POL 218H1S:
State, Society and Power in Comparative Perspective
Department of Political Science
University of Toronto

Administrative Details:

Term: Summer 2021, S Section  
Lecture Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4-6PM  
Room: SS 1072  
Email: cheng.xu@mail.utoronto.ca

Instructor: Cheng Xu  
Office Hours: By Appointment

Tutorial Times and Location: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 3-4PM in BL 312
Teaching Assistants: TBD

Course Overview:

This course is designed to introduce students to some of the broad concepts and themes of comparative politics. It deepens students’ understanding of how states are formed, the political forces that shape how they are organized, and how state power enhances or limits social mobilization. The approach partially draws on recent events and introduces concepts and theoretical tools to explain them. It links them to how comparative politics explains some of the most important political phenomena within countries. The course is not bound by any particular region, but instead uses examples from around the world. The focus remains, however, on politics within states, how the phenomena are similar or different from one place to the next. The core aims of the course include the following:
• Historical contexts of various paths of state formation
• Development of various regimes and their change
• Identity and modes of contention

Requirements:

Grading criteria for the course will be in the following areas:

1. Participation and in class discussions (15%): student-led discussion is critical to the success of a tutorials and group learning. To those ends, students will be assessed on their attendance, their level of participation, and their degree of preparation for in-class discussions.

2. Course Papers (30% x 2 = 60%): two 5-page, double-spaced papers that directly responds to the essay prompts by critically engaging with the required readings. Note that these papers should not be summaries of the theme's assigned readings; rather, they should develop theoretical, empirical, or methodological critiques of one or more theme’s assigned readings and/or highlight new directions for future research on the topic. Papers are to be submitted on Quercus.

   b. Paper 2: Covering the readings for Theme II and III; due 11:59PM, Friday, Aug 12, 2022.
3. **Take Home Exam (25%)**: a cumulative take home final exam to be submitted online via the course's Quercus site. The final exam will consist of three exam questions that deal with each of the three themes covered throughout the course. The exam questions will be provided to the students on **Monday, August 15, 2022** and students will have **one week** to submit their exam on Quercus **no later than 11:59PM EST, Monday, August 2022**. More details on the take-home final exam will be provided to students as we approach the examination period.

**Policies:**

**Late or missed papers:** Late papers will be penalized 5% per calendar day, excepting only extraordinary personal emergencies. If you find yourself in such a situation, please email me as soon as possible to inform me. Substantiating documentation will be required and must be submitted within one week of the missed due date. Note that assignments or tests from other courses scheduled for the same day do not constitute acceptable reasons—please plan accordingly. In the absence of substantiating documentation, late or missed assignments will receive a mark of zero.

**Accessibility:** The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accessibility accommodations of any kind, please contact Accessibility Services at [accessibility.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:accessibility.services@utoronto.ca) as soon as possible.

**Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism is a major academic offense and will be treated accordingly. Students are required to familiarize themselves with and conform to the University of Toronto’s policies on Academic Honesty, available at [http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/newstudents/transition/academic/plagiarism](http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/newstudents/transition/academic/plagiarism). In addition, students should consult Margaret Proctor’s guide on “How Not to Plagiarize,” available at [http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize](http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize).

**Ouriginal:** Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University’s plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool’s reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site ([https://uoft.me/pdt-faq](https://uoft.me/pdt-faq)).

**Mental Health:**

Students are highly encouraged to prioritize their own mental health over any individual assignments. If you find yourself becoming emotionally distressed or overwhelmed any time throughout the course, please do not hesitate to reach out to the instructor for help accessing mental health services. Additionally, a list of mental health resources will be posted for students on Quercus should they choose to access them confidentially.
Required Reading:

Quercus will be used to manage the course and readings. Specific and additional readings will be noted on the semester-specific schedules posted to Quercus.

Week 1, Session 1 (July 5): Course Overview and Introduction

No Readings

Theme 1: State Formation

Week 1, Session 2 (July 7): The Birth and Spread of the Modern State


Week 2, Session 1: Decolonization and its Long-term Consequences


Week 2, Session 2: Revolutionary Paths


Theme 2: Regimes

Week 3, Session 1: Democracies


Schmitter, Philippe C., and Terry Lynn Karl. "What democracy is... and is not." Journal of democracy 2, no. 3 (1991): 75-88.

Week 3, Session 2: Authoritarianism


**Week 4, Session 1: Regime Change**


**Theme 3: Identities and Contention**

**Week 4, Session 2: Nationalism**


**Week 5, Session 1: Ethnicity**


**Week 5, Session 2: Social Movements**


**Week 6, Session 1: Civil War**


**Week 6, Session 2: Conclusion and Wrap-Up**

No readings