

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO
POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THE STATE

Fall semester, 2002
Ian Robert Douglas

Class hours: Mondays 4.30-7pm, Tuesdays, 4-6.30 pm
Office hours: Sundays, 2-3pm, Wednesdays 1.30-3pm

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**“None are so hopelessly enslaved as those who falsely believe
they are free.”**

Johann von Goethe

The State is the most powerful phenomenon on earth. Clausewitz argued that the growth of the modern state was ‘the most significant process in history.’ We live in an age in which the state is said to be declining. Is it? This course has a singular aim: to understand this dream called “the State.” What its violence is. What it was formed for. What its destiny is. We will aim to understand it, in order to understand the nature of the effect it has on our lives. We will chart the evolution of the state from the earliest times through to the modern era. We will review the main ways in which it has been justified in political thought, and the struggles that have sought to place limits upon it.

Objectives/outcomes

At the end of the course we will have:

- 1) Reviewed the evolution of the State-form, and placed it in its proper context: at the heart of the study of political science—not as a monolithic “defining” structure to which we must bear our allegiance (or suspend our criticism), but rather as that thing which denies us our politics, and which is the universal code and trap for human creativity, spirit and humanity.
- 2) Accounted for—through “theories”, writings, essays, quotes—the rise of the State, and its progressive internalization over the modern era. We will aim above all to come to a comprehensive, though broad, understanding of the major turning points in the evolution of the State-form; in order to see with better vantage its possible trajectory, and its contemporary significance.

- 3) Revealed the multi-dimensionality of “the State”; not just the grand esoteric tables of Law and Right—or the ethical ideal of human culture; but a complex apparatus, or “field” upon the plane of chaos; a form which likewise imprints other forms. We will expand the understanding we have of the State to include the totality of order—from the broad mechanisms of “education”, “government”, “security”, to the minor mechanisms of self-constitution, self-formation, ego and rationality.

Organization and assessment

This course is firmly a **seminar course**. What this means is that no one human being—and not me either—could possibly present all the material we need to account for in one semester. We will therefore disaggregate and disassemble and have participants carry the weight equally. In other words, everyone—whether taking the course for credit, or merely auditing—will be asked to take a full part in each session. So much as is possible, I want you come to this course with a fresh perspective. Don’t expect to be taught; expect rather to teach others. Collectively we will combine our resolve and our strength, and seek to deal directly with one of the most disturbing, most immanent, most powerful and transformative phenomenon ever to appear: the State as it evolves from violence and destitution, and encodes itself into the heart of man’s modernity.

The assessment of this course will be as follows:

Minor research paper	(due in class Week 7)	15%
Book review	(due in class Week 9)	10%
Extended research paper:		
(1st draft due in class Week 12; final peer-reviewed draft due the last day of class)		40%
Participation		35%

Written assignments will take the form of one short research paper, a book review, and an extended research paper. The first, shorter essay must be at least 1500 words in length. The extended research paper must be at least 3500 words in length. The book review is an undetermined length, but should comprehensively account for the book under review.

In the essay assignments your task is to respond critically and thoughtfully to a specific question, or series of questions (to be distributed). Class participation is the second major part of our assessment. Students will be asked to regularly present from chapters or readings, and will be asked to distribute (via the class webpage), summaries of these readings (one to two pages of notes only) in advance.

With regard to the final research paper, we will introduce something new. Essays are to be submitted first in a “draft form” in week 12. These essay will then be distributed among other participants for **peer review**. Having provided detailed comments and assessment on your essays, students will have until the last day of class to re-draft and complete their research papers. The paper I grade will hopefully, therefore, be a better paper than the original

submitted—depending on the efforts of your peer reviewer. This should be regarded as a means of encouraging debate amongst you.

The book review assignment is to review a book taken from a distributed list. Samples of good practice will also be distributed. In essence the aim to evaluate the text, not simply summarize it. This presupposes that you know more than the average reader about the subject of the book itself, in order to be able to comment. Therefore, the book review exercise should be seen as an ongoing project running alongside the first essay; not simply you get to after you complete the first essay, but rather something which benefits from the readings you do for that essay, and for class.

Above all, in all assignments, you are responsible for demonstrating **originality of thought** and **comprehensiveness of understanding**. Further guidance will be given in class.

