SOCIOLOGY 476 (Topics in Sociological Analysis)
Comparative and Historical Approaches to
Political Analysis
Focus: The Many Hands of the State
Fall 2017, Tuesdays, 9:00 – 11:50 am

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The seminar provides an overview of the theoretical and empirical debates focusing on states as institutions engaged in coercion and competition; regulation and redistribution; the classification, stratification and production of citizens/subjects; production and reproduction. We discuss the emergence, development and futures of states and empires, and their (usually uncertain) boundaries. Sociology 476 is a seminar in which students are active participants in discussions of readings.

Course Requirements:

(1) Participation in seminar discussions: Regular attendance and active engagement in discussions on the part of all members of the seminar is crucial to the success of the enterprise; attendance is mandatory. If you need to miss a class, simply email me ahead of time and you will be excused. Please come into each seminar prepared to express your opinions and voice your views in acts of comradely contention with each other on all aspects of our intellectual endeavors.

Constitutes approximately 20% of your grade

(2) Participation in class discussion forum/blog, and contributing one or two lead blog entries [with appropriate scholarly citations and references] addressed to readings of the relevant week. The lead blog entry will identify and focus on a theme, topic, or problem in a critical and evaluative (i.e. not descriptive or reconstructive) mode, taking a stand and proposing an agenda for discussion. Each week, one or two students will serve as lead bloggers; after meeting with me the week before the readings for which they are responsible, they will write a blog entry for that week’s readings, to be posted by 10:00 am Monday. All the other students should post replies by 7:00 pm Monday. Everyone should read all posts before class.

Constitutes approximately 20% of your grade
(3): Critical Papers

(a) Two (8-10pp) critical papers focused on seminar material. These papers will address particular debates related to seminar readings; they are not meant to be research papers but rather scholarly interrogative essays (with appropriate text citation and references) written in your own authorial voice, well-documented, and engaging themes, problems, topics, and difficulties posed by the thinkers and texts addressed in this seminar. You are free to bring in empirical material with which you are engaging in your own research projects. The first paper should attend to (selected) readings and issues raised in the first half of the seminar (weeks 1-5) and the second with texts and issues raised from the second half (weeks 6-10). Although you should take care not to overlap material, themes, and arguments in your essays, the second paper may be an extension of themes identified in the first, or you may write two separate and unrelated papers. Each paper constitutes approximately 30% of your grade.

Due dates for the papers are as follows:
Paper #1: Monday, October 30, 2017
Paper #2: Tuesday, November 28, 2017

(b) For advanced graduate students and only with my permission: One (18-20pp) paper focused both on seminar readings and additional scholarship on states in sociology, history, political science. A memo outlining how you would engage the seminar readings in conversation with your topic is due October 10, 2017. A first draft of the paper (on which I'll provide comments and suggestions for revision) must be submitted on November 7, 2017. The final draft is due November 28, 2017.

The paper constitutes approximately 60% of your grade.

All papers must be printed, using no less than 11 point font, with hard copies put in my mailbox in the Department of Sociology, by no later than 5:00 pm on the due date; please also post on Canvas.

Class format:

At the beginning of class, lead bloggers will propose an agenda for discussion, to which we can add or modify. Our first order of business will be to clarify what is the argument being presented, answer questions of fact about the topic and get our definitions straight. Then we move into an evaluative phase of discussion, in which we will both appreciate and criticize the works we have read. Finally, we will try to summarize what we think about the particular topic under discussion.
Course readings: We will read excerpts from books, and a number of articles. I expect you can find published articles through Northwestern library’s online services. Book excerpts will be posted to the course site in Canvas (before class begins). The following books are available for purchase through Norris or other online booksellers:

**Required:**


**Recommended** (we’ll be reading several essays from the collections, but not the entire book, or excerpts from single-authored books; many of these are available relatively inexpensively online); items marked with an asterisk have been put on reserve.


*Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol, editors, *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge University Press, 1985).


The schedule of readings is open to revision by seminar participants.
Seminar Schedule

week 1
Tuesday, September 19, 2017: Overview of Historical and Comparative Political Analyses of States and Introduction to the Seminar

Required reading:

*Kimberly Morgan and Ann Shola Orloff, eds., “Introduction,” in The Many Hands of the State: Theorizing Political Authority and Social Control, edited by Morgan and Orloff (Cambridge University Press, 2017); the essay will also be posted on the course site on Canvas.


