

# State Development and State Capacity

## Details

Instructor: Bogdan G. Popescu

Hours: TBA

Total Hours of Contact: 2:30 per week

Credits: 3

Prerequisites: None

Office Hours: TBA

## Course Description

This course aims to teach students about state formation and political development from a comparative-historical viewpoint. Students will be exposed to various approaches describing the emergence of states, including philosophical, political economy, and sociological perspectives. It will investigate how historical trajectories influence contemporary political and policy outcomes on a global scale. The course will explore questions like:

- What is “the State”?
- What are the origins of the state?
- Why do some states excel in revenue collection and public service provision while others struggle?
- Why do nationalism and ethnic identity play a more prominent role in the politics of specific countries?
- How do historical legacies shape the patterns of political inclusiveness, democracy, and economic inequality over time?

The course will examine various regional contexts, including Europe, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the United States. By the course’s conclusion, students will be able to scrutinize diverse political outcomes through the lens of state formation.

## Summary of Course Content

The course introduces students to a variety of interrelated topics: 1) the emergence of modern states; 2) the evolution of state institutions (such as tax systems, justice systems, and educational framework) and state capacity; 3) how these institutions continue to influence politics today. It explores how historical trajectories shape contemporary political and policy outcomes globally, addressing questions such as the nature and origins of the state, characteristics of state institutions, the role

of nationalism and ethnicity in politics, and reasons for variations in revenue collection and public service provision as they relate to state-making.

## Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course the students will:

- have a comprehensive understanding of what constitutes “the State” and its historical origins
- analyze how historical paths and events have shaped contemporary political and policy outcomes worldwide
- compare and contrast countries and regions, including Europe, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and the United States, regarding state formation and political development.
- recognize how historical legacies continue to shape patterns of political inclusion, democracy, and economic inequality

## Assessment

You will be graded based on how well-prepared you come to class. During the first session, there will be primarily a lecture, while the second session will be dedicated to student presentations and a discussion. During the second session, students must demonstrate their knowledge of the readings and ability to engage in independent, critical thinking. References to current global issues will be a constant. Contributions to class discussion, especially during the second session, will represent 33% of the final grade.

There will be a mid-term in-class, closed-book exam, which will test the improvement of students’ knowledge of the theories and facts developed in the first half of the course. There will also be a final exam, which will be comprehensive of all topics covered in the course. The exam will test students’ knowledge and ability to engage in proactive, independent critical thinking. Both the mid-term and final exams represent 33% of the grade.

A major exam (midterm or final) cannot be made up without the permission of the Dean’s Office. The Dean’s Office will grant such permission only when the absence was caused by a serious impediment, such as a documented illness, hospitalization or death in the immediate family (in which you must attend the funeral) or other situations of similar gravity. Absences due to other meaningful conflicts, such as job interviews, family celebrations, travel difficulties, student misunderstandings or personal convenience, will not be excused. Students who will be absent from a major exam must notify the Dean’s Office prior to that exam. Absences from class due to the observance of a religious holiday will normally be excused. Individual students who will have to miss class to observe a religious holiday should notify the instructor by the end of the Add/Drop period to make prior arrangements for making up any work that will be missed.

## Attendance

Students are required to attend classes following the University’s policies. Students with more than four unexcused absences (two weeks) are assumed to have withdrawn from the course. Thus, students must attend classes and all exams in person on campus (unless otherwise required by the University). Students with a justified need to participate in any exam remotely may do so only if express permission has been obtained from the Dean’s Office before the exam.

## Students with Learning Difficulties and other Disabilities

The University does not discriminate based on disability. Students with approved accommodations must inform their professors at the beginning of the term. Please see the website for the complete policy.

## Required Books

There are no specific required book for the course. See the items for every specific week's session.

## Academic Honesty

As stated in the university catalog, any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty will receive a failing grade on the work in which the dishonesty occurred. In addition, acts of academic dishonesty, irrespective of the weight of the assignment, may result in the student receiving a failing grade in the course. Instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Academic Affairs. A student who is reported twice for academic dishonesty is subject to summary dismissal from the University. In such a case, the Academic Council will then make a recommendation to the President, who will make the final decision.

## Week 1

### Class 1: Intro to the Course

Date - Day - Lecture

- Introduction and course overview
- What is the State?
- What are the Laws of Nature and the Social Contract

#### *Reading*

Hobbes, Thomas. 1651. Leviathan. C. XIII. Of the Natural Condition of Mankind, as concerning their Felicity, and Misery (pp. 94-99) C. XIV. Of the first and second Natural Lawes, and of Contracts (pp. 99-110); C. XV. Of other Laws of Nature (pp. 110-128)

### Class 2: State of Nature and the State

Date - Day - Lab

- What is the State?
- What are the Laws of Nature and the Social Contract?

