

**CSS 230 – Sophomore Government Tutorial:  
State and Society in the Modern Age**

Friday 2:00 – 4:00 pm  
Fisk 403  
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Office hours (virtual):  
Thurs 3:00 - 5:00 pm & by appointment

**Course Description**

This course examines the rise and the evolution of the modern state. While many of the readings focus on Western Europe, the course draws on cross-regional comparisons to tease out theoretical propositions, compare historical processes across different parts of the world, and consider different understandings of the body politic. We start by exploring what factors account for the rise and consolidation of the nation state in the Western context, while also considering the postcolonial critique of Eurocentric theories of state formation. Next, we examine how the process of state-building occurred in the Middle East and North Africa, and explore some of the challenges the sovereign state model faces outside the European context. We then move on to discuss the emergence of different systems of governance and some of the challenges to the state. We will consider whether there are certain paths that lead to democracy, and whether there is something unique about American democracy. We will take into account the challenges posed by modernization, and evaluate what factors best explain the rise of communism and fascism. We will then consider how the communist and fascist past impacted the rise of the social democratic model in Europe. We will ask whether the social democratic model is in crisis today, and why some contemporary right-wing populist movements are appropriating the defense of the welfare state. We conclude with an examination of political engagement beyond national borders, and discuss how different forms of migration may affect domestic political processes.

**Requirements**

Every week you are required to write a five page double-spaced essay (12 font, 1 inch margins). The essay should offer a critical reflection on the readings for the week. You will not receive any specific prompts, but rather are expected to identify theoretically relevant questions and topics of discussion on your own. You may critically engage with the overall argument, unpack the underlying assumptions, comment on the empirical evidence, or discuss broader theoretical or policy implications. You are strongly encouraged to integrate readings from different weeks, and compare and contrast the main arguments of the different authors. Are there any tensions or contradictions that emerge? Are there any theoretical or empirical puzzles? The questions included in the

syllabus for each week will be used to structure some of the class discussions, and can also serve as a starting point for your papers. The essays are due in hard copy at the start of class. In addition to the essays, please prepare two discussion questions on the readings each class.

### **Citing Sources**

To cite your sources in your papers, please use the Chicago Manual of Style author-date format. Here is a quick guide:

[https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html)

For additional information on how to cite your sources, you can also consult the library website here: <https://libguides.wesleyan.edu/citing>

You will notice that the library website also includes links to a variety of citation software. You are not required to use any of these tools, but you might find them very useful, and benefit from starting now your personalized library of references that you can easily organize and access.

### **Readings**

The following is a list of books that will be most extensively used. They are all available for purchase at Broad Street Books, and also available on reserve at Olin. Please note that the library might have different editions of these books. All other readings will be either uploaded on Moodle or available as Ebooks or via EReserves.

Ayubi, Nazih. 1995. *Overstating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*. New York: I.B. Tauris.

Berman, Sheri. 2006. *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Berman, Sheri. 2019. *Democracy and Dictatorship in Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Dahl, Robert. 1971. *Polyarchy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Huntington, Samuel. 2006. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Moore, Barrington. 1966. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Tilly, Charles. 1993. *Coercion, Capital and European States, AS 990-1990*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell.

Tocqueville, Alexis de. 2010. *Democracy in America*. Edited and abridged by Richard Heffner. Signet Books.

### **Accessibility Services**

Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a disability as defined by the ADA. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

If you have a disability, or think that you might have a disability, please contact [Accessibility Services](#) in order to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. Accessibility Services is located in North College, rooms 021/022, or can be reached by email ([accessibility@wesleyan.edu](mailto:accessibility@wesleyan.edu)) or phone (860-685-5581).

### **Week 1. The Emergence of the Modern State**

What is a state? Why did the state emerge? What logic drove state formation, and what factors shaped the process of state-building in Europe? What was the impact of state formation on the population at large? How does postcolonial theory challenge “classic” arguments about the emergence of the modern state in Europe?

Tilly, Charles. 1993. *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990-1990*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell. Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4.

Olson, Mancur. 1993. “Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development.” *American Political Science Reviews* 87: 567 – 576.

Bhambra, Gurminder. 2018. “The State: Postcolonial histories of the concept.” In *Routledge Handbook of Postcolonial Politics*, edited by Olivia U. Rutazibwa and Robbie Shilliam. London: Routledge.

### **Week 2. State Formation and State-building Outside the Western Context**

How did the state formation process differ in the Middle East and North Africa from the European experience? What are some alternative views on the body-politic in the Arab world, and how do they challenge the European conceptualization of the state? How can we understand the fact that many post-colonial and Arab states are simultaneously too strong and too weak - oversized in some respects, but fragile and underdeveloped in others? Why do we see a gap between the de jure and the de facto sovereignty in many post-colonial states? Is a rethinking of the sovereign state model necessary in the African and Middle Eastern context?

