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PSCI 381.01: State Formation

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University of Montana

PSCI 381

State Formation

Class meeting time: Tuesdays, and Thursdays 2:00-3:20 pm

Abhishek Chatterjee

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Office Hours: Mondays, and Wednesdays 1:00-2:00 pm, and by appointment

Office: Liberal Arts 355

This course will examine the concept of the 'state' and evaluate explanations of the emergence and proliferation of this form of organization throughout the world. Among the questions addressed will be the following: what is the 'state'? What is the relationship of the state to the rest of 'society'? How has the state affected or altered human behavior and belief? What are the political-economic institutions most associated with the 'state'? And finally, what is/has been the role of the state in promoting industrialization and economic development (defined conventionally) and how had the process of industrialization in turn affected the state?

A course such as this cannot possibly satisfactorily cover all the issues mentioned above; nor can it equally cover every region of the world. For one, theoretical writing on the origins of the state—at least in the social sciences—is skewed to Europe. ("American Political Development" exists as its own field in political science, and is an exception; I have excluded readings from this field on purely pragmatic grounds). As a result theories and hypotheses derived from the study of Europe becomes the background in which other arguments are proposed, or other hypotheses generated. On one hand this is inevitable: no theoretical argument, or investigation is ever conducted in vacuum; our previous knowledge always informs what we further seek to investigate. On the other hand, as we shall see, it could also lead to conceptual problems. Nonetheless, detecting such potential problems is in itself a worthy intellectual exercise.

What you read will be less than the proverbial tip of the iceberg. Therefore I encourage you to pick from one of these topics for your research proposal (more about this below). That will give you a slightly more in depth knowledge of the topics that pique your interest.

In addition to building your knowledge about theories of state formation, this course also aims to develop several types of skills. First is your critical reading ability - i.e., being able to read and understand what authors are arguing and the strengths and weaknesses of their views. The second is your ability to write clearly - an extremely difficult task that can only be mastered through practice. Virtually no one is a born writer. Virtually everyone can be a good - even outstanding - writer. Focused

papers will help to develop your skills. Third the course encourages you to develop your “public” speaking skills – albeit to a very accepting and comfortable public. There is a heavy emphasis on student participation and discussion in each class, along with more structured presentations and debates. Finally some of the work is accomplished in small groups. Working in groups is a developed skill and hopefully the discussions and projects we do will contribute to it. Be assured that your grade in the course will be based overwhelmingly on your individual performance.

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Understand and conceptualize terms such as “state capacity,” “infrastructural power,” and despotic power.
- Understand the complications involved in the measurement of the concepts named above.
- Understand and critically analyze the various explanations of the emergence of the “state” form.

Course Requirements:

1. Weekly journal, and class participation: 20%

Even though this is, strictly speaking, not a seminar, I do expect considerable student participation. To that end, students should come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings or answer questions (I raise in class) on them. Failure to participate will be taken as a sign of inadequate preparation. Students often find it helpful to form study groups whose members divide up the readings and share notes among themselves. I encourage you to do this but will leave it to you to organize these groups and distribute notes. I would also like you to keep a journal of weekly readings, where you summarize the readings in your own words (and also note questions that you may have about the readings). I will occasionally ask for these journals to see if you have been keeping up with the readings. Your notes won’t be graded.

2. Take home Mid-term: 30%

3. Take home final: 50%

For Graduate students, and those taking the class for the 400-level writing requirement, instead of participation, 20% will count towards a research proposal (between 3500 and 4000 words) on a topic of their choice. They should consult with me within the first three weeks of the semester to decide on their respective topics. We will have additional subsequent consultations, including over preliminary drafts (you should submit at least one for me to comment on). The research proposal will generally consist of the following components:

The research proposal will generally consist of the following components:

- A statement of the research question, which addresses the following questions: (1) why is the question important, given the present state of knowledge? (2) How does the question fit into current conversations/ arguments; if it does not, why should the question be included?
- A literature review, which succinctly summarizes what, if anything, has been written about the question, and what have been some of the approaches to answering it (if any). The review should also point out—if possible—some of the shortcomings of the extant ways of either looking at/conceptualizing and/or answering the question.

