

# Political Science 361/461: State-Building and State Collapse

## Fall 2008

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11:30-12:30 and by appointment \*

Are nation-states the most effective means of organizing society? To answer this question, we will examine the historical rationales behind the development of nation-states. We will also consider the functions that modern states aspire to perform and explore why some states fail to perform these functions, even to the point of state collapse. Finally, we will investigate potential alternatives to the state. Can potential alternatives to the state, such as tribes, mercenaries, mafia groups, and international organizations, provide typical state services? Does the provision of these services by entities other than states undermine state legitimacy and capacity?

To explore these issues, we will draw on examples from most regions of the world, including the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe, the former Soviet Union, North America, and South America. The course also incorporates policy exercises.

### Course Materials

**Books and Articles:** Six works are available for purchase at the bookstore and on reserve at Kelvin Smith Library: 1) *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns*, 2) *States and Power in Africa*, 3) *Poor People's Politics*, 4) *Subversive Institutions*, 5) *Anthills of the Savannah*, and 6) *When Things Fell Apart*. Unless otherwise noted, other required materials will be distributed in class.

**News:** Students are strongly encouraged to follow world events. These sources offer some of the best foreign coverage:

- *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/>, provides daily news for free on its website, once you register. Also see the website for details about a student subscription discount.
- *The Economist* is available for free online through EuclidPLUS and in print at Kelvin Smith Periodicals. For information about a student subscription rate call 1-800-456-6086.
- National Public Radio (WCPN 90.3 FM) broadcasts brief news updates at the top of the hour and news analyses throughout the day on programs, such as Morning Edition, Talk of the Nation, All Things Considered, and Marketplace. See <http://www.wcpn.org/schedule/> for the schedule.

**Blackboard:** Students will post questions on Blackboard, as later described. To post a question, go to the Case web site, select Academics, choose Computing, and select Blackboard. Select Course Catalog, College of Arts & Sciences, POSC. Login next to POSC 361. Choose Discussion Board. Doubleclick on the appropriate week and then on my message. Select reply, write your questions, and click submit. Additional assistance is available through Blackboard FAQ on the first site.

\* No office hours August 28, September 18, September 25, November 20

## Course Requirements

**Participation:** The focus of each class will be on discussion. Students should craft at least two analytical questions based on each week's readings and post them on the course Blackboard site by noon Monday prior to class meetings during Parts I, II, and III of the course. Students should read their classmates' questions before the start of class. The instructor will select some questions for class discussion, and students are welcome to raise questions in class. Students are expected to actively participate in class discussion and to thoughtfully complete evaluations of their classmates' presentations (described below). Students are strongly encouraged to take notes on the readings in order to be prepared to integrate and critique the materials in class. Because participation is critical to understanding the material, students are expected to attend all classes. Except under extraordinary circumstances, absenteeism will negatively affect students' final grades.

**Commentaries:** In addition to reading course materials, posting questions, and participating in class, students will write a commentary on the readings for four class meetings. Students should write papers for two weeks in Part I, one week in Part II, and one week in Part III. No commentaries will be accepted for Parts IV and V. The purpose of the commentaries is to help students understand, critique, and integrate the readings and prepare to pose questions for discussion in class. Students should not summarize the readings but should instead use the course materials to answer their own questions and explore their own arguments. Students should incorporate concepts and arguments in readings from previous weeks, and the quality of the commentaries should improve throughout the semester. For the commentaries informal citations—phrases like “as Bates argues”—are acceptable. Commentaries should be between two and two and a half pages double-spaced. They must be submitted at the beginning of the class the analyzed materials are assigned. Grading of the responses will take into account the degree of independent thinking, use of assigned materials, and quality of writing.

**Individual Presentation:** Each student will develop an argument integrating the readings from Part I, Part II, or Part III of the course and share this argument with classmates in a ten-minute presentation. In preparation for this presentation, students will share their topics with the instructor, and the class will discuss techniques of effective public speaking. Students will receive two types of feedback on their presentations; students will receive written evaluations from their classmates, and the instructor will provide her own evaluation, taking into account insights offered on student evaluations. The instructor's evaluation will be based on the degree of independent thinking, use of assigned materials, and quality of presentation. Part I presentations will take place on October 2, Part II presentations will take place on October 23, and Part III presentation will take place on November 13.

