

Columbia University
Department of Political Science

Spring 2013

Senior Seminar in Political Theory

POLS W3912y: WAR, REVOLUTION, AND THE MODERN STATE

613 Hamilton

F 10:10–12

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Course description

Historically, war and revolution have been two of the strongest forces shaping the development of the modern state. In its classical formulation, the state was defined through sovereignty, a monopoly of legitimate force intended to protect citizens against both foreign encroachment and domestic strife. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, state sovereignty also implied (at least in theory) a clear separation of the political, legal, and moral connotations of intra-state violence as opposed to inter-state violence. In practice, such a separation was premised on a division of the world between a Euro-Atlantic core and a colonial periphery, where very different norms concerning the policing of violence prevailed.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, revolution has receded in importance (at least in the West) as a key political contingency, war has been completely transformed in its methods, aims, and participants, and the constraints on state sovereignty have become ever more pervasive. To explore how these changes came about, and what they portend for the role of politics in the contemporary world, is the main goal of the seminar. To that end, we will be drawing on a variety of texts from several different disciplines in the social sciences, evenly balanced between classic statements in the history of political thought and contemporary contributions to research and scholarship.

Course mechanics

The seminar form is intended to run as a colloquy, and as a consequence its success depends largely on active participation. Everyone should contribute to the conversation, and will be called upon to do so. Students are expected to read the material carefully and in detail before class, and to come prepared not only to examine its content, but also to discuss the normative and political implications of the arguments. I will circulate introductory and background comments, study questions and other complementary material from one week to the next, in order to help frame in-class debate.

The texts assigned are not inordinately long, but they are layered and complex: students should budget sufficient preparation time to absorb the nuances. A grounding in modern European history (since the French revolution) and prior exposure to classic texts in early-modern political thought (Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau...) are recommended in order to maximize the pedagogical value of the seminar.

Schedule

Students should come to the first seminar having read Poggi, by way of introduction to the theory of the state. During the first meeting, further logistical and administrative issues will be discussed, including assessment methods. Thereafter, the seminar will run according to the following course outline.

Section I: The State

Week 1 (25 January): Basic concepts

Reading: Poggi, *The State: Its Nature, Development, and Prospects* (Stanford, 1990).

Week 2 (1 February): Classic formulations

Reading: Weber, “The Profession and Vocation of Politics” and Whimster (ed.), *The Essential Weber*, part II (pp. 117–99) (Courseworks).

Week 3 (8 February): The patriotism debate

Reading: Nussbaum (ed.), *For Love of Country?* (Beacon, 2002).

Section II: Revolution

Week 4 (15 February): The exemplary function of violence

Reading: Mazzini, *A Cosmopolitanism of Nations* (Princeton, 2009).

Week 5 (22 February): 1848 as revolution and social defense

Reading: Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*

(<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/index.htm>);

Tocqueville, *Recollections* (Transaction, 1987).

Week 6 (1 March): Wars of movement and wars of position

Reading: Gramsci, *Pre-prison Writings* (Cambridge, 1994).

Week 7 (8 March): Blurring the lines between politics and war

Reading: Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan* (Telos, 2007).

Section III: Imperialism

Week 8 (15 March): Imperialism and the domestic politics of the metropole

Reading: Hobson, *Imperialism* (Michigan, 1965).

*** 18 March – 22 March: Spring Break ***

Week 9 (29 March): Imperialism as an issue of race, class, and gender

Reading: Luxemburg, *The National Question* (Monthly Review, 1976).

Week 10 (5 April): Re-importing imperialist practices

Reading: Traverso, *The Origins of Nazi Violence* (New Press, 2003).

Section IV: War

Week 11 (12 April): The changing face of war

Reading: Gros, *States of Violence* (Seagull, 2010).

Week 12 (19 April): Apocalyptic perspectives

Reading: Girard, *Battling to the End* (Michigan State, 2009).

Week 13 (26 April): Eastern and Western ways of war
 Reading: Jullien, *Treatise on Efficacy* (Hawaii, 2004).

Epilogue

Week 14 (3 May): Mourning and commitment
 Reading: Camus, *The Rebel* (Vintage, 1992).

Further reading

- Theory and historical background:
 - Delmas, Philippe, *The Rosy Future of War* (Free Press, 1997).
 - Gurr, Ted, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, 1970).
 - Mantena, Karuna, *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Imperialism* (Princeton, 2010).
 - Moore, Barrington, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Beacon, 1993).
 - Parker, Geoffrey, *Military Revolution* (Cambridge, 1996).
 - Pitts, Jennifer, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton, 2005).
 - Said, Edward, *Culture and Imperialism* (Vintage, 1994).
 - Skinner, Quentin, "The State" in Ball, Farr & Hanson (eds.), *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change* (Cambridge, 1989).
 - Skocpol, Theda, *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge, 1979).
 - Tilly, Charles (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, 1975).
 - Tuck, Richard, *The Rights of War and Peace* (Oxford, 1999).
 - Weber, Eugen, *Peasants into Frenchmen* (Stanford, 1976).

- Secondary literature on individual authors:
 - Avineri, Shlomo, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* (Cambridge, 1968).
 - Basso, Lelio, *Rosa Luxemburg: A Reappraisal* (Praeger, 1975).
 - Beetham, David, *Max Weber and the Theory of Modern Politics* (Polity, 1985).
 - Bellamy & Schecter, *Gramsci and the Italian State* (Manchester, 1993).
 - Bendix, Reinhard, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait* (California, 1977).
 - Femia, Joseph, *Gramsci's Political Thought* (Clarendon, 1981).
 - Freedom, Michael (ed.), *Reappraising J.A. Hobson: Humanism and Welfare* (Unwin, 1990).
 - Golding, Sue, *Gramsci's Democratic Theory: Contributions to a Post-Liberal Democracy* (Toronto, 1992)
 - Hennis, Wilhelm, *Max Weber: Essays in Reconstruction* (Allen & Unwin, 1988).
 - Hoffman, John, *The Gramscian Challenge: Coercion and Consent in Marxist Political Theory* (Blackwell, 1984).
 - Martin, James, *Gramsci's Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction* (Macmillan, 1998).
 - McCormick, John, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1997).
 - Mommsen, Wolfgang, *Max Weber and German Politics* (Chicago, 1984).
 - Mueller, Jan-Werner, *A Dangerous Mind* (Yale, 2003).
 - Murdoch, Iris, *Existentialists and Mystics* (Chatto & Windus, 1997).
 - Walzer, Michael, *The Company of Critics: Social Criticism and Political Commitment in the Twentieth Century* (Basic Books, 1988).