Grading

A = Excellent command of the literature, independent and directed thinking, innovation and style. The essay/assignment would be meticulously referenced, and well-structured. A strong contribution not simply to the particular class, but overall to the student's own education and development.

B = A good solid effort. The kind of essay that tries hard, is well sourced, but doesn't break through, or add much that is new or insightful (i.e., more a case of good repetition of an existing literature, rather than thinking/researching/striving for oneself).

C = An honest effort, but sloppy in presentation and foresight. Some good ideas, but jumbled or confused. Remember that thought is like any sport, or any art. There is a point at which the mind becomes lean and fast, but it can only be attained through great effort. An essay that is worthy of the grade "C" is perhaps only a few hours from being worthy of a "B," and only a certain level of intensity—perhaps commitment—away from an "A." Test yourself out. Have courage.

D = A bare pass. Just enough effort shown to warrant passing the course but not enough to impress or inspire in any way. Typical of a D grade essay would be one that simply "went through the motions", without much thought, care, or interest on the behalf of the student.

F = Fail.

Class policies

1. Forget everything you think you know.
2. I expect you to value my time: be prompt and ready for class.
3. You will be allowed a maximum of 2 missed classes without penalty. 3 missed classes, for whatever reason, will warrant an automatic "F" for the class, as per University regulations (see the University handbook for official policy).
4. If you miss an assignment deadline you may hand in your work within 72 hrs. No work will be accepted more than 72 hrs after the deadline.
5. Essays are to be submitted typed in hard copy **in class**.
6. There are no make-ups.
7. Plagiarism (or any form of cheating) is not simply an academic offense of dishonesty; it is a personal insult to me, and I will take it as such. All cases will be immediately—without exception—referred to the Dean of Students. The student will fail instantly.

8. Grades are non-negotiable.
9. **Never** be afraid to ask if something is not understood.
10. *Have courage to use your own understanding.*

Readings

There will be no textbook, but rather a “reader” of key articles, chapters, essays, and quotes. This reader can be purchased at a minimal price in the copy center near to the *sheesa* bar across from the Social Sciences entrance to Greek campus. There are four volumes of readings (including the supplementary readings, which is not compulsory purchase, but nonetheless a strong recommended purchase). I do not expect you to read everything in the reader, but this reader should be used as solid basis and foundation: you must read as much as you can. Beyond the collection that the reader represents, students are expected to be resourceful in finding additional materials in the library and in their lives. Good research is a basic skill in any university context. You should work to master this skill—or certainly to be proficient in it. We’re here to read, explore, and to find things out. Journey into the world. You have no choice: *Vous êtes embarqué!* (Pascal)

The Reader/Course outline

[Volume 1]

A poetic prologue

“Hyperion’s Song of Fate,” Friedrich Hölderlin
 Various excerpts Friedrich Hölderlin
 “Man” Friedrich Hölderlin
 “Marriage of Heaven and Hell,” William Blake
 “The Archipelago,” Friedrich Hölderlin
 “The Pauper Palace,” anonymous

1. The infinite, the gods, and the State

“The Greek State,” and “Homer on Competition”, Friedrich Nietzsche
 “Pericles’ Funeral Oration,” Thucydides
 “On the Marionette Theatre,” Heinrich von Kliest
 “Dog boy rescued,” various news reports
 “The Life of Infamous Men,” Michel Foucault
 “The Life of Spinoza,” Gilles Deleuze

2. Conceptions of the State

“The State,” Giovanni Gentile
 “Political power beyond the State: problematics of government,” Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller

“The Autonomous Power of the State: Its origins, mechanisms and results,” Michael Mann
 “Prison Talk,” Michel Foucault
 “The State in Question,” Stuart Hall
 Aristotle’s Concept of Political Structure and the State,” Wolfgang Weissleder

3. Pre-histories of the State

“Copernicus and the Savages,” Pierre Clastres
 “State Origins: A Reappraisal,” Ronald Cohen
 “The Origin of the State Among the Nomads of Asia,” Lawrence Krader
 “The Early State in Ancient Egypt,” Jac J. Janssen
 “Context and Authority in Early Mesopotamian Law,” Norman Yoffee
 “Egypt: Formation by Internal Development,” Lawrence Krader
 “Islam and State formation in West Africa,” Nehemia Levtzion
 “The Triple Heritage of the state in Africa,” Ali A. Mazrui
 “The Making of the State,” M. Ruthnaswamy
 “The Absolutist States of Western Europe,” Perry Anderson
 “Absolutism and Other Ancestors,” James Anderson and Stuart Hall