#### *Reading*

Hobbes, Thomas. 1651. Leviathan. C. XIII. Of the Natural Condition of Mankind, as concerning their Felicity, and Misery (pp. 94-99) C. XIV. Of the first and second Natural Lawes, and of Contracts (pp. 99-110); C. XV. Of other Laws of Nature (pp. 110-128)

John Locke. 1689. Second Treatise of Government. CII: Of the State of Nature. (pp. 122-129); CIII: Of the State of War (p. 129-132); CIV: Of Slavery (pp. 132-135); CV: Of Property (p. 133-146); CVIII: Of the beginning of Political Societies (pp. 168-183)

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. Social Contract. Book 1 - 2 The first societies; Book 1 - 6 The social contract; Book 1 - 7 The sovereign

## Week 2

### Class 1: Thinking States

Date - Day - Lecture

- How do we define states?
- What are the attributes of states?

#### *Reading*

Bourdieu, Pierre, 1994. Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field. *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 1-18

Vu, Tuong. 2010. "Studying the State through State Formation." *World Politics*, Vol. 62, No. 1., pp. 148-175.

Mann, Michael. 1993 Volume 2: The Rise of Classes and Nation States 1760-1914. Cambridge University Press. C3: A theory of the modern state

### Class 2: Power Structures and the State

Date - Day - Seminar

- What are the differences between infrastructural and despotic power?
- How does geography impact state capacity?

#### *Reading*

H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, 1946. "From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology", New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 77-128

Mann, Michael. 1984. "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results." *Archives européennes de sociologie* Vol. 25, pp. 185-213.

Soifer, Hillel, and von Hau, Matthias. 2008. "Unpacking the Strength of the State: The Utility of State Infrastructural Power." *Studies in Comparative International Development*. Vol. 43, pp. 219-230.

## Week 3

### Class 1: Property Rights

Date - Day - Lecture

- How are property rights connected to states?
- What is the relationship between property and political authority

#### *Reading*

John Locke. 1689. *Second Treatise of Government*. CV: Of Property. pp. 133-146

Elinor Ostrom. 1990. *Governing the Commons*. Cambridge University Press. C1: Reflections on the Commons

### Class 2: Extractive vs. Inclusive States

Date - Day - Discussion

- What is the difference between extractive and inclusive institutions?
- How do property rights impact economic development?

### ***Reading***

North Douglas. 1981. Structure and Change in Economic History. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. Chapter 1

Catherine Hafer. 2006. On the Origin of Property Rights: Conflict and Production in the State of Nature.” Review of Economic Studies.

Acemoglu, Daron, and James Robinson. 2012. Why nations fail. New York: Crown Business. Chapters 1 and 2.

## **Week 4**

### **Class 1: Wars and States**

Date - Day - Lecture

- What is the relationship between wars and states?
- How do states control coercion?

### ***Reading***

Charles Tilly. Coercion, Capital, and European States. C1: Cities and States in World History; C3: How War Made States, and Vice Versa

Nicola Gennaioli and Joachim Voth. 2013. “State Capacity and Military Conflict.” Review of Economic Studies. Vol. 82, No. 4: pp. 1409-1448

### **Class 2: Wars and States**

Date - Day - Seminar

- What is the relationship between wars and states?
- How do states control coercion?

### ***Reading***

Tilly, Charles. 1985. “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime.” In Bringing the State Back In, edited by Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol. Cambridge University Press.

Centeno, Miguel Angel. 1997. “Blood and Debt: War and Taxation in Nineteenth-Century Latin America.” American Journal of Sociology 102 (6): 1565–1605.

## **Week 5**

### **Class 1: States and Crime**

Date - Day - Lecture

- How do bandits turn into states?

### ***Reading***

Levi, Margaret. 1981. "The Predatory Theory of Rule." *Politics and Society*, Vol. 10, No. 4: pp. 431-465

Boix, Carles. 2015. *Political Order and Inequality*. Cambridge University Press. C1: Introduction

### **Class 2: Governance without States**

Date - Day - Seminar

- Is governance without states possible?
- What are web-like societies?

### ***Reading***

Boix, Carles. 2015. *Political Order and Inequality*. Cambridge University Press. C2: Tabula Rasa

Migdal, Joel. 1988. *Strong Societies, Weak States*. Princeton University Press. C1: A Model of State-Society Relations

## **Week 6**

### **Class 1: Governing Peripheries**

Date - Day - Lecture

- How do states govern peripheries?

