

Introduction to World Politics

PSC 10300

Fall 2023

Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-10:45

Marshak 117

Instructor

Nicholas Rush Smith

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Office Hours

Tuesday 11:00-12:00

NAC 4/146

Other Times by Appointment

Course Overview: Where do states come from? What is a state anyway? Why would some people want membership in a state while others try to avoid it? To what extent do states shape the use of violence? How do states shape the economy? What political tools do average citizens have for constraining state power? This course uses questions like these to introduce students to the study of world politics. In doing so, it serves as a foundational course for further study in two subfields of political science: comparative politics and international relations.

The course is divided into three sections that tell the story of the broad evolution of world politics as the co-evolution of states and markets. The first section examines where states come from and their connections to early economic accumulation. The second section considers how the first modern states were organized and how states are connected to modern economic power. The final section explores political tools citizens have to constrain the power of states.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course students will gain:

- Insight on foundational questions in comparative politics about the growth and development of states
- Insight on foundational questions in international politics about the growth and development of the global economy
- Critical thinking skills that enable the application of these theoretical schools to contemporary issues in world politics

Course Assignments: The primary assignments for the course are three in-class exams. Exams will be based on the in-class lectures and the course readings. Students are, therefore, responsible for each source of information.

Grading and Evaluation: The course will be graded on a 100-point scale. Each exam is worth 30 points. Class attendance and participation will be worth an additional 10 points.

- Exam 1: September 28 (Section I)
- Exam 2: November 2 (Section II)
- Exam 3: Per CCNY Final Exam Schedule (Section III)

Attendance Policy: Participation in class discussions is crucial to the success of the course. **As such, students will lose 2.5 points from the participation portion of their grade for each class missed (i.e. 2.5% off the final course grade for each class missed up to a maximum of 10% off the final grade).** I will allow one unexcused absence without penalty. However, each subsequent unexcused absence will incur this penalty. I will have a sign-in sheet available at the beginning of class for students to sign showing they are present. If students are there on time, they should sign-in upon entering class. If a student is late and I have already picked up the sign in sheet, it is a student's responsibility to let me know that they are present after class. Otherwise, they will be counted as absent. I start class promptly and it is a student's responsibility to be there on time.

If a student writes me *before* class letting me know about an emergency that requires them missing class (e.g. sickness, death in the family), I will excuse the absence if a student acts in good faith. I will not accept excuses after the fact, though. **Clearly, please do not come to class, if you are feeling ill. Just send me an email and I will excuse the absence.**

If a student misses an exam, a note from a relevant authority attesting to the emergency (e.g. doctor) is required. I will not allow students to take an exam if such a note is not provided and if the reason for missing the exam is not legitimate (e.g. illness; family emergency). Late work hours or a delayed train are not legitimate excuses for missing an exam. **To encourage frequent attendance, there will be occasional unannounced in-class extra-credit activities, the points for which will only be available to students who were present in class that day.**

Current Events Reading: As this is a course on World Politics, students are expected to keep abreast of the news happening in the world. We will begin most classes with a brief discussion of the news for that day and try to apply conceptual tools learned in class to help us understand the event better. To facilitate these discussions, students are required to sign up for an electronic subscription to either the *New York Times* or *Wall Street Journal* and to read its world coverage. Free electronic subscriptions are available to both newspapers to all students using a CUNY email address.

You can sign up for free access to the Times website and mobile apps here: <https://myaccount.nytimes.com/verification/edupass>

You can sign up for free access to the Wall Street Journal website and mobile apps here: <http://www1.cuny.edu/sites/cunyufs/2018/03/09/wall-street-journal-access-for-cuny-faculty-and-students/>

Books to Purchase: None. This is a zero-cost course. All readings will be available on Blackboard.

Accessibility & Campus Resources: At City College, we strive to make all our classes accessible to every student, regardless of any disability (visible or non-visible; physical, cognitive, emotional, or learning) or any other special circumstances (such as a medical, personal, or housing emergency; family responsibilities; financial difficulties; legal difficulties;

or immigration status) that may affect your ability to attend class and complete the coursework. Please speak to me (and your other professors) in office hours or via email early in the semester or as soon as you're aware that you may need accommodations, so that we can work together to make sure that you receive the support you need.

City College offers resources to students in a wide range of circumstances. We want all students to succeed and to take advantage of all the support the college has to offer.

Please let your other professors know if you have registered with the AccessAbility Center/Student Disability Services (AAC/SDS) or have any **special needs, learning differences, or medical conditions** that may affect your coursework so that we can make the appropriate accommodations. If you believe you may need an accommodation, please do get in touch with the AAC/SDS. You can reach the AccessAbility office via email (disabilityservices@ccny.cuny.edu) or through their Zoom virtual front desk (<https://ccny.zoom.us/j/116151245>).

