

SS486 State Building

Department of Social Science

United States Military Academy

Introduction

This course examines state building in the modern world. Whether one focuses on international relations, American politics or comparative politics, the state remains a critical component to our understanding of political life. Throughout this semester, we will explore how states emerged; why some states become strong or weak; how the state interacts with its society; and how the state building project functions in the contemporary world. Our course is organized in four blocks. In Block I, we will examine the major theoretical foundations of the state formation literature and discover how the state emerged from kingdoms, empires, and feudal systems. We will also examine the critical role of warfare in the development of modern states and consider throughout the semester whether or not this constitutes a necessary condition for building strong states. Additionally, this block will introduce the critical concepts of nationalism, rational choice, and institutions. In Block II, we examine fundamental concepts related to state capacity - the ability of a government to function - in order to understand both the development and denigration of states. During Block III, we view the state from the perspective of the civil society. Finally, in Block IV we examine the state building phenomena in: Sub Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the post-Soviet region.

In the middle of the course, we will have the opportunity to witness the dynamics of state building in action. From April 2 - 4, 2020, we will participate in a three day exploration of the state and civil society in Jersey City, New Jersey. During portions of the experience, we explore state capacity with respect to local government, municipal projects, police, judicial system, and community outreach. In other events, we will learn from various groups operating in the civil society such as: Muslim, Sikh, Jewish, Coptic, Catholic, and Mormon communities. By the end of the experience, cadets will gain new perspective on the relationship between the state and civil society.

Course Objectives

1. Think critically about the process to build state capacity by studying competing theoretical perspectives, questioning assumptions, and assessing evidence in order to develop a deeper understanding of the complexities of state building and an appreciation of the value of intellectual pluralism.
2. Read critically within a wide spectrum of academic, popular, and policy-oriented literature in order to understand key arguments and debates in the field and apply standards of social scientific analysis to critique the logic, argumentation, and evidence in the state building literature.
3. Describe, analyze, and explain state building processes using contemporary theoretical perspectives in combination with empirical evidence drawn from primary and secondary sources.
4. Apply theoretical perspectives accurately and consistently to explain causal phenomena that contribute to building state capacity both thematically and in case study analysis. Be able to articulate the critical mechanisms that contribute to state development in oral and written form.
5. Critically evaluate the normative and ethical implications of state building in the contemporary environment.
6. Communicate clear and effective analysis and arguments about complex international issues verbally and in writing.

Course Schedule

State Building Course Schedule		
Lesson	Topic	Date
Lesson 1	Welcome to State Building	January 8, 2020
Lesson 2	Studying the State	January 10, 2020
Lesson 3	Types of States	January 15, 2020
Lesson 4	War and the State	January 17, 2020
Lesson 5	Economics and the State	January 23, 2020
Lesson 6	Institutions and the State	January 27, 2020
Lesson 7	Nation Building	January 29, 2020
Lesson 8	Capacity and Strength	February 3, 2020
Lesson 9	Scope of the State	February 5, 2020
Lesson 10	Building Capacity	February 11, 2020
Lesson 11	Developing States	February 13, 2020
Lesson 12	Building the United States	February 18, 2020
Lesson 13	Building the Armed State	February 20, 2020
Lesson 14	Paper Drop (Lit Review)	February 24, 2020
Lesson 15	State Weakness	February 28, 2020
Lesson 16	State Failure	March 2, 2020
Lesson 17	WPR	March 4, 2020
Lesson 18	Paper Drop (Outline)	March 6, 2020
Lesson 19	State and Society	March 16, 2020
Lesson 20	State and Religion	March 20, 2020
Lesson 21	State and Social Movements	March 23, 2020
Lesson 22	State and Rebellion	March 25, 2020
Lesson 23	Civil War	March 27, 2020
Lesson 24	Jersey City	April 2 - 4, 2020
Lesson 25	Middle East and North Africa	April 13, 2020
Lesson 26	Latin America	April 15, 2020
Lesson 27	Asia	April 20, 2020
Lesson 28	Africa	April 23, 2020
Lesson 29	Post Soviet Region	April 27, 2020
Lesson 30	The State of State Building	April 29, 2020