### ***Reading***

Scott, James, 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed*. Yale University Press: London. C1: Hills, Valleys, and States: An Introduction to Zomia and C5: Keeping the State at a Distance: The Peopling of the Hills

### **Class 2: Governing Peripheries**

Date - Day - Seminar

- Can peripheries be governed by competing states?
- What are the effects of periphery governance by competing states?

### ***Reading***

Lee, Melissa. 2020. *Crippling Leviathan*. Cornell University Press. C1. The State of State Authority; C2. The Strategy of Foreign Subversion. C3. Hostile Neighbors, Weak Peripheries

Abramson, Scott F., Carter, David B., and Ying, Luwei. Historical Border Changes, State Building, and Contemporary Trust in Europe. *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 116, No. 3., pp. 875-895

## Week 7

### Class 1: Executive Constraints and Limited Rule

Date - Day - Lecture

- How did executive constraints come to be?
- What do constitutions say about ruler's commitment to share power?

#### *Reading*

Karaman, Kivanc and Pamuk, Sevet. 2013. "Different Paths to the Modern State in Europe: The Interaction Between Warfare, Economic Structure, and Political Regime" *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. 107. No. 3: pp. 603-626

North, Douglass C., and Barry R. Weingast. 1989. "Constitutions and commitment: the evolution of institutions governing public choice in seventeenth-century England." *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 49, No. 4: pp. 803-832.

### Class 2: Regime Types and Origins of States

Date - Day - Seminar

- What is the relationship between democracy and the state?
- What are the historical origins of regime types?

#### *Reading*

Weingast, Barry R. 1997. "The political foundations of democracy and the rule of the law." *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 91, No. 2: pp. 245-263.

Boix, Carles, and Milan W. Svolik. 2013. "The foundations of limited authoritarian government: Institutions, Commitment, and Power-Sharing in Dictatorships." *The Journal of Politics*. Vol. 75, No. 2: pp. 300-316.

## Week 8

### Class 1: Bureaucracy

Date - Day - Lecture

- How do states develop bureaucracies?
- Why do states need bureaucracies?

#### *Reading*

Fukuyama, Francis. 2011. *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy*. C.3. Bureaucracy

Mann, Michael. 2012. V2. *The Rise of the Modern State: III. Bureaucratization*.

Kiser, Edgar and Cai, Yong. 2003. "War and Bureaucratization in Qin China: Exploring an Anomalous Case." *American Sociological Review*. Vol. 68, No. 4, pp. 511-539

## **Class 2: Consequences of Bureaucracies**

Date - Day - Lab

- What are the consequences of bureaucratic capacity for economic development?
- How are public goods such as railroads connected to bureaucracies?

### ***Reading***

Fukuyama, Francis. 2011. Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy. C.4. Prussia Builds a State

Fukuyama, Francis. 2011. Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy. C.11. Railroads, Forests, and American State Building

## **Week 9**

### **Class 1: States and Information Capacity**

Date - Day - Lecture

- Why do states count their populations?
- What is the relationship between counting and state-making?

### ***Reading***

Emigh, Rebecca Jean, Dylan Riley, and Patricia Ahmed. 2016. Antecedents of Censuses from Medieval to Nation States: How Societies and States Count. Palgrave Macmillan US. C1: A State-Centered Perspective on Censuses; C2: The Interactive Effects of States and Societies on Censuses.

Loveman, Mara. 2013. "Census Taking and Nation Making in Nineteenth-Century Latin America." In State and Nation Making in Latin America and Spain: Republics of the Possible, edited by Miguel A. Centeno and Agustin E. Ferraro, 329–55. Cambridge University Press.

### **Class 2: States and Information Capacity**

Date - Day - Seminar

- How do states build capacity from acquiring information their citizens?
- How does population counting create conflict?

### ***Reading***

Lee, Melissa M., and Nan Zhang. 2016. "Legibility and the Informational Foundations of State Capacity." The Journal of Politics. Vol. 79, No. 1: pp. 118–32.

Lieberman, Evan S., and Prerna Singh. 2017. "Census Enumeration and Group Conflict: A Global Analysis of the Consequences of Counting." World Politics. Vol. 69. No. 1: pp. 1–53.

## **Week 10**

### **Class 1: States and Fiscal Capacity**



Date - Day - Lecture

- How does taxation impact representation?
- How did fiscal centralization impact state strength?

***Reading***

Bates, Robert H., and Da-Hsiang Donald Lien. 1985. "A Note on Taxation, Development, and Representative Government." *Politics and Society*, Vol. 14, No. 1. pp. 1-113

Beramendi, Pablo and Rogers, Melissa. 2022. "Geography, Capacity, and Inequality: Spatial Inequality" Cambridge University Press: New York.

