Political Science 51700: Violence and State Formation
Department of Political Science
University of Chicago

Fall 2012
Time: Wednesday, 9:30-12:20
Room: Social Sciences 302
Office Hours: Tuesday, 2:00-4:00 pm and by appt.
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Course Description
This class examines state control over coercion and the relationship between states and non-state violent actors. The goal is a better understanding of how states manage, manipulate, and monopolize violence, whether through the military, sponsorship of militants at home and abroad, or collusive bargains with local strongmen. An overarching emphasis will be on the intersection of international security pressures with domestic threats and political interests. The unintended consequences and long-term effects of different structures of violence management are also considered.

The focus of the readings is intentionally broad, from Foucault to formal modeling. The intellectual agenda is to bring together research on civil war, state building, international security, and a variety of other topics into a unified framework for studying politics and violence. The result is an extremely heavy, though interesting, reading load. Please do not take this class if you are not seriously interested in the material. I reserve the right to change readings as the course develops, but will communicate any changes to you.

Course Requirements
Participation in class discussion is essential for a successful seminar. Students are expected to have carefully done all of the required reading and to be prepared to discuss it in detail. The works assigned are important and worth your time. Participation will account for 20% of your grade.

Two response papers (each no more than 4 pages, doubled-spaced, 12-point font) will be assigned. In week 4 I will assign a paper due in week 5 and in week 8 I will assign a paper due in week 9. The paper topic will identify an important claim from our readings in the previous weeks and ask you to critically assess it in light of our reading and discussions. These are not opportunities for you to do a literature review or summary of readings, but instead to advance an argument. Each paper will account for 10% of your grade. I will provide the topic at the end of class and the paper will be due in hard copy at the beginning of the next class meeting.

Research paper of no more than 30 pages total (doubled-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins) due at the end of the semester. It can be emailed to me or dropped off at my office by 5 pm CST, Thursday, December 13, 2012. This paper should address a major question in the study of violence and the state with a literature review, theoretical argument, and empirical evaluation of the theory relative to its competitors. This empirical evaluation can include a case or comparative
case studies, quantitative analysis, or a mix of methods. Students can use this opportunity to lay
the groundwork for a publishable article, develop research for a thesis, or “try out” a possible
dissertation topic. Please note that this is a hard space limit: the entire paper must not be more
than 30 pages; I may reduce your grade for excess.

The paper will account for 60% of your grade. You must confirm your topic with me, in person
or over email, before our Week 7 class meeting. Late papers will not be accepted.

**Electronic Etiquette**

I request that students not use their cell phones during class for any reason. This will allow more
focused discussion and intellectual exchange. Laptops should only be used if this will facilitate
bringing readings to class.

I aim to be responsive to email from students. However, please do not expect an answer to your
question any sooner than 48 hours after it is sent. Last-minute email questions and requests are
bad for everyone involved. I prefer that students use office hours rather than email for asking
substantive questions.

**Books for Purchase**

These are available for purchase at the Seminary Co-op.

America, 1859-1877*. Cambridge University Press.
University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
Ertman, Thomas. 1997. *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and
Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Herbst, Jeffrey Ira. 2000. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and
Slater, Dan. 2010. *Ordering Power: Contentious Politics and Authoritarian Leviathans in
Southeast Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Scott, James. 2009. *The art of not being governed: an anarchist history of upland Southeast

Book chapters that are not part of the required books will be posted in the Library Course
Reserves section of the Chalk site. Journal articles can be found through the University of
Chicago library, unless the URL is specified on the syllabus. If you are having trouble accessing
a reading, please let me know ASAP.
October 3
Introduction and Overview
Cramer, Christopher. *Violence in developing countries: war, memory, progress* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2007), Chapter 1 (Chalk e-reserves)

October 10
The Macro-Politics of European State Building
Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan*, all.

October 17
War, Strategy, and the State
October 24

**War and Money**


Skocpol, Theda, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), Chapter 2: “Old-Regime States in Crisis,” pp. 47-111. (Chalk e-reserves)


October 31

**International Context: Beyond Great Power War**


Centeno, *Blood and Debt*, Chapters 1, 2, and 3.


November 7

**Violence and Regimes**

Slater, *Ordering Power*, all.


Carles Boix, *Democracy and Redistribution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003),
Chapter 1, “A Theory of Political Transitions,” pp. 19-64. (Chalk e-reserves)

November 14
The Politics of Internal Violence
Centeno, Blood and Debt, chapter 4.
Davis, Diane E., and Anthony W. Pereira, eds. Irregular Armed Forces and Their Role in Politics and State Formation (Cambridge University Press, 2003), Chapter 1 (Chalk e-reserves)

November 21
No Meeting due to Thanksgiving

November 28
Sub-National Variation

**December 5**

**Pursuing the State: Elections and Violence**

Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence*, read Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6, 8; skim Chapters 3-4.