Requirements

Cadets will have the opportunity to earn up to 1,000 points in during this course. These are the requirements:

Comprehension

Participation *50 points.* We are a learning community. Classroom participation is an essential component of our course wide examination of state building. Cadets will be expected to complete all assigned readings **before** scheduled lessons. These readings will constitute the foundation of our discussions and will be augmented with articles, data projects, guest lectures, podcasts, and group presentations. Cadets will receive a score of 0 (unacceptable), 1 (acceptable), or 2 (excellent) for each lesson. I will take excused absences into account and normalize grades for those impacted.

Online Entries *100 points.* Cadets will have the opportunity to engage the course material beyond the classroom. The arguments and ideas presented throughout the course are contentious and Cadets are encouraged to articulate agreements, dissents, applications, and gaps via online or “blog” entries. Prior to each lesson, Cadets will respond to a post provided by the instructor via the course website.

WRIT *50 points.* Cadets will take an in-class WRIT on January 29, 2020 via the Respondus Lock-down Browser. This assessment will cover Lessons 1 - 7 and take thirty minutes to complete.

WPR *100 points.* Cadets will take an in-class WPR on March 4, 2020 via the Respondus Lock-down Browser. This assessment will cover Lessons 1 - 16 and take 65 minutes to complete.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

Writing is critical to your development as an Officer and critical thinker. For each of the following assignments the following basic conventions apply:

1. Cover Sheet
2. Arial, Book Antiqua, or Times New Roman
3. 12 point font
4. 1 inch margins
5. Chicago Style
6. Footnotes
7. Bibliography
8. Safe Assign Score (via Blackboard)
9. Blackboard Submission
10. All submissions are due NLT 1600 on the date assigned.

Proposal 25 points. The writing component of this course is extensive and cumulative. On January 31, 2020 Cadets will submit a 500 word proposal on a state building project of their choosing . Cadets may select from the following options: Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Post Soviet Region, and Western Europe. The proposal will contain the following elements: (1) a research question, (2) identification of dependent and independent variables, (3) initial data sources.

Literature Review 50 points. On February 28, 2020, Cadets will submit a 1500 word literature review. This assignment will address major arguments relative to each Cadet’s chosen project and identify gaps in our understanding of state building. This assignment will be incorporated into the draft and final papers.

Outline 75 points. On March 6, 2020, Cadets will submit a 4-page outline that sketches the major components of the research paper. Good outlines will: (1) address the research question and provide a compelling introduction, (2) assess the literature, (3) describe the type of data, (4) justify the selection of research method, (5) describe and execute an empirical examination, (6) assess your results, and (7) provide a compelling conclusion.

Draft 150 points. Cadets will submit a complete draft of their research project on April 10, 2020. This draft will be 4,000 words in length and incorporate comments from the previous three lessons.

Critique 100 points. Following submission of draft papers, each Cadet will be assigned a colleagues’ paper, anonymously, for critique. Each Cadet will be given one week to read and provide comments to another project. This assignment is due on April 17, 2020.

Final 100 points. On May 1, 2020, Cadets will submit a final draft of their research project. This draft will incorporate both instructor and anonymous comments.

Presentation 100 points. TBD. During TEE week, Cadets will design and present a 10 minute presentation of their research project.

Cultural Immersion

Preparation 25 points. From March 16 - 31, Cadets will prepare for our course trip to Jersey City, NJ. Activities will include: mission analysis, route reconnaissance, packing list design, transportation plan, communication plan, and research question. Throughout this phase, Cadets will coordinate with the instructor, local enablers, Mr. Ahmed Shadeed, and Councilman Richard Boggiano.

Execution 25 points. Cadets will participate in the 16th iteration of the Jersey City | West Point Cultural Immersion Program from April 2 - 4, 2020.

Reflection 50 points. Cadets will submit a 500 word reflection on their experience on April 7, 2020.