**Group Research Session:** Teams of two to four students will select a non-state actor and research its viability as an alternative to the state, its impact on state legitimacy and capacity, and other analytical questions of their choosing. During a 30-minute period November 18 or November 25, each group will share its findings through presentation and discussion techniques of its choosing. In preparation, groups will consult with the instructor about their topics; review relevant materials suggested by the instructor; gather and analyze additional research materials; work during and outside class, as needed; and develop an informative and interesting approach for sharing their ideas with classmates. Students will receive the two types of feedback described above. The instructor's evaluation will be based on the degree of independent thinking, the extent of research, and the quality of the session. Each student will receive an individual grade.

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**Final Paper:** Each student will write a critique of a group research session that takes place on the day he or she does not lead a session. The critique should focus on the substance, not the style, of the session, and it should incorporate concepts and arguments from other class meetings. Evaluation of the critique will take into account the degree of independent thinking, use of session and course materials, and quality of writing. *Undergraduates'* critiques should be 5-6 pages long, double-spaced. *Graduate students'* critiques should be 10-12 pages long, double-spaced. Papers are due at the beginning of class December 4.

All written work should be carefully structured and grammatically correct. To avoid plagiarism, students should review "Plagiarism: What It is and How to Recognize and Avoid It," distributed in class. Cases of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be investigated by university judicial bodies.

Participation and attendance will constitute 15 percent of the course grade, the four commentaries will count for 25 percent, the individual presentation for 15 percent, the group research session for 30 percent, and the final paper for the remaining 15 percent. Students will lose a half a grade on an assignment for each day it is late. Not completing an assignment will negatively affect a student's final grade.

## Course Schedule and Readings

### I. August 26: Introduction to State and Course

**NO CLASS August 28**

### PART I: STATE-FORMATION

### II. September 2, 4: “Stateless” Societies

Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard. *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940. “Introductory” [part], “Interest in Cattle” [part], “Oecology,” “The Political System” [part], 3-15, 16-31, 48-50, 51-93, 139, 150-184, 190-191. *Distributed in class August 26.*

Max Weber. “Politics as a Vocation.” In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by Hans Heinrich Gerth and C. Wright Mills, 77-128. New York: Oxford University Press, 1946. Read 77-83. *Distributed in class August 26.*

### III. September 9, 11: The Formation of States—Europe

Charles Tilly. “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime.” In *Bringing the State Back In*, edited by Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, 169-191. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. *Distributed in class September 2.*

Janice E. Thomson. *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. 3-6, 21-42, 43-44, 67-68, 69-106, 107-110, 115-120, 140-142.

### IV. September 16: The Formation of States—Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia

M. A. Centeno. “Blood and Debt: War and Taxation in Nineteenth-Century Latin America.” *American Journal of Sociology* 102, no. 6 (1997), 1565-1605. *Obtain through Kelvin Smith Library’s e-Journal portal, connecting through VPN if off campus. Search for journal title first.*

Lisa Anderson. “The State in the Middle East and North Africa.” *Comparative Politics* 20, no. 1 (1987), 1-18. *Obtain through Kelvin Smith Library’s e-Journal portal, connecting through VPN if off campus. Search for journal title first.*

Meredith Woo-Cumings. “Introduction: Chalmers Johnson and the Politics of Nationalism and Development.” In *The Developmental State*, edited by Meredith Woo-Cumings, 1-31. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999. *Distributed in class September 2.*

**NO CLASS September 18**

**PART I: STATE-FORMATION**  
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**V. September 23: The Formation of States—Africa**

Jeffrey Ira Herbst. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000. “The Challenge of State-building in Africa,” “Power and Space in Precolonial Africa,” The Europeans and the African Problem,” “The Political Kingdom in Independent Africa” [part], 1-113.

