PS 607 States and State-Society Relations

Spring 2015

Professor: Tuong Vu
Class meeting time and location: 2-5 pm Tuesdays,
Office hours: TBA or by appointment
Office location: 918 PLC
Email: thvu@uoregon.edu
Course website: through https://blackboard.uoregon.edu

Objectives
This course examines how scholars have studied the state and its relationship to society. Among the topics we will discuss are concepts of the state, state formation, state and cultural and social change, forms of state domination, revolutions, and methods of studying states and contentious politics. The goals of this class are 1) to familiarize students with key debates and methodological approaches to the study of the state and state-society relations in the subfield of comparative politics; 2) to learn how to evaluate, critically engage, and build on existing scholarship; and 3) to explore problems of research design, methods, evidence, and other elements of research and writing.

Requirements
The class is run as a seminar. Full attendance and active participation in class discussion are required. For each class, the instructor will also send out some questions on Tuesdays to help students prepare for class discussion. These questions will be written on the board to guide discussion.

To facilitate class participation, each student is required to send two questions about the readings to the entire class by noon on Tuesday. Some of these questions will be used for discussion in class, so think about big or broad issues in the readings that you want to discuss. Besides the questions, each student is required to submit 5 reflection papers during the term. These papers (no more than 2 pages each, single-spaced) reflect your critical thoughts on the readings for the week. Students are free to pick which weeks they want to write reflection papers. Please share these by email with the class by noon on Tuesday. Please submit a hard copy of your paper to me before class begins. Reflection papers can discuss any issues suggested by the readings for that week, regarding theories, approaches (level of analysis, causal ontology, generalization, interpretation, underlying assumptions), and methodologies (e.g., use of evidence, selection of variables, use of comparison).

You can choose either to take the final take-home exam (12-15 pages), or to write a research paper. The paper will provide you with an opportunity to explore in greater depth a substantive area of debate within political economy and to begin working on a research agenda which links the central issues in the debate to empirical research. If you choose to write a paper, come discuss your topic with me by the first week of the term and submit a paper proposal in abstract form with a list of references by January 15. Your paper, which should be double-spaced with one-inch margins and about 20-25 pages in length (excluding bibliographic references), is due on March 20.

Grade Criteria
Participation, including class discussion (35%); reflection papers (25%); final take-home exam or research paper (40%).

Readings
The books listed below are available for purchase from the University Bookstore. [B] means the material is available in Blackboard.


**Introduction to Course and Classical Thoughts on States**

**March 31**


Optional:


State versus Society or State in Society?

April 7


Optional


Rational Choice Institutionalisms

April 14


Optional

Comparative State Formation

April 21


APSR article

Optional


Comparative State-Building

April 28


Optional


The State and Cultural and Social Change

May 5


Optional


Forms of State Domination

May 12


**Optional**


**Rebellion and revolution**

**May 19**


**Optional**


**May 26**

**Beyond Revolution**


Optional


June 2

A New Type of Revolution?


Optional


**Final take-home exam or research paper due**

**No late paper or exam accepted**