State Building Requirements

Deliverable	Date	Points
Participation	Throughout	50
Journal Entries	Throughout	100
WRIT	January 29, 2020	50
Proposal	January 31, 2020	25
Lit Review	February 24, 2020	50
WPR	March 4, 2020	100
Outline	March 6, 2020	75
JC Prep	March 16-31, 2020	25
JC Execution	April 2 - 4, 2020	25
JC Reflection	April 7, 2020	50
Draft	April 10, 2020	150
Critique	April 17, 2020	100
Final	May 1, 2020	100
Presentation	TBD	100

Course Description and Readings

Block I: Origins of the State

Objectives *What is the state? How did the state emerge? What are alternatives to the state? Why did scholars chose to “Bring the State Back In”? Is warfare a necessary condition to state-building? Is the saga of state building simply a European story that is inapplicable to the rest of the world? How does nationalism impact the development of the state? Do the assumptions imposed by rational choice apply to contemporary state building or are they irrelevant to the modern state building project? What types of institutions lead to strong states?*

Lesson 1: Welcome to State Building

- George C. Marshall, “Remarks by the Secretary of State at Harvard University,” June 5, 1947.
- Craig Whitlock, “The Afghanistan Papers” *Washington Post* December 9, 2019.
- AY20-2 SS486 Course Syllabus

Lesson 2: Studying the State

- Tuong Vu. 2010. “Studying the State Through State Formation,” *World Politics* 62 (1): 148-175.
- John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge. 2014. “The State of the State: The Global Contest for the Future of Government,” *Foreign Affairs* 93 (4): 118-132.
- UN Member States
- State Building

Lesson 3: Types of States

- Guillermo O'Donnell. 1993. "On the State, Democratization, and Some Conceptual Problems: A Latin American View with Glances at Some Postcommunist Countries," *World Development*. 21(8), 1355-1369.
- Lucan Way. 2005. "Authoritarian State Building and the Sources of Regime Competitiveness in the Fourth Wave: The Cases of Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine," *World Politics*. 57(2), 231-361.
- **Varieties of Democracy**

Lesson 3: War and the State

- Charles Tilly 1990. "How War Made States and Vice Versa," *Capital, Coercion, and European States*. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 67-95.
- Brian D. Taylor and Roxana Botea. 2008. "Tilly tally: War-making and state-making in the contemporary third world," *International Studies Review*. 10 (1) 27-56.

Lesson 5: Economics and the State

- Margaret Levi. 1989. "The Theory of Predatory Rule," *Of Rule and Revenue*. Berkeley: California University Press, 10-40.
- Robert Bates. 2014. "Rental Havens and Protective Shelters: Organizing Support Among Urban Beneficiaries," *Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies* Berkeley, University of California Press, 96-105.

Lesson 6: Institutions and the State

- Hendrick Spruyt. 1994. "Organizational Variation and Selection in the International System," *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors*. Princeton, 22-33.
- Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson. 2012. "The Making of Prosperity and Poverty," *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*. New York: Crown, 70-95.
- **Acemoglu Lecture**

Lesson 7: Nation Building

- Ernest Gellner. 2008. *Nations and Nationalism*. Cornell University Press, 1-7 and 39-62.
- Michael Hechter. 2000. "State Building Nationalism," *Containing Nationalism*. Oxford University Press, 56-69.
- **Benedict Anderson Lecture**
- **World Atlas of Language Structures**

Block II: State Capacity

Objectives *What is state capacity? What are some of the features of strong states and can these features be exported? What is infrastructure power and how does this concept improve our understanding of state building? What are the basic economic arguments that underpin the state capacity literature? What features allowed the United States to develop into a “strong state” and can the developing world learn from this experience? Are weak states born that way and are they condemned to suffer in their weak status? How might a struggling state reverse course and take steps to build a strong state?*

Lesson 8: Capacity and Strength

- Timothy Besley and Torsten Persson. 2009. “The Origins of State Capacity: Property Rights, Taxation, and Politics,” *American Economic Review*. 99(4): 1218-1244.
- [Observatory of Economic Complexity](#)
- Cullen S. Hendrix. 2010. “Measuring State Capacity: Theoretical and empirical implications for the study of civil conflict,” *Journal of Peace Research*. 47(3), 273-285.