Stephan Leibfried, et al., Oxford Handbook on Transformation of the State (Oxford University Press, 2015) – online resource from NU library:
  • Stephan Leibfried, et al., “Introduction: Transformations of the State”
  • Jonah Levy, “Changing Perspectives on the State”

week 2
Tuesday, September 26, 2017:
Bringing the State Back In: War, Revolution, Taxes, States

Required reading:

Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China (Cambridge University Press, 1979), Introduction and Conclusion, and (recommended) as much of the rest as you can manage.

Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol, editors, Bringing the State Back In (Cambridge University Press, 1985):
  • *Theda Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research,” pp.3-43
  • *Charles Tilly, “Warmaking and Statemaking as Organized Crime,” pp.169-191


  • Ajay Mehrotra, "Taxation as the Lifeblood of the Modern American State."
• Meyer Kestnbaum, "Unexpected Adversaries: The Revolution in War at the End of the Eighteenth Century."
• Christian Davenport, "Performing Order: An Examination of the Seemingly Impossible Task of Subjugating Large Numbers of People, Everywhere, All the Time."

Recommended reading:


Giovanni Arrighi, *The long twentieth century: Money, power, and the origins of our time* (Verso, 1994).


week 3

Tuesday, October 3, 2017:

**Bringing the State Back In: Welfare and Political Economy**


Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol, editors, *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge University Press, 1985) *read at least one of the following chapters:*

• "Alice Amsden, "The state and Taiwan's economic development," pp.78-106.


*Theda Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), excerpt.


Recommended reading:


Kathleen Thelen, How Institutions Evolve: The Political Economy of skills in Germany, Britain, the United States, and Japan (Cambridge University Press, 2004).


week 4  
October 10, 2017  
States and Culture  

- George Steinmetz, “Introduction: Culture and The State,” pp.1-49  
- Pierre Bourdieu, "Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field," pp.53-75  

Recommended reading: other essays in the volume  


week 5  
Tuesday, October 17, 2017:  
States, Success and Failure, Development and Democracy  


Recommended reading:

Apter and Sohrabi in State/Culture


Tuong Vu, *Paths to Development in Asia: South Korea, Vietnam, China, and Indonesia* (Cambridge University Press, 2010),

**week 6**
**Tuesday, October 24, 2017:**

**American Political Development and the American State**

Required reading:


• Bill Novak, Steve Sawyer, and Jim Sparrow, "The Democratic State."

Recommended reading:


SHORT CRITICAL ESSAY #1 DUE BY MONDAY, OCTOBER 30, HARD COPY IN PROFESSOR ORLOFF’S MAILBOX; PLEASE ALSO POST ON CANVAS

week 7
Tuesday, October 31, 2017:
Bounding States, Implementing States

Required reading:

- Damon Mayrl and Sarah Quinn, "Beyond the Hidden American State: Classification Struggles and the Politics of Recognition."
- Elisabeth Clemens, "As Equal yet Individual Citizens: Articulating the Boundaries between State and Civil Society."
- Armando Lara-Millán, "States as a Series of People Exchanges: A Perennial and Daily Negotiation between Many Hands."

Cybelle Fox and Irene Bloemraad, "Beyond "white by law": explaining the gulf in citizenship acquisition between Mexican and European immigrants," *Social Forces* 94 (2015): 181-207.

Recommended reading:


week 8  
Tuesday, November 7, 2017:  
States, Empires and the Transnational

**Required Reading:**

- George Steinmetz, “Social Fields at the Scale of Empires: Revising Bourdieu’s Theory”
- Iza Hussin, "Colonial Conflations and the Making of the Modern Muslim State."


**Recommended reading:**


Required reading:


- Mala Htun and Laurel Weldon, "States and Gender."


Recommended reading:


week 10
Tuesday, November 21, 2017:
Stratifying States II: Race, Nation, Ethnicity

Required reading:

  • Desmond King and Robert Lieberman, "The Civil Rights State: How the American State Develops Itself."
  • Tianna Paschel, “The Paradox of Racial Policy in Racial Paradise: The Role of Movements and the State in the Making of Black Rights in Brazil.”


Recommended reading:


SHORT CRITICAL ESSAY #2 DUE NOVEMBER 28, HARD COPY IN PROFESSOR ORLOFF’S MAILBOX, ALSO POST ONLINE