**NO CLASS September 25**

**VI. September 30, October 2: The Formation of States—By Design**

Jason Brownlee. “Can America Nation-Build?” *World Politics*, 59 (January 2007), 314-340. Obtain through Kelvin Smith Library’s e-Journal portal, connecting through VPN if off campus. Search for journal title first.

George Packer. “Letter From Baghdad: War After the War.” *The New Yorker* (November 24, 2003). Available at [www.newyorker.com](http://www.newyorker.com). Search for the title.

**INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS FOR PART I—October 2**

**PART II: STATE FUNCTION**

**VII. October 7, October 9: Strong and Weak States—Legitimacy, Autonomy, and Capacity**

Juan J. Linz. *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978. 16-23. Distributed in class September 2.

Theda Skocpol. “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research.” In *Bringing the State Back In*, edited by Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, 3-37. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. Read 9, 15-17. Distributed in class September 2.

Michael Mann. *The Sources of Social Power: The Rise of Classes and Nation-States, 1760-1914*. Vol. II. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986. 59-60. Distributed in class September 2.

**VIII. October 14, October 16: State Roles—Particularistic versus Programmatic Politics**

Javier Auyero. *Poor People's Politics: Peronist Survival Networks & the Legacy of Evita*. Durham, NC: Duke, 2000. Read 1-14, 19-23, 26-28, 63-79, 80-118, 152-172.

**NO CLASS October 21**

**PART II: STATE FUNCTION**  
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**IX. October 23: State Roles—Rentier versus Welfare States**

Harold L. Wilensky. *Rich Democracies: Political Economy, Public Policy, and Performance*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. Read 211-234. *Distributed in class September 2.*

Hazem Beblawi. "The Rentier State in the Arab World." In *The Arab State*, edited by Giacomo Luciani, 85-98. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. *Distributed in class September 2.*

Michael L. Ross. "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* 53 (2001), 325-361. *Obtain through Kelvin Smith Library's e-Journal portal, connecting through VPN if off campus. Search for journal title first.*

**INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS FOR PART II**

**PART III: STATE COLLAPSE**

**X. October 28, October 30: The Collapse of an Empire**

Valerie Bunce. *Subversive Institutions: The Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

**XI. November 4, November 6: The Collapse of States—Initial Analysis**

Robert I. Rotberg. "The Failure and Collapse of Nation-States: Breakdown, Prevention, and Repair." In *When States Fail : Causes and Consequences*, edited by Robert I. Rotberg, 1-49. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004. Read 1-14. *Distributed in class September 2.*

Jack A. Goldstone, Ted Robert Gurr, Barbara Harff, Marc A. Levy, Monty G. Marshall, Robert H. Bates, Colin H. Kahl, T. Surko, John C. Ulfelder, and Alan N. Unger. *State Failure Task Force Report: Phase III Findings*. State failure task force. (September 30, 2000). Read iii-x. Available at <http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/pitf/SFTF%20Phase%20III%20Report%20Final.pdf>

Chinua Achebe. *Anthills of the Savannah*. London: Heinemann, 1987.

**XII. November 11, November 13: The Collapse of States—A Theory**

Robert H. Bates. *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

**INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS FOR PART III—November 13**

## **PART IV: POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVES TO THE STATE**

### **XIII. November 18: State Alternatives I**

Commentaries will not be accepted for this week.

**GROUPS RESEARCH SESSIONS**

**NO CLASS November 20**

### **XIV. November 25: State Alternatives II**

Commentaries will not be accepted for this week.

**GROUPS RESEARCH SESSIONS**

**NO CLASS November 27**

## **PART V: THE FUTURE OF THE STATE**

### **XV. December 2, December 4: The State: The Most Viable Form of Organization?**

For these class meetings students are expected to review their notes and be prepared to integrate the topics we discussed. Commentaries will not be accepted for this week.

**DUE Thursday, December 4, 1:15, Clark 205: Final Paper**