Lesson 9: Scope of the State

- Francis Fukuyama. 2004. “The Imperative of State-Building,” *Journal of Democracy*. 15(2), 17-31.
- [Fukuyama Lecture](#)

Lesson 10: Building Capacity: Infrastructure Power

- Michael Mann. 2008. “Infrastructure Power Revisited,” *Studies in Comparative International Development*. 43(3-4) 355-365.
- Hillel Soifer. 2008. “State Infrastructure Power: Approaches to Conceptualization and Measurement,” *Studies in Comparative International Development*. 43(3-4) 231-251.
- [Infrastructure Report Card](#)

Lesson 11: Developing States

- Mancur Olson. 1993. “Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development,” *The American Political Science Review*. 87(3) 567-576.
- James C. Scott. 1998. “Cities, People, and Language,” *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 53-83.
- [IMF DataMapper](#)

Lesson 12: Building the United States

- Sheldon Pollack. “Origins of the American State,” *War, Revenue, and State Building: Financing the Development of the American State*. Ithaca: Cornell, 100-116.
- Desmond King and Robert C. Lieberman. 2009. “Ironies of State Building: A Comparative Perspective on the American State,” *World Politics*. 61(3), 547-588.
- [US Census Bureau, IRS, US Treasury](#)

Lesson 13: Building The Armed State

- Zoltan Barany 2011. “Comparing the Arab Revolts: The Role of the Military” *Journal of Democracy*. 22(4), 24-35.

Lesson 14: Paper Drop, Literature Review

Lesson 15: State Weakness

- Miguel Angel Centeno. 2002. “The Latin American Puzzle,” *Blood and Debt: War and the Nation State in Latin America*. Pennsylvania, 1-32.
- Francis Fukuyama. 2004. “Weak States and International Legitimacy,” *State Building*. Ithaca: Cornell, 92-118.
- [Fragile State Index](#)

Lesson 16: State Failure

- Jeffery Herbst. 2004. “Let Them Fail: State Failure in Theory and Practice,” in Robert I. Rotberg, ed *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*. 302-318.
- Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson. 2012. “Why Nations Fail Today,” *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*. New York: Crown, 368-403.

Lesson 17: WPR

Lesson 18: Paper Drop, Outline

Spring Break, March 7 - 15, 2020.

Block III: State and Society

Objectives *What is state autonomy? What is the role of civil society with respect to the state? Are the state and society locked in an unending competition for dominance? What are some of the challenges to the state’s authority from the civil society? To what extent does the state tolerate or deny the practice of religion? What strategies does the state adopt in order to thwart challenges from contentious members of the civil society? What conditions favor the onset, length and termination of rebellion and civil war?*

Lesson 19: State and Society

- Joel Migdal. 1994. "The State in Society: An Approach to Struggles for Domination," Joel S. Migdal, Atul Kohli, Vivienne Shue, eds. *State Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World*. Cambridge University Press, 7-36.
- Alfred Stepan, Juan Linz, and Yogendra Yadav. 2011. "Comparative Theory and Political Practice: Do We Need a State-Nation Model as Well as a Nation State Model," *Crafting State Nations: India and Other Multinational Democracies*. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1- 38.

Lesson 20: State and Religion

- David Laitin. 1985. "Hegemony and Religious Conflict: British Imperial Control and Political Cleavages in Yorubaland," in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds *Bringing the State Back In*. Cambridge University Press, 285-316.
- Alfred C. Stepan. 2000. "Religion, Democracy, and the "Twin Tolerations," *Journal of Democracy*. 11(4), 37-57.
- [Harvard World Religions Project](#)

Lesson 21: Social Movements

- Sidney Tarrow. 2011. "States, Capitalism, and Contention," *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. Cambridge University Press, 71-91.
- Christian Davenport. 2007. "State Repression and Political Order," *Annual Review of Political Science*. 10(1), 1-23.
- [Minorities at Risk Project](#)