Dincecco, Mark. 2009. "Fiscal centralization, limited government, and public revenues in Europe, 1650-1913." *The Journal of Economic History*. Vol. 69, No. 1: pp. 48-103.

**Class 2: States and Fiscal Capacity\***

Date - Day - Seminar

- How does fiscal capacity impact economic growth?
- What is the relationship between tax farming and state capacity?

***Reading***

Dincecco, Mark and Mauricio Prado Warfare. 2012. Fiscal Capacity, and Performance *Journal of Economic Growth*, Vol. 17, No. 3, pp. 171-203.

Johnson, Noel and Mark Koyama. 2014. "Tax farming and the origins of state capacity in England and France." *Explorations in Economic History* 51: pp. 1-20.

## Week 11

**Class 1: Nation-States**

Date - Day - Lecture

- How does literacy contribute to emergence of nation-states?
- What are the different ways in which the state can penetrate rural areas?

***Reading***

Ernest Gellner. 1983. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

**Class 2: Nation-States**

Date - Day - Seminar

- How does state formation impact language?
- How is nationalism connected to language

***Reading***

Weber, Eugen. 1977. Peasants into Frenchmen. The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914. Stanford University Press

Ziblatt, Daniel, Hilbig, Hanno, and Bischof, Daniel. 2023. Wealth of Tongues: Why Peripheral Regions Vote for the Radical Right in Germany

## Week 12

### Class 1: States and Religion

Date - Day - Lecture

- How do religious leaders impact the development of states?
- What characteristics did medieval states borrow from the church?

#### *Reading*

Rubin, Jared, 2017. Rulers, Religion and Riches. Cambridge University Press. C1-3 Grzymala-Busse, Anna, 2022. Sacred Foundations: The Religious and Medieval Roots of the European State. C1

### Class 2: States and Religion

Date - Day - Seminar

- How did Christianity and Islam diverge in the Middle Ages?
- What was the impact of the Crusades for states formation?

#### *Reading*

Blaydes, Lisa, and Chaney, Eric. 2013. "The Feudal Revolution and Europe's Rise: Political Divergence of the Christian West and the Muslim World before 1500 CE." American Political Science Review. Vol. 107, No. 1: pp. 16–34

Blaydes, Lisa, and Paik, Christopher. 2016. "The Impact of Holy Land Crusades on State Formation: War Mobilization, Trade Integration, and Political Development in Medieval Europe." International Organization Vol. 70, No. 3: pp. 1–36

## Week 13

### Class 1: Inclusive and Extractive Institutions

Date - Day - Lecture

- How do inclusive institutions impact economic development?
- When do inclusive institutions fail?

#### *Reading*

Acemoglu, Daron, and James Robinson. 2012. Why nations fail. New York: Crown Business. Chapters 3

Popescu. Bogdan. 2023. Imperial Borderlands. Cambridge University Press: New York. C2: Imperialism and Extractive Institutions. A Theoretical Framework

## **Class 2: Inclusive and Extractive Institutions**

Date - Day - Lecture

- When do extractive institutions impact development?

### ***Reading***

Dell, Melissa, 2010. “The Persistent Effect of Peru’s Mining Mita.” *Econometrica*. Vol. 78. No. 7. pp. 1863-1903

Dell, Melissa, and Benjamin Olken. 2020. “The Development Effects of the Extractive Colonial Economy: The Dutch Cultivation System in Java.” *Review of Economic Studies* Vol. 87, No. 1: pp. 164-203.

## **Week 14**

### **Class 1: States Institutions and Long-Term Persistence**

Date - Day - Lecture

- How do pre-colonial institutions impact development?
- How are state capacity and local governance connected?

### ***Reading***

Stelios Michalopoulos and Elias Papaioannou. 2013. “Pre-Colonial Ethnic Institutions and Contemporary African Development.” *Econometrica*. Vol. 81, No. 1, pp. 113-152

Melissa Dell, Nathan Lane, and Pablo Querubin. 2015. “State Capacity, Local Governance, and Economic Development in Vietnam.” *Econometrica*. Vol. 86, No. 6, pp. 2083-2121

### **Class 2: States Institutions and Long-Term Persistence**

Date - Day - Lecture

- What are the historical roots of democracy?

### ***Reading***

Paola Giuliano and Nathan Nunn. 2013. “The Transmission of Democracy: From the Village to the Nation-State”. *American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings*. Vol. 103. No. 3. pp. 86-92

Jeanet Bentzen, Jacob Hariri, and James Robinson. 2019. “Power and Persistence: The Indigenous Roots of Representative Democracy.” *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 129, No. 618, pp. 678–714\