidate the concept of ‘maritime geopolitics’, discussing and illustrating both classical and critical geopolitical-strategic perspectives.

II. Indian Ocean Geopolitics and Geostrategy: Agendas, Actors and Alliances

This unit accounts for the growing significance of Indian Ocean, its bordering states and islands in global geopolitics and geostrategy. It looks at the growing assertions of classical geopolitical-strategic tenets of the Mahanian theory ‘sea-power’, including naval projection, control of sea-routes and access to bases by both India and external powers. It also examines the implications of growing India-China competition in many parts of the Indian Ocean Region for South Asia.

III. Maritime Order and Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean

This unit critically examines notion of ‘maritime order’, on the intersections of so-called traditional and non-traditional threats to ‘maritime security’. Taking the examples of piracy, IUU fishing, human smuggling and irregular migration in the Indian Ocean region, it invites critical attention to interplay between considerations of national security and human security and safety at sea.

IV. Maritime Regionalism: Challenges and Opportunities before the Indian Ocean Rim Association

This unit aims at introducing the concept of ‘maritime regionalism’, and the important role it could play in providing shoreline and infrastructure protection, water quality maintenance, food security, livelihood support, and innovative ocean governance architecture in the Indian Ocean region. The unit also examines both the role of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in providing overall leadership in maritime regionalism, and the promise and potential of BIMSTEC in the Bay of Bengal.

V. Geoeconomics and Geopolitics of Maritime Connectivity: Implications of the interplay between Indo-Pacific and China’s BRI for South Asia

This unit, against the backdrop of the complex interplay between the strategic narratives of the Indo-Pacific and China’s maritime silk route strategy, examines the implications of competing—at times clashing—narratives of maritime connectivity for South Asia.

VI. Maritime South Asia and Emerging Challenges and Opportunities in the Indian Ocean Region

This unit, looking ahead, identifies emerging challenges and opportunities before South Asia including ‘Blue Economy’ (a concept yet to be operationalized), Cyber Security (mitigation and regulation of risks as ships and ports get increasingly connected to each other through cyberspace), and Communication Security’ (in the form of undersea fiber-optic cables –Cable Highways— through which nearly all voice and internet traffic, including financial and military transmissions, travels), irregular migration, natural disasters and climate change.

Readings:

(Please note that required and recommended readings will be specified; as and when required, additional readings may be suggested.)

Agarwala, N. & Premesha Saha, P. (2019) Is the Bay of Bengal Regaining its Lost Importance? *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 15:3, 336-345.

Amrith, S. S. (2013). *Crossing the Bay of Bengal*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press.

Bateman, S. (2016). Maritime security governance in the Indian Ocean region. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 12(1), 5-23.

Berlin, D. (2010). Sea power, land power and the Indian Ocean. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 6(1), 52-66.

Bisht, M. (2020). Towards a networked strategy: framework for maritime South Asia. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 16(2), 182-201.

Blanchard, Jean Marc F(ed.) (2018) *China's Maritime Silk Road Initiative and South Asia: A Political Economic Analysis of its Purposes, Perils, and Promise*, New York: Macmillan Palgrave. (Chapters 1 & 4)

Blanchard, Jean-Marc, F. & Flint, C. (2017) "The Geopolitics of China's Maritime Silk Road Initiative," *Geopolitics*, 22:2, 223-245.

Bo, H., & Yanpei, Z. (2019). *Chinese Maritime Power in the 21st Century: Strategic Planning, Policy and Predictions*. London: Routledge.

Bouchard, C., & Crumplin, W. (2010). Neglected no longer: the Indian Ocean at the forefront of world geopolitics and global geostrategy. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 6(1), 26-51.

Brears, R. C. (2021). *Developing the Blue Economy*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature. (Chapter 3)

Brewster, D. (2018) *India and China at Sea: Competition for Naval Dominance in the Indian Ocean*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Chapters 1-3)

Bueger, C. (2015). What is maritime security?. *Marine Policy*, 53, 159-164.

Cannon, B. J., & Hakata, K. (eds.). (2022). *Indo-Pacific Strategies: Navigating Geopolitics at the Dawn of a New Age*. Routledge. (Chapters 1 & 2)

Chacko, P. (ed.) (2016) *New Regional Geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific: Drivers, Dynamics and Consequences*, London, Routledge.

Chapman, Bert, "Undersea Cables: The Ultimate Geopolitical Chokepoint" (2021). FORCES Initiative: Strategy, Security, and Social Systems. Paper 1.
<https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/forces/1>

Chaturvedi, S. (2017) "Mapping Maritime Order in the Greater Indian Ocean from IR Perspectives" in Yogendra Kumar (ed.) *Whither Indian Ocean Maritime Order*, New Delhi, Knowledge World.