Lesson 22: State and Rebellion

- Kathleen G. Cunningham. 2014. "A Theory of Self-Determination Politics," *Inside the Politics of Self-Determination*. Oxford University Press, 22-49.
- Zachariah C. Mampilly. 2011. "Bandits, Warlords, Embryonic States, Black Spots, and Ungoverned Territories: the Unwieldy Taxonomy of Rebel Governed Areaa," *Rebel Rulers: Insurgent Governments and Civilian Life During War* Ithaca: Cornell, 25-47.
- [State Building and Non State Armed Actors in Somalia](#)

Lesson 23: Civil War

- Fotini Christia. 2012. "A Theory of Warring Group Alliances and Fractionalization in Multiparty Civil Wars," *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars*. Cambridge University Press, 32-54.
- Paul Staniland. 2012. "States, Insurgents, and Wartime Political Orders," *Perspectives on Politics* 10(2), 243-264.
- [Uppsala Conflict Data Program](#)

Lesson 24: Jersey City

Block IV: Comparative State Building

Objectives *How does state building vary across regions? Are certain regions home to weak and failing states while others produce strong states? What factors continue to plague weak states in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America? Are there effective policy options available to leaders in these regions or are they condemned? How did some Asian states develop from weak and ineffective polities to the strong and vibrant “tigers” we see today? What lessons can we learn from the modern state building projects in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the post-Soviet region?*

Lesson 25: Middle East and North Africa

- Michael N. Barnett. 1995. “Sovereignty, Nationalism, and Regional Order in the Arab States System,” *International Organization*. 49, 479-510.
- Jason Brownlee, Tarek E. Masoud, and Andrew Reynolds. 2015. *Lineages of Repression,” The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform*. Oxford University Press, 41-63.
- [Wilson Center Middle East Program](#)

Lesson 26: Latin America

- Marcus J. Kurtz. 2013. “The Social Foundations of State Building in the Contemporary Era,” *Latin American State Building in Comparative Perspective: Social Foundations of Institutional Order*. Cambridge University Press, 18-65.
- Cameron G. Theis. 2005. “War, Rivalry, and State Building in Latin America,” *American Journal of Political Science*. 49(3), 451-465.
- [Latin American Public Opinion Project](#)

Lesson 27: Asia

- Tuong Vu. 2010. “State Formation Dynamics and Developmental Outcomes,” *Paths to Development in Asia: South Korea, Vietnam, China, and Indonesia*. Cambridge University Press, 1-21.
- Etel Solingen. 2007. “Pax Asiatica versus Bella Levantina: The Foundations of War and Peace in East Asia and the Middle East,” *The American Political Science Review* 101(4) 757-780.
- [Asian Development Bank](#)

Lesson 28: Africa

- Catherine Boone. 2003. “Mapping Political Topography in Africa,” *Political Topographies of the African State: Territorial Authority and Institutional Choice*. Cambridge University Press, 11-42.
- Cameron G. Thies. 2009. “National Design and State Building in sub-Saharan Africa,” *World Politics*. 61(4), 623-669.
- [Afrobarometer](#)

Lesson 29: Post Soviet Region

- Brian D. Taylor. 2011. “Bringing the Gun Back In: Coercion and the State,” *State Building in Putin’s Russia: Policing and Coercion after Communism*. Cambridge University Press, 8-35.
- Venelin I. Ganev. 2005. “Post-Communism as an episode of state building: A reversed Tillyan perspective,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*. 38, 425-445.
- **Robert Person**

Lesson 30: The State of State Building

- Michael Mazarr. 2014. “The Rise and Fall of the Failed-State Paradigm: Requiem for a Decade of Distraction,” *Foreign Affairs* 93(1), 113-121.
- James Schear and Michael Mazarr 2014. “Washington’s Weak State Agenda: A Decade of Distraction?,” *Foreign Affairs*. 93(3), 172-175.
- Jonathan Monten. 2014. “Intervention and State-Building: Comparative Lessons from Japan, Iraq, and Afghanistan,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science* 656, 173-191.
- **USAID**