4. Theories of the State

“Central Perspectives on the Modern State,” David Held
 “Poulantzas and Foucault on Power and Strategy,” and “The State as Political Strategy,”
 Bob Jessop
 “Some Theoretical Problems of the Study of the Early State,” Anatolh M. Khazanov
 “The Early State as a Process,” Peter Skalník

[Volume 2]

5. Dangers and Threats to the State

“Society Against the State,” Pierre Clastres
 “Popular disturbances and the Machinery of the State,” Max Beloff
 “The Reasons of Misrule,” Natalie Zemon Davis
 “Reformation, carnival and the world turned upside-down,” Bob Scribner
 “After we have captured their bodies,” Timothy Mitchell
 “In the Margins of Settled Life: Imprisonment and the Repression of Begging,” Pieter
 Spierenburg
 “Idleness and Labor,” Pieter Spierenburg

6. Violence/force and the State

“Of Torture in Primitive Societies,” Pierre Clastres
 “A History of Torture,” George Riley Scott

7. "Civilization" and the State

"The tilt toward civility and the Winds of Change," Marvin Becker

"The Civilizing Process," Norbert Elias

"On the Education of the Lower Orders," Dugald Stewart

8. Social cartography and the State

"The Development of Demography," Frank Lorimer

"Classification and Training", "Security and Control" and "Work," Lionel Fox

"Accounting and Objectivity: The Invention of calculating Selves and calculable Spaces,"
Peter Miller

[Volume 3]

9. The birth of the factory

"The Period of Experimentation: Prison Workhouses on the Continent, 1588-1650," Pieter Spierenburg

"The Workhouse System, 1834-1929," M. A. Crowther

"The Prison as a Household: Management, Forced Labour, and the Economy," Pieter Spierenburg

10. Prisons of the State

"Variations on the Prisons," Aldous Huxley

"Prisons, the State, and the Labour Market, 1820-1842," Michael Ignatieff

11. Law, Right and norm, and the State

"Legal Discourse and State Power: Foucault and the Juridical Relation," Jerry Palmer and Frank Pearce

"Norms, Discipline, and the Law," François Ewald

"Montesquieu and the Philosophy of natural Law," Mark H. Waddicor

"Territorial Expansion of the Code," Jean Limpens

"The Ideological and Philosophical Background," C. J. Friedrich

"The Grand Outlines of the Code," André Tunc

"Codification and National Unity," René Cassin

12. Medical ecology and the State

“The Well-Ordered Police State and the Development of Modernity in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Europe: An Attempt at a Comparative Approach,” Marc Raeff

“Polizei,” Franz-Ludwig Knemeyer (with an introduction by Keith Tribe)

“Security and vitality: drains, liberalism and power in the nineteenth century,” Thomas Osborne

13. Idealization of the State

“The Organic Theory,” Martin Sicker

“Prisons and the Imagination” Pieter Spierenberg

“A Way of Obtaining Power,” Robin Evans

“Postscript on the societies of control,” Gilles Deleuze

“The State of Emergency,” Paul Virilio

14. The Meaning of the Death of God

“The Grand Inquisitor,” Fyodor Dostoevsky

“Civilization and Its Discontents,” Sigmund Freud

A Final Word

“Back-up U.S. government in place,” <http://www.cnn.com>

“Active and reactive,” Gilles Deleuze

“Let the slave ...,” William Blake

[Volume 4: Supplementary materials]

The Rise and Decline of the State, Martin van Crevald

In Defense of Prisoners of Rights, The Human Rights Centre for the Assistance of Prisoners' Reports from 1997-20



“ .. what blindness, what deafness, what density of ideology would have to weigh me down to prevent me from being interested in what is probably the most crucial subject to our existence, that is to say the society in which we live, the economic relations within which it functions, and the system of power which defines the regular forms and the regular permissions and prohibitions of our conduct. The essence of our life consists, after all, of the political functioning of the society in which we find ourselves.”

—michel foucault