Chaturvedi, S. and Sakhujia, V. (2015) *Climate Change and the Bay of Bengal: Emerging Geographies of Fear and Hope*, Singapore: ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute & New Delhi: Pentagon Press. (Chapters 2, 3, 6 & 7)

- Choong, W. (2019) “The Return of the Indo-Pacific Strategy: An assessment, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, DOI: 10.1080/10357718.2019.1639134
- Christian, Le Mière (2014) *Maritime diplomacy in the 21st century: Drivers and challenges*. Routledge. (Chapters 1 & 5)
- Chung, C. P. (2018). What are the strategic and economic implications for South Asia of China's Maritime Silk Road initiative?. *The Pacific Review*, 31(3), 315-332.
- Cordner, L. (2010) “Rethinking Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region,” *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 6 (1): 67-85.
- De, Prabir (ed.) (2018) *Twenty years of BIMSTEC: Promoting Regional Cooperation and Integration in the Bay of Bengal Region*, New Delhi, Knowledge World.
- Germond, Basil (2015) *The Maritime Dimension of European Security: Seapower and the European Union*, Palgrave Macmillan. (Chapter 2)
- Germond, B. (2015). The geopolitical dimension of maritime security. *Marine Policy*, 54, 137-142.
- Gresh, G. F. (2020). *To Rule Eurasia's Waves: The New Great Power Competition at Sea*. Yale University Press.(Chapters 5 & 6)
- Gupta, M. (2011) *The Indian Ocean Region: Maritime Regimes for Regional Cooperation*(New York: Springer, 2011. (Chapter 2)
- Hardy, D. (2019) “Repositioning the Bay of Bengal: Implications of Regional Change”, *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 15:3, 265-280.
- Holmes, J. R., & Yoshihara, T. (2012). *Chinese naval strategy in the 21st century: The turn to Mahan*. London: Routledge.
- Hong, W., & Ciyuan, L. (2018). Indian Ocean Rim Association: New Developments and China's Engagement. *China International Studies*, 70, 152-168.
- Hopcraft, Rory and Keith M. Martin (2018) Effective Maritime Cybersecurity Regulation – the Case for a Cyber Code”, *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 14:3, 354-366.
- Jaiswal, P. and Bhatt, P. C. (eds.) (2021) *Rebalancing Asia: The Belt and Road Initiative and Asia Pacific Strategy*, Singapore: Springer. (Chapters 3, 4, 9, 10 & 11)
- Kumar, Y. (ed.) (2018) *Whither Indian Ocean Maritime Order*, Contributions to a Seminar on Narendra Modi's SAGAR Speech, New Delhi, Knowledge World. (Chapters 2,3,5 & 14)
- Malcolm, J. A., & Murday, L. (2017). Small islands' understanding of maritime security: the cases of Mauritius and Seychelles. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 13(2), 234-256

Malecki, E. J. and Wei, H. (2009), A Wired World: The Evolving Geography of Submarine Cables and the Shift to Asia, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 99(2): pp. 360– 382.

Matsuda, T. (2020). Explaining Japan’s post-Cold War security policy trajectory: maritime realism. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 74(6), 687-703.

Panikkar, K. M. (1945). *India and the Indian Ocean: An essay on the influence of sea power on Indian history*. London: Allen & Unwin. (Chapter 1)

Rahman, M. R. (2021). Gambling with humanity at sea: states' legislative and policy responses to irregular migration in the Indian Ocean. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 1-17. DOI: 10.1080/19480881.2021.2001984

Rumley, D. and Chaturvedi, S. (eds.) (2015) *Energy Security and the Indian Ocean Region*, London: Routledge Revivals. (Chapters 1,2 & 12)

Rumley, D. and Chaturvedi, S.(eds.) (2015) *Security of the Sea Lanes of Communication in the Indian Ocean Region*, London: Routledge Revivals. (Chapters 4, 7 & 8)

Rumley, D. and Doyle, T. (ed.) (2015) *Indian Ocean Regionalism*, London and New York: Routledge.

Rumley, D., Doyle, T. & Chaturvedi, S. (2012) ‘Securing’ the Indian Ocean? Competing regional security constructions, *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 8:1, 1-20.

Russell, G. (2006). Alfred Thayer Mahan and American geopolitics: the conservatism and realism of an imperialist. *Geopolitics*, 11(1), 119-140.

Onyango Ogutu, M. (2021). The Indian Ocean Rim Association: Lessons from this regional cooperation model. *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 28(1), 71-92.

Scott, D. (2021). Small Island Strategies in the Indo-Pacific by Large Powers. *The Journal of Territorial and Maritime Studies*, 8(1), 66–85.

Steinberg, P. E. (2001). *The Social Construction of the Ocean*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Chapter 1)

Stockbruegger, J. (2021) US Strategy and the Rise of Private Maritime Security, *Security Studies*, 30:4, 578-602.

Techera, Erika J. (2018) “Supporting Blue Economy Agenda: Fisheries, Food Security and Climate Change in the Indian Ocean”, *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, (14)1: 7-27.

Voyer, M., Schofield, C., Azmi, K., Warner, R., McIlgorm, A. & Quirk, G. (2018). Maritime security and the Blue Economy: intersections and interdependencies in the Indian Ocean. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 14:1, 28-48.

Wagner, C. (2013) “The Indian Ocean Rim – Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR–ARC): the Futile Quest for Regionalism?”, *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 9:1, 6-16.

Assessment: The course assignment will carry 40 percent of weightage, which could include a full-length term paper of 5000 words. The examination for the course will account for the remaining 60 percent of the evaluation.