

State and Society¹

SOC 333

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Course Description

This course explores the relationship between political systems and the societies that are governed by them. We will take a broadly historical look at variation in power arrangements and bases of legitimate authority by studying topics such as the organization of coercion, the development of law, and other facets of governance, as well as developments in religion, the economy, and other related social spheres. We will uncover these topics by examining a number of the most significant political and cosmological transitions in the history of the world's civilizations: (1) the initial development of the state, (2) the emergence of transcendental religions (axial civilizations), (3) the rationalization of religion and law through the elaboration of axial cosmologies, (4) the development of early bureaucratic empires, and (5) the transition to modernity, industrialization, and the development of the nation-state. The complexities of modern governance and geopolitics in the colonial and post-colonial era will receive extended attention in the second half of the course.

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to provide students with a comparative perspective of political institutions as an endemic feature of all societies. The state and variety of its apparatuses will frame our discussion of other related features of society. This is not to say that we will treat the state and politics as though they *cause* or *determine* other social and historical phenomena. The state will be the starting point, but not always the primary interest of our analysis. Upon completing the course, students should have an understanding of the main historical developments in state institutions, as well as the variation in the manifestation of these institutions in the diverse societies we will cover.

Class format: 13 lectures, 13 seminars, 1 in-class essay exam, 1 opposition seminar. Seminars will address class questions from previous lectures, and students will be expected to prepare presentations attempting to answer the class questions; individual or team format will be used depending on the subject. Each seminar one or two students will be assigned to facilitate the discussion – moderating the classroom and preparing in-class discussion questions.

Statement of Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a very serious offence and is considered as cheating under University rules. Plagiarism includes the following:

- Submission of work that is identical or substantially similar for assessment in more than one course, whether in the same department or in other departments.
- Passing off work as yours that is really the work of others (whether other students, text from a web page you have found or from a published source).

¹ Based on the original syllabus developed by David Levy.

- Duplicating sentences or paragraphs from other works in whole or in part without accurate citation of the text being quoted and proper referencing of the source in the bibliography.

In other words, the only time you should use the words of somebody else in your work is in the form of a direct quote. This should be either indented or should clearly be in quotation marks and should include a direct reference immediately after the quote ends (name, date: page number) e.g. (Harvey, 1989: 64). Direct quotes are accepted academic practice but should be used sparingly in your work. The reference from which the quote comes should then appear in your bibliography. e.g.

Harvey, D. (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Plagiarism does not include:

- **Summarising the arguments of someone else in your own words and citing them as a reference**
- Using published academic work to help you develop your own argument

In each case, though, you should still include a reference in your text to the things that you have read at the end of the relevant sentence or paragraph if you are referring directly to their work e.g. (Harvey, 1989).

Penalties for Plagiarism

First offence, minor (a few unconnected sentences). The lecturer will confront the student with the evidence and if an adequate explanation is not forthcoming they will deduct some marks (to be decided by the lecturer but normally up to 10% overall) from the piece of work in question and a note will be put on the student's file recording they have been caught plagiarising.

First offence, major (substantial plagiarism of more than a few isolated sentences). The lecturer will confront the student with the evidence and if an adequate explanation is not forthcoming the matter will be referred to the Head of Department for action. This will normally result in the piece of work in question being given a mark of zero. A note will be put on the student's file explaining the actions taken and the reasons for them.

Second or further offence. Once evidence has been presented the matter will be referred to the Head of Department for disciplinary action to be taken under University Rules.

Grading

1 individual presentation	10%
2 seminar facilitations	10%
Midterm exam	20%
2 reflection papers	10%
Seminar participation and attendance	25%
Opposition seminar participation	5%
Final course paper/project	20%
Total	100%

Students have the option to make up for two missed classes **with a prior notice** by turning in a reflection essay of 300 words before the next class. The essay should be based on the course literature for the missed class.

Grading scale

Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent
A	91% and more	C	73 – 75%
A-	88 – 90%	C-	70 – 72%
B+	85 – 87%	D+	67 – 69%
B	82 – 84%	D	63 – 66%
B-	79 – 81%	D-	59 – 62%
C+	76 – 78%	F	58% and less

Brief assignment guidelines

Students will be evaluated based on their a) Final paper at the end of the course; b) mid-term in-class essay based on provided questions; c) two reflection papers; d) one individual presentation, e) seminar facilitation and class participation, f) opposition seminar participation.

