Course Outline Britain and the Geopolitics of the Baltic, 1600 to present
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The Baltic – the littoral of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, and Sweden – has been an area of considerable importance to England, Scotland and then the United Kingdom. In the 16th and 17th centuries it was a vital trading partner and source of timber, furs and many other products. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Royal Navy drew most of its naval stores from the Baltic, watched jealously over the balance of power in that region and intervened against Russia. In the 20th century Britain encouraged the independence of the Baltic states in 1918-19 and fought both the Bolsheviks and the Nazis there. Later, the Baltic states, which regained their independence from the Soviet Union in 1990-91 and then secured membership of the European Union and NATO, were supported by the British government. Today British forces provide the backbone of NATO deterrence against Vladimir Putin in Estonia. This course of seven two-hour seminar-lectures will trace the evolution of this important relationship through the lens of historical geopolitics. In the final week, students will participate in a simulation exercise organised around a fictional future geopolitical crisis, featuring guests with longstanding foreign policy experience.

General Surveys


Theoretical Works (for additional stimulation only, not to be considered a definitive framework)


Week 1: The Rise of Sweden, 1600-1701

Primary sources

- Andreas Bureus, Orbis Arctoni Nova et Accurate Delineatio, 1626 (map).

Secondary sources

Week 2: Commerce and Neutrality, 1701-1779

Primary Sources

- Pamphlet of George Mackenzie, British Envoy to Poland (1710-14), and Russia (1715).
- Catherine II of Russia’s Nakaz on Britain and international commerce, 1767.

Secondary sources

- Davies, J.D., Alan James, and Gijs Rommelse, eds. Ideologies of Western Naval Power, c. 1500-1815. 1st. London: Routledge, 2019. https://cam.llds.org.uk/vdc_100084401231.0x000001. (Also relevant to week 3)
- Herbert Kaplan, Overseas Commerce with Great Britain during the Reign of Catherine II, Philadelphia 1995
- Kahan, & R. Hellie, The plow, the hammer and the knout: an economic history of eighteenth-century Russia, University of Chicago Press 1985
- Roberts, Michael, British diplomacy and Swedish politics, 1758-1773 (Minneapolis, 1980)

Week 3: Intervention and Conflict, 1780-1815

Primary Sources

- Commissioners for Trade and Plantations on the Baltic Timber Trade in 1800 (NA, CO 325/30).
John Bull embracing the pie man or a friendly visit to Zeland (caricature of bombardment of Copenhagen, 1807).


**Secondary Sources**


**Week 4: The Geopolitics of a Backwater, 1815-1914**
Primary Sources

- Speeches by Disraeli and Earl Russell on German-Danish War, 27.6.1864 In Plumb and Wiener, I, pp. 449-462.
- Swedish export statistics from the Crimean War, taken from G. Fridlizius, 'The Crimean war and the Swedish economy', Economy and History, 3:1, 56-103, 1960

Secondary Sources

- Lambert, Andrew, "Under the heel of Britannia, the Bombardment of Sweaborg 8–10 August 1855" in Capt. P. Hore RN ed. Seapower Ashore: 200 Years of Royal Navy Operations on Land (London, 2001)

Week 5: The World Wars, 1914-1945

Primary sources

- Baltic Project, Lord Fisher, National Archives, 1914, CAB 21/5.
• Records of the Committee for the creation of the Free City of Danzig. National Archives, FO 608/61/10, FO 608/70/11.

Secondary Sources

• Hovi, Kalervo, *Cordon sanitaire or barriere de l’Est?: the emergence of the New French Eastern European Alliance Policy 1917-1919* (Turku: Turun yliopisto, 1975)
• Hovi, Olavi, *Baltic area in British policy, 1918-1921. vol. 1: From the compleigne armistice to the implementation of the Versailles treaty, 11.11.1918-20.1.1920* (Helsinki: [s.n.], 1980)

Primary sources

KGB reports on SIS activity in Baltic States
Report on speech by Margaret Thatcher 1990

Secondary sources

Week 7: NATO and EU, 1992-2021

Primary sources

- Tony Blair’s Speech at the European Institute:
  https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/nov/23/euro.eu1
- SNP Nordic/Baltic Policy Statement.
  https://www.army.mod.uk/deployments/baltics/.

Secondary sources

- Geoffrey, Till, Britain and NATO’s Northern flank, Hampshire, 1998
- Johnson, Robert, and Janne Haaland Matlary. The United Kingdom’s Defence after Brexit: Britain’s Alliances, Coalitions, and Partnerships / Edited by Rob Johnson, Janne Haaland Matlary. 2018.
- Readman Spohr Kristina, Germany and the Baltic problem after the Cold war, Routledge, 2005;
• Smith, David, *The Baltic states and their region New Europe or old?*, Amsterdam – New York, 2005;

• Rogers, James, and Uģis Romanovs. “Brexit: Military Implications for the Baltic States.” In *Riga Conference Papers 2016*. Riga, 2016. [https://www.academia.edu/29575647/Brexit_Military_Implications_for_the_Baltic_States](https://www.academia.edu/29575647/Brexit_Military_Implications_for_the_Baltic_States)