POLITICS 589. STATES, DEMOCRACIES, NATIONS

Fall 2019, Thursdays, 1:30-4:20.

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Course Design and Objectives

Why are there states? Do we need a common authority to cooperate with each other? Why do we grant our allegiance to a particular national community over others? Under what conditions do we govern ourselves democratically? This course surveys current theoretical and empirical contributions to these questions – with a major focus on national identity and nationalism. After spending one week on the causes and consequences of state formation, the course will explore: the canonical literature on national identity formation; potential microfoundations of national identity; empirical work on the particular paths taken by different countries; national identity and resentment; nationalism and revolutionary action in the 20th century. The course will close with a discussion of the foundations of democratic institutions. With the explicit goal of exploring how research in comparative politics should be pursued in the future, the course assigns readings from both traditional macrohistorical and qualitative research and more recent analytical models.

Course Procedures and Evaluation

Each student is expected to read (before class) the items listed as 'required readings' for each session.

In addition, students are expected to complete:

(1) Four short papers (around 3 pages) answering one of the week’s discussion questions. Papers will be due by 4:30pm the day before class (with answers to the questions of that week’s session). No exceptions will be made and no extensions will be granted. The answers should not just summarize readings, but show reflection on how the readings address important issues, are flawed in particular dimensions, or can be developed or improved in specific directions.

(2) A final take-home exam to be set by the instructor or a research paper with a topic to be determined in advance with the instructor. Due date: January 20, 2020.

Grades: 25% participation, 35% papers, 40% final exam (paper).

Readings

Books marked with an (*) have been ordered at the Labyrinth and put on reserve. All other readings have been put on electronic reserve.
Week 1. The Construction of Political Order. (September 12)

Required reading


Further reading


Required reading


Further reading

Week 3. Nations and National Identity: The Canonical Literature (II). (September 26)

Required reading


Further reading


Simon Schama. Citizens.


Week 4. A Theoretical Foundation of Sorts: The Problem of Recognition, Emancipation, and the Liberal Deal. (October 3)

Required reading


Further reading


Rousseau. *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*. 
Week 5. Bourgeois Revolution and National Identity. (October 10)

Required reading


Further readings

Clermont-Tonnerre. 1789. *Discourse on the Assimilation of the Jewish People*.


Week 6. Reactionary Nationalism. The Problem of “Ressentiment.” (October 17)

Required reading


Krause, Javier. 2013. “Fin-de-Siècle Imperial Melancholia: Angel Ganivet’s Idearium español”. In Imperial Emotions: Cultural Responses to Myths of Empire in Fin-de-Siècle Spain. Chapter 3. Liverpool University Press.

Week 7. Nationalism and Colonialism. (October 24)

Required reading

Marx, Karl. 1843. *On the Jewish Question.*


Further reading


Week 8. Nationalism and Postcolonialism. (November 7)

Required reading


Further Readings


Week 9. Understanding Oneself as a Nation. (November 14)

Required reading

Week 10. Democracy as an Equilibrium. (November 21)

Required Reading


Further reading


Lee Sigelman, “Understanding Political Instability: An Evaluation of the Mobilization-
Institutionalization Approach,” *Comparative Political Studies* 12 (July 1979) 205-228.


Week 10. Democratic Transitions. (December 5)

Required Readings


Further Readings


Week 12. Representative Democracy. (December 12)

Required Readings


Further Readings


Further reading on accountability