If you need a **computer, tablet, or wi-fi**, you can request them through an online form (https://portal.ccny.cuny.edu/depts/oit/cuny_loaner/login.php). You can also contact the iMedia Center via email (imedia@ccny.cuny.edu) or via their Zoom virtual front desk, Monday-Thursday, 11am-3pm (<https://ccny.zoom.us/j/2126505480>).

If you have any questions or concerns about your **immigration status** or that of your family members, please consult the CCNY Immigration Center for free and confidential advice via phone (212-650-6620) or email (meetu.dhar@ccny.edu).

If, for any reason, you are struggling with **personal issues, anxiety, depression, or stress**, there are a number of resources on campus.

The Student Counseling Center in the Health and Wellness Center provides remote counseling that is free and confidential to students. You can contact them via phone (212-650-8222), email (counseling@ccny.cuny.edu), or their Zoom virtual front desk, Monday-Thursday 10am-4pm (<http://ccny.zoom.us/j/2126508222>). They also have links to a number of resources on their website (<https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/counseling>).

The Colin Powell School offers free, confidential peer mentoring with trained graduate students on issues of stress management and self-care. To sign up, simply send an email (peernavigationccny@gmail.com) or sign up online (<https://calendly.com/peernavigation/calendar?month=2020-10>).

If you are dealing with **food insecurity**, please visit Benny's Food Pantry in the Hoffman Lounge on the first floor of the NAC. The pantry is open even during the pandemic. To gain access on weekdays, just make an appointment online (<https://calendly.com/bennysfoodpantry/benny-s-food-pantry-appointment-system?month=2021-08>).

If you are facing an **emergency shortage of funds**, please email Ms. Charlene Darbassie (cdarbassie@ccny.cuny.edu) or Dean Andy Rich (arich@ccny.cuny.edu) in the Colin Powell School Dean's Office. They will tell you how to apply for an emergency grant. Applying is quick and easy.

If you are experiencing or have experienced **domestic violence** or **violence that is sex-based, gender-based, or sexuality-based**; or if you are experiencing or have experienced **discrimination because of gender, sex, sexuality, race, ethnicity, language, religion, disability, or other reasons**, please report it to Diana Cuzzo in the Office of Affirmative Action, Compliance, and Diversity via email (dcuzzo@ccny.cuny.edu) or phone (212-650-7330). For a confidential discussion of these and related issues, please contact Sophie English via email (senglish@ccny.cuny.edu) or phone (212-650-8905).

If you are struggling in any of your classes, don't hesitate to get extra **academic support**. Just make an appointment with the Academic Resource Center (www.ccny.cuny.edu/sssp/tutoring-arc) or email Charlene Darbassie (cdarbassie@ccny.cuny.edu) in the Colin Powell School office of Academic Support Services.

The CCNY Writing Center (www.ccny.cuny.edu/writing) offers individualized **writing support** to all students.

To receive information and support about securing **internships** and planning for your **post-college career**, please contact Debbie Cheng (dcheng@ccny.cuny.edu) and Ashif Hassan (ahassan@ccny.cuny.edu) in the Colin Powell School Dean's Office. Also, take a look at the new Career Handbook that their office has created to help you start thinking about career and professional development (<https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/colinpowellschool/career-and-professional-development>).

For **advising**, contact the Colin Powell School Advising Office (<https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/colinpowellschool/office-academic-advisors>). At their website, you can make a virtual appointment with one of the advisors or you can find their email addresses so you can send them a message.

Course Outline

Section I: Understanding the Origins of State Power

Week 1 – Course Introduction

Tuesday, Aug. 29 – Course Introduction
No assignments

Thursday, Aug. 31 – Overview Lecture

James Scott. 2014. *Two Cheers for Anarchism: Six Easy Pieces on Autonomy, Dignity, Meaningful Work and Play*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: Chapter 3.

Week 2 – The Emergence of Political and Economic Power

Tuesday, Sept. 5 – In the beginning...

James C. Scott. 2017. *Against the Grain: A Deep History of Early States*. New Haven: Yale University Press: Chapter 1.

Thursday, September 7 – The Social Cage and the Origins of States

David Graeber and David Wengrow. 2021. *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux: Chapter 3.

Week 3 – The Fragility of Early States

Tuesday, Sept. 12 – Slavery and the Foundations of Economic and Political Order
David Graeber. 2011. *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*. Brooklyn: Melville House: Chapter 7.