Individual presentations: Twenty-minute individual presentations are done during seminars chosen by student. Each presentation will be followed by a discussion question addressed to the class. A responsible student is expected to facilitate the discussion.

Reflection papers: Should be 400-600 words long. They should not only present a short summary of chosen articles (from among class literature) but also critically assess class literature. Reflection essays should be handed in before the seminar on the week when they are assigned. Assignments will lose one letter grade for every day they are turned late.

Opposition seminar: This is the first step to writing your final course paper. A week prior to the seminar each student should submit a 60% completed draft of the final paper. Each student will be assigned a paper written by a fellow student. S/he is expected to have read the paper before coming to class; in class the opponent is making a five-minute summary of the paper's main points followed by presentation of weak and strong points of the paper. The author has 5 minutes to respond; after that the floor is open for a quick discussion by the rest of the class including the course instructor. Presentation and discussion of one paper should not exceed 20 minutes. After the opposition sessions students have till the end of the course to make changes in their papers and turn in the final drafts.

Final examination essays: Should be 2100-2500 words long. Should reflect upon course literature, usage of supplementary literature is encouraged, but should show knowledge and understanding of assigned readings. Should present a critical review of the readings and could be done in the form of "research essays". Should clearly state research question, have a theoretical framework, and also findings from the course literature, e.g., case studies of countries (if applicable).

NOTE: Late submission will result in losing 1 grade-point for every day of tardiness, no written assignments are accepted after 5 days of tardiness, and the highest grade after 5 days will be "C+".

The instructor reserves the right to change the schedule of the meetings and topics as and when necessary.

Additional course information might be given during the semester.

Citations: **It is crucial that you use proper citation style in your papers. Please use**

<http://www.easybib.com/>

Points will be decreased from your reflection and final papers if proper citations are not used.

Students have the option to make up for two missed classes with a prior notice by turning in a reflection essay of 400 words before the next class. The essay should be based on the course literature for the missed class.

Date	Topic	Reading
Week 1	Course overview & Introduction	No reading
Week 2	The Definition and Origins of the State and the Political Community	The reader: Eisenstadt. Chapter 1: The historical and bureaucratic polities. The setting and the problem.
Week 3	Legitimate Domination I	The reader: Eisenstadt. Chapter 2: The fundamental characteristics of the political systems and the social conditions of their development.

Week 4	Legitimate Domination II: The Political Implications of the Process of Rationalization in Religion and Law	The reader: Eisenstadt. Chapter 3: The economic structure of the historical bureaucratic societies.
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Reflection essay 1 on seminar day by 17:00		
Week 5	Contradictions in the Political Systems of Expanding Patrimonial States	The reader: Eisenstadt. Chapter 4: Religious and cultural organization and orientation.
Week 6	Bureaucracy and the Political Processes of Empires	The reader: Eisenstadt. Chapter 5: Social organization and stratification.
Week 7	The Political Orientations of Major Social Strata within Consolidating Imperial Bureaucracies	The reader: Eisenstadt. Chapter 6: The social conditions and the institutionalization of the political systems.
Week 8	Mid-term examination: In-class essay	
Week 9	Nations and Nationalism: From Agrarian to Industrial Society	The reader: Gellner. Chapter 1: Definitions & Chapter 2: Culture in agrarian society.
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Reflection essay 2 on seminar day by 17:00		
Week 10	The “Great Revolutions” and the “Civilizations of Modernity”	The reader: Gellner. Chapter 3: Industrial society.
Week 11	Colonialism and Orientalism: World-System and Dependency Theories	The reader: Gellner. Chapter 4: The transition to an age of nationalism & Chapter 5: What is a nation?
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Final paper draft should be 60% finished and submitted to e-course for the opposition seminar. Submit on seminar day by 17:00		
Week 12	Opposition seminar	
Week 13	The Liberal State and Civil Society I: Economic Policy, Stratification, and Civil Rights in Western Political Philosophy	The reader: Gellner. Chapter 6: Social entropy and equality in industrial society.
Week 14	The Liberal State and Civil Society II: Application of Western Institutions in Post-Colonial and Post-Socialist States	The reader: Gellner. Chapter 7: A typology of nationalisms
Week 15	Post-Colonial Law and Ethnicity: Constitutional and Electoral System Design in Ethnically Divided States	The reader: Gellner. Chapter 8: The future of nationalism; Chapter 9: Nationalism and ideology.
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Course paper is due on seminar day by 17:00		

NB: Syllabus is subject to changes.