- A summary of the alternative argument that explains how it improves on or adds to the existing debate. Remember that this does not have to be the “final” argument; it can be an interesting alternative argument that illuminates a new aspect of the question or makes one think differently about it (of course you will have to say why it should be “interesting”).
- A description of how the project will be completed, which addresses the following questions: (1) what kind of evidence will be advanced to support the argument (for instance, will there be a case study, or some kind of comparative study)? (2) Why is such evidence appropriate for the question asked? (3) How will such evidence be collected?

The proposal will be judged by the following criteria:

- Does it contain the components enumerated above? If not, is there a good reason not to include all of them?
- Is the question clear? Is it precisely stated?
- Is the project realistically achievable, say as a part of a senior, or master’s (even doctoral) thesis?
- Is the writing clear and coherent? Are there too many spelling and grammatical errors? Are all the works properly cited?

Tips on Close Reading

Close reading entails reflecting on the text as you are reading, and evaluating the author’s argument. Here are a few suggestions for close reading:

Look for the author’s argument and the evidence she uses to support it: What is the main claim she makes? With whom is she disagreeing? Then consider your reactions to the author’s work: Does this make sense to you? Why or why not? What are the weaknesses of the argument?

- Always read with pencil in hand. Jot down thoughts you want to raise in class. Write your reactions to the text in the margins. Above all, think about what you are reading; if you find yourself turning pages numbly, stop, take a pause, and then refocus on the author’s chain of thought.
- Plan your readings to be spaced out in reasonable increments. Thoughtful reading takes time and energy. It is more pleasant and more productive to read over several days than to try and compress all the reading into a couple of nights.
- Try not to use a highlighter. Writing comments (e.g., “good counterpoint to Tilly”) helps a reader engage with the text, whereas highlighting often encourages passivity and torpor.
- Keep track of the parts of the text where you had questions, objections, or fierce agreement with the author’s points. Note page numbers on a separate sheet of paper. You may also want to use post-it flags for quick reference to key passages.
- When you are done reading, check to see that you can summarize the author’s argument in a few sentences. You may want to take 5 minutes and write down this summary, particularly if you are reading several different texts in given week.
- Remember that the goal of close reading is not just to have touched the pages, but to be able to say something about the material and evaluate it.

These tips may seem unfamiliar at first, but can become useful habits when practiced over time.

Readings:

Readings from books will be posted on the class moodle site. Journal articles are available on jstor.org or other databases (even a google search will pull up the articles). I have not ordered books for this class from the bookstore, but you could buy the following books online (they are available at multiple sites, such as amazon.com, bookfinder.com, or abebooks.com). You could buy—one or a few of—the following books (even though, as I noted above excerpts will be posted) if you don't want to read (or have difficulties reading) scanned copies.

1. Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States* (Blackwell, 1992)
2. Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge)
3. Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge, 1997)
4. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (Yale)
5. James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (Yale)

Tips on Close Reading

Look for the author's argument and the evidence she uses to support it: What is the main claim she makes? With whom is she disagreeing? Then consider your reactions to the author's work: Does this make sense to you? Why or why not? What are the weaknesses of the argument?