Thursday, Sept. 14 – The Fragility of States

James C. Scott. 2017. *Against the Grain: A Deep History of Early States*. New Haven: Yale University Press: Chapter 6.

Week 4 – Living without a State

Tuesday, Sept. 19 – In-Class Debate

Debate: Without the state to protect us, life is nasty, brutish, and short.

Meet a Political Scientist: Dirk Moses

Thursday, Sept. 21 – How to Escape a State and Live to Tell About It

James Scott. 2010. *The Art of Not Being Governed*. New Haven: Yale University Press: Chapter 5.

Week 5 – Exam 1

Tuesday, Sept. 26 – No Class

CUNY Cancellation (Monday Schedule)

Thursday, Sept. 28 – Exam 1
Exam 1

Section II: The Emergence of Durable States and Market Economies

Week 6 – States and Their Supposed Opposites

Tuesday, Oct. 3 – States as Protection Rackets

Tilly, Charles. 1985. “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime.” In *Bringing the State Back In*, edited by Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Thursday, Oct. 5 – Working with Economic Threats to Grow the State

Karen Barkey. 1994. *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press: Chapter 6.

Week 7 – The State and the Economy

Tuesday, Oct. 10 – An Economy without a State

Avner Greif. 1989. “Reputation and Coalitions in Medieval Trade: Evidence on the Maghribi Traders.” *The Journal of Economic History* 49 (4): 857-882.

Thursday, Oct. 12 – Monopolizing Violence and Enabling the Economy

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson. 2012. *Why Nations Fail*. New York: Crown Publishing: Chapter 3.

Week 8 – The Effects of Europe’s Rising Economies and States

Tuesday, Oct. 17 – Europe’s Economic Expansion and Its Devastating Effects Elsewhere

Linda M. Heywood. 2017. *Njinga of Angola: Africa’s Warrior Queen*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: Chapter 3.

Thursday, Oct. 19 – States, Habits and Violence

Robert Muchembled. 2012. *A History of Violence*. Malden, MA: Polity: Chapter 7.

Week 9 – Emotions, States, and Discipline

Tuesday, Oct. 24 – The Rise of Rights

Lynn Hunt. 2008. *Inventing Human Rights*. New York: Norton: Chapter 1.

Thursday, Oct. 26 – Evading State Discipline

James Scott. 1998. *Seeing Like a State*. New Haven: Yale University Press: Chapter 4.

Week 10 – Debate 2 and Exam 2

Tuesday, Oct. 31 – Debate 2 and Meet a Political Scientist

Debate 2: States are preconditions for prosperity. Without a state, life is generally poor.

Meet a Political Scientist: Raphaëlle Khan

Thursday, Nov. 2 – Exam 2

EXAM 2

Section III: Capitalism and the Rise of a Democratic World

Week 11 – The Contradictory Relationship between Capitalism and Revolution

Tuesday, Nov. 7 – Commerce and Revolution

Julius S. Scott. 2018. *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution*. London: Verso: Chapter 4.

Thursday, Nov. 9 – Capitalism and Inequality

Thomas Piketty. 2014. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap: Chapter 8.

Week 12 – Making and Breaking the Modern World Economy

Tuesday, Nov. 14 – Challenges of Post-Colonial Political Economy

Adom Getachew. 2019. *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: Chapter 5.

Thursday, Nov. 16 – Financial Crisis in the Global North

Adam Tooze. 2018. *Crashed: How a Decade of Financial Crises Changed the World*. New York: Viking: Chapter 3.

Week 13 – Founding Democracy

Tuesday, Nov. 21 – Democratization from Below

Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephen. 2011. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Non-Violent Conflict*. New York: Columbia University Press: Chapter 2.

Thursday, Nov. 23 – No Class

Thanksgiving

Week 14 – Democracy's Value and Contradictions

Tuesday, Nov. 28 – The Material Value of Democracy

Thomas Piketty. 2022. *A Brief History of Equality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: Chapter 6.

Thursday, Nov. 30 – The Violence of Democratic States

Yanilda Gonzalez. 2020. *Authoritarian Police in Democracy: Contested Security in Latin America*. New York: Cambridge University Press: Chapter 3.

Week 15 – Destroying Democracy

Tuesday, Dec. 5 – Destroying Democracy

Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die*. New York: Crown: Chapter 1.

Thursday, Dec. 7 – Debate 3 and Meet a Political Scientist

Debate 3 – Capitalism is the cause of inequality. For a more equal world, we should get rid of it.

Meet a Political Scientist: Nicholas Rush Smith

FINAL EXAM – Per CCNY Final Exam Schedule