Ayubi, Nazih. 1995. *Overstating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*. New York: I.B. Tauris. Chapters 1, 3, 4.

Ghani, Ashraf, Clare Lockhart and Michael Carnahan. 2005. "Closing the Sovereignty Gap: An Approach to State-building." Overseas Development Institute, Working Paper 253.

Herbst, Jeffrey. 1996/1997. "Responding to State Failure in Africa." *International Security*, 21(3).

### **Week 3. Democracy and Democratization**

What is democracy? Are there certain paths towards democracy? If so, are these paths unique to each case or are there generalizable patterns of democratization? How did democracy emerge in England? What lessons can we learn from the more recent waves of democratization?

Dahl, Robert. 1971. *Polyarchy*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapters 1 – 7.

Moore, Barrington. 1966. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press. Chapters 1, 7.

Bunce, Valerie. 2000. "Comparative Democratization: Big and Bounded Generalization." *Comparative Political Studies*, 33 (6/7): 703-734.

### **Week 4. Civil Society, Democracy and American Exceptionalism**

What are the origins of the American democratic mindset according to Tocqueville? What are some disadvantages (or even dangers?) of the American democracy in Tocqueville's view? How do you evaluate Tocqueville's observations on American society? Are there any aspects that are still relevant today? Is there a uniquely American civic vitality? Is the American social capital in decline? What are the implications for the quality of democracy in the U.S.?

Tocqueville, Alexis de. 2010. *Democracy in America*. Edited and abridged by Richard Heffner. Signet Books. Part One: all, Part Two: Book II chapters 26 – 31.

Skocpol, Theda. 1997. "The Tocqueville Problem: Civic Engagement in American Democracy." *Social Science History*, 21(4): 455-479.

Skocpol, Theda. 2004. "Voice and Inequality: The Transformation of American Civil Democracy." *Perspectives on Politics*, 2(1): 3-20.

Putnam, Robert. 1995. "Bowling alone: America's declining social capital." *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1): 65-78.

### **Week 5. The challenge of modernization**

What prompts traditional polities to “modernize”? What does the process of modernization entail, and why are there differences across countries? When and why does modernization lead to violence and political instability? What steps can be taken in order to avoid “political decay” and instability? In which ways do Lipset and Huntington see the process of modernization similarly or differently? How does postcolonial theory challenge modernization theory? How can we think of modernity from a postcolonial perspective?

Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1959. “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy.” *American Political Science Review*, 53 (1): 69 – 105.

Huntington, Samuel. 2006. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapters 1, 2, 3, 7. Read Foreword last.

Quijano, Anibal. 2000. “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America.” *Nepantla: Views from the South*, 1(3): 533-580.

### **Week 6. Communism and Fascism**

What are revolutions and why do they occur? What factors led to the rise of communism and the rise of fascism? What is the role of the state in the communist and in the fascist ideology?

Berman, Sheri. 2019. *Democracy and Dictatorship in Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press. Read Ch. 11 (Italy), Ch.12 (Germany), Ch. 15 (East-Central Europe).

Huntington, Samuel. 2006. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Ch. 5

Moore, Barrington. 1966. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press. Chapters 8, 9.

Mann, Michael. 2004. *Fascists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 2, 10. [Available as Ebook via library website.](#)

### **Week 7. Social Democracy and the Welfare State**

How can we understand the rise of the social democratic model in Europe? Is the social democratic model in crisis today? How and why have right-wing populist parties in Europe appropriated the defense of the welfare state? What lessons can we learn about democracy and dictatorship from the history of political developments in Europe?

Berman, Sheri. 2006. *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe’s Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Keating, Michael and David McCrone. 2015. *The Crisis of Social Democracy in Europe*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. Read Ch. 1 (The Crisis of Social Democracy), Ch. 8 (Multi-Culturalism, Right-Wing Populism and the Crisis of Social Democracy), and Ch. 9 (Labor Markets, Welfare States, and the Dilemmas of European Social Democracy). Available as Ebook via library website.

Berman, Sheri. 2019. *Democracy and Dictatorship in Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press. Ch. 18 (Lessons from Europe).

### **Week 8. Politics Beyond National Borders: Migration and Transnational Political Engagement**

The national state is conceptualized as a territorially bounded entity, but the political processes shaping a state are not always (if ever) confined to national borders. How do migrants, exiles and national diasporas shape domestic politics? What are the implications for how we understand the state, political loyalty, and governance?

Shain, Yossi. 1989. *The Frontier of Loyalty: Political Exiles in the Age of the Nation-State*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press. Introduction, Ch. 1, 2, 7, 8, Conclusion. Available as Ebook via library website (2005 version).

Duuquette-Rury, Lauren. 2019. *Exit and Voice: The Paradox of Cross-Border Politics in Mexico*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press. Introduction, CH. 1, Ch.2, Conclusion. Available as Ebook via library website.