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## **Comparative State Theory and Practice**

What is the state? What are the different ways of thinking about the state and its relationship to society? What can we learn by comparing the experiences of different states across time and place? This graduate seminar relies on conceptual readings that explore different theoretical approaches to the study of the state. We will look at case studies in different countries to analyze the specific ways in which citizens experience the state and the effects of state actions. These case studies will also be used to discuss the multiple strategies used by individual and collective social actors to shape state-led processes and state-society relations. Some of the themes explored include the process of state-formation, state-society relations, the relationship between states and social movements, the role played by states development, the role played by states in the formation of social, cultural and political identities, and the effect of globalization on state sovereignty and autonomy. We will use international case studies with an emphasis on developing countries.

### **Readings**

There are three books and one reading packet assigned for this class. The reading packet can be obtained at Aires Press.

The following books can be obtained at the UIC bookstore:

Scott, James. Seeing Like the State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

Evans, Peter. Embedded Autonomy: States and Economic Transformation. Princeton University Press, 1995.

Joseph, Gilbert and Daniel Nugent. Everyday Forms of State Formation. Duke University Press, 1994.

### **Requirements**

There are no exams in this course. You are expected to write four critical essays in response to the readings assigned. The instructor will provide the question two weeks before the paper is due. You may not skip any paper. If you have turned in four acceptable papers I will drop the lowest paper grade. You may always turn in an early draft of the paper if you want to

make corrections before the final draft. Your final grade is the average of your three highest papers (each 30%) in addition to your participation grade.

For those students who are very interested in writing a research paper, there is an alternative route. You may write two critical essays of your choosing and submit a research paper. However, I will not drop any of the grades (unless you decide to write 3 critical essays and a research paper in which case I will drop the lowest critical essay grade). Additionally, you need to clear your research question with the instructor no later than September 16. You will also need to turn in a first draft of the paper by November 18 and a final corrected version by December 11.

## **Student Participation**

This is a graduate course and I fully expect that all students will have completed the reading by class time. I reserve the right to take pop quizzes and use other methods necessary to ensure that students do complete the readings. Student participation consists of informed comments and questions in class, as well as structured student participation in discussion of the readings. Each week I will assign a minimum of two students to assist in the discussion of class readings. Each student will make a brief presentation discussing at least two aspects or themes of the reading that he/she thinks is important or insightful. The student is also expected to discuss at least one aspect of the reading that is problematic and explain why. Finally, the student must produce two questions that he or she thinks should be addressed in class discussion. Since this is a small class, most students will participate two or three times. Participation is 10% of your grade.

## **Schedule**

### **August 26**

Course Introduction and Key concepts  
Defining the State

### **Part 1: the State as Actor**

### **September 2**

Origins of the nation-state  
Pluralist Theories of the State

*David Held, The Emergence of Sovereignty and the Modern State in Democracy and the Global Order: from the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance. Polity Press, 1995. (p)*

*Stephen Krasner, Approaches to the State: Alternative Conceptions and Historical Dynamics. Comparative Politics, Vol 16, N. 2, January 1984. (p)*

*Howard Lentner, The Concept of the State: A Response to Stephen Krasner. Comparative Politics. Vol 16, N. 3, April 1984. (p)*

*David Held, Central Perspectives on the Modern State in Political Theory and the Modern State: Essays on State, Power and Democracy. Stanford University Press, 1989. (p)*

### **September 9**

Marxist Theories of the State

*David Held, Class, Power and the State in Political Theory and the Modern State: Essays on State, Power and Democracy. Stanford University Press, 1989. (p)*  
(p)

*Nicos Poulantzas, The Problem of the Capitalist State. New Left Review, Vol 58, 1969. (p)*

*The Capitalist State: Reply to Nicos Poulantzas. New Left Review Vol 59, 1970, pp 53-59. (p)*

*Poulantzas and the Capitalist State. New Left Review. N. 82, November/December 197, pp 83-92. (p)*

*Fred Block, The Ruling Class does not Rule: Notes on the Marxist Theory of the State. Socialist Review 33, May-June 1977, pp. 6-27. (p)*

### **September 16**

Bringing the State Back in: Neoinstitutionalism

*Theda Skocpol, Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research, Chapter 1 in Bringing the State Back In, edited by Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol, 1985. (p)*

*Bringing the Russian State Back In: Explanations of the Derailed Transition to Market Democracy. Comparative Politics Vol 31, N. 4, July 1999. (p)*

### **September 23**

Alternative Approaches

*Timothy Mitchell, The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and their Critics. American Political Science Review. Volume 85, N. 1, March 1991. (p)*

*John Bendix, Batholomew Sparrow and Bertell Orman, Going Beyond the State? American Political Science Review. Volume 86 N. 4, December 1992. (p)*

## **Part 2: State Formation and Popular Culture**

## **September 30**

- Gil Joseph and Daniel Nugent. *Everyday Forms of State Formation*. Preface, Section I and first four essays in Section II

Critical Paper #1 due

## **October 7**

- Gil Joseph and Daniel Nugent. *Everyday Forms of State Formation*, remainder of the book.

## **Part 3: State-Society Relations**

### **October 14**

Models of cooperation and mutuality

David Nugent, *Building the State, Making the Nation: The Based and Limits of State Centralization in Modern Peru*. *American Anthropologist* Vol 96, N. 2, pp 333-369. (p)

Xu Wang, *Mutual empowerment of State and Society: its Nature, Conditions, Mechanisms and Limits*. *Comparative Politics*. Vol 31, N. 2, January 1999. (p)

### **October 21**

Race and Ethnicity

Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*. Routledge, 1986. Chapters 4-8 (p)

William Safran, *Language, Ideology and State Building: Comparison of Policies in France, Israel, and the Soviet Union*. *International Political Science Review* (1992), Vol 13, No. 4, 397-414.

Critical Paper #2 due

### **October 28**

Social Movements and the State

Gender and the State

Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements in Contentious Politics*. Cambridge University Press, 1998. Chapters 4 and 5 (p)

Nilfer Gle, *Islam and Public: New Visibilities, New Imaginaries*. *Public Culture*, Vol 14, Number 1 (2002), 173-190.

Wendy Brown. *Finding the Man in the State*. *Feminist Studies*. Vol 18, N 1 (1992).

## **Part Four States, Development and Modernity**

### **November 4**

States and Economic Development

*Peter Evans. Embedded Autonomy Chs 1-5*

### **November 11**

States and Economic Development

*Peter Evans. Embedded Autonomy Chs 6-10*

### **November 18**

States and Social Development

*James Scott. Seeing Like a State Parts 1 and 2*

Critical essay #3 due

### **November 25**

States and Social Development

*James Scott. Seeing Like a State Parts 3 and 4*

### **December 4**

Globalization and State Sovereignty

*Ngairé Woods, Global Governance and the Role of Institutions in Governing Globalization, David Held and Anthony McGrew eds. (p)*

*David Held, Democracy, the Nation-State and the Global Order I and II in Democracy and the Global Order: from the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance. Polity Press, 1995.*

### **December 11, 5pm.**

Critical essay # 4 or research paper due.