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Part I: Conceptual issues

Week 1: Intro, the philosophical background, and method:

August 28: Course Introduction

August 30:

- No class; I'm away at a conference

Week 2: Some Conceptual Issues

September 4:

- Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation", Page 1-4
- J.P. Nettl, "The State as a Conceptual Variable," *World Politics*, Vol 20, No. 4 (1968), 559-592

September 6:

- Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms, and Results," *Archives europeennes de sociologie*, vol 25, 1984, pp. 185-213
- Hilel Soifer, "State Infrastructural Power: Approaches to Conceptualization and Measurement," *Studies in Comparative and International Development*, Vol. 43, Issue 3-4

Part II Some Theories of State Formation I- Europe

Week 3:

September 11:

- Michael Hechter and William Brustein, "Regional Modes of Production and Patterns of State Formation in Western Europe," *American Journal of Sociology*, Volume 85, Issue 5 (Mar., 1980), 1061-1094

September 13:

- Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States* (Blackwell, 1992), pp. 1-37

Week 4:

September 18:

- Vivek Swaroop Sharma, "Kinship, Property, and Authority: European State Formation Reconsidered," *Politics and Society* (2015), 1-30

September 20:

- Hendrik Spruyt, "Institutional Selection in International Relations: State Anarchy as Order," *International Organization*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (Autumn, 1994), pp. 527-557

Week 5:

September 25:

- Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge, 1997), excerpts

September 27:

- Ertman, *Birth of the leviathan*, excerpts

Part III: More Theoretical Arguments. Postcolonial state formation in comparative perspective

Week 6:

October 2:

- Miguel Centeno, "Blood and Debt: War and Taxation in Nineteenth Century Latin America," *American Journal of Sociology*, 1997, pp. 1565-1605

October 4:

- Marcus J. Kurtz, "The Social Foundations of Institutional Order: Reconsidering War and the 'Resource Curse' in Third World State Building," *Politics and Society*, 37 (4), 2009, 479-520

Week 7:

October 9:

- Robert G. Williams, *States and Social Evolution. Coffee and the Rise of National Governments in Central America* (UNC Press, 1994), 197-255

October 11:

- Ryan Saylor, "Sources of State Capacity in Latin America: Commodity Booms and State Building Motives in Chile." *Theory and Society* 41(3) (May 2012): 301-324

Week 8:

October 16:

- Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood," *World Politics*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Oct., 1982), 1-24
- Jeffrey Herbst, "War and the State in Africa," *International Security*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Spring, 1990), pp. 117-139

October 18:

- Catherine Boone, "Rural Interests and the Making of Modern African States," *African Economic History*, No. 23 (1995), pp. 1-36

Week 9:

October 23:

- William Reno, "order and Commerce in Turbulent Areas: 19th Century Lessons, 21st Century Practice," *Third World Quarterly*, 25(4) (2004), 607-625
- William Reno, "War, Markets, and the Reconfiguration of West Africa's Weak States", *Comparative Politics* 29 (4), 493-510

October 25:

- Victoria Tin-bor Hui, "Toward a Dynamic Theory of International Politics: Insights from Comparing Ancient China and Early Modern Europe," *International Organization*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (Winter, 2004), pp. 175-205

Week 10:

October 30:

- Ja Ian Chong (2010) How External Intervention Made the Sovereign State, *Security Studies*, 19:4, 623-655

November 1:

- Barnett R. Rubin, "The Fragmentation of Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 68, No. 5 (Winter, 1989), pp. 150-168
- Barnett R. Rubin, Peace Building and State-Building in Afghanistan: Constructing Sovereignty for Whose Security? *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 1, From Nation-Building to State-Building (2006), pp. 175-185

Week 11:

November 6:

- Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge), excerpts

November 8:

- Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule*, excerpts

Week 12:

November 13:

Free catch up day

November 15:

- “Federalism as State Formation in India: A Theory of Shared and Negotiated Sovereignty,” Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *International Political Science Review*, 31 (5), 553-572

Week 13:

November 20:

- Vivek Chibber, *Locked in Place: State-Building and Late Industrialization in India* (Princeton), selections

November 22: Thanksgiving Break

Part IV: States reconsidered

Week 14:

November 27:

- Michael Foucault, On Governmentality, from *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991)

November 29:

- James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (Yale), selections

Week 15:

December 4:

- James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (Yale), selections

December 6:

- Summary and Wrap up