IR 525, Fall 2010
State and Society in International Relations

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A NOTE on OFFICE HOURS: Because unexpected meetings and various events pop up all the time, office hours must inevitably be flexible. If I can’t be there at the regularly-scheduled time, I’ll always try to let you know well in advance, and will naturally be ready to arrange alternate times for meetings.

Goals and Requirements for IR 525

Some would argue that the central focus of concern in the study of politics and international relations should be state-society relations. Clearly, the state has been enormously important in structuring society (while being structured by it) over the course of millennia, striving to manage flows of various sorts across the constructed boundaries with other states and to regulate interactions among citizens or subjects within.

Yet states have only been a significant factor in the human experience for 5,000 years or so, and have changed profoundly in their structures and functions—in particular since the rise of the “modern state” in Europe at the end of the Middle Ages. Changes came slowly at first, and then with increasing rapidity, in the technologies states could use to wield power over “their” populations and others; the goals state leaders could conceive of pursuing; and the ways in which they could legitimate their acts in the eyes of audiences at home and abroad. Today, of course, the evolution—or revolution—in the nature of the state continues, with unknowable consequences. Technological advance and the challenges and opportunities presented by globalization ensure that the state of 2050 is likely to be very different from the state of 1950. But we don’t know exactly how, or why, or with what consequences for human welfare.

States have always varied significantly in identity, capabilities, and objectives. But in the past half-century or so, their elites have been under mounting pressure to accept socialization to a common global standard, which might be summarized as the managerial, human-welfare-seeking state. Still, vast differences across (and within) national and civilizational boundaries over precisely what a “model” state should be ensure that states will continue to compete, jostle, and unleash violence upon each other’s armies and peoples even as they also pursue cooperation to cure
communicable diseases, gather for grand and inspiring global festivals, or wrestle with existential risks such as global warming.

Understanding almost any aspect of politics and international relations requires reading, thinking, and writing reflectively on the topic of ever-changing state-society relations—including state-to-state relations within international society and states’ varying encounters with global civil society. For this reason, we will examine the state from both the inside and the outside, and from economic, cultural, social, and technological perspectives. The goal is to solidify our grip both on broader themes in politics and international relations but also in the real world of palpably-significant, real-people-are-getting-hurt (or helped) political change.

Final course grades will be calculated as follows:

Three thought pieces (5-7 pages each): 30 percent (10 percent each)
Two times leading the seminar discussion: 20 percent (10 percent each)
Reading preparation and seminar contributions: 25 percent
Take-home final exam or research paper: 25 percent

PLEASE NOTE: Unless you have a certifiable serious illness or family emergency, I will have to dock you a notch (e.g., from an A to an A-) for every day a thought piece is late, or if you don’t show up on a day that you’re scheduled to lead the seminar discussion.

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A:

http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/.

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be
sure the letter is delivered to the professor or your TA as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number is (213) 740-0776.

**Schedule**

**23 August:** Introduction

a. Assignment of discussion topics; explanation of course mechanics; brief introductory lecture; etc.

**30 August:** State Formation


**6 September:** LABOR DAY

**13 September:** The Sources of Social Power


**20 September:** Seeing Like a State


**27 September:** The Surveillance State in the Context of Empire

4 October:  **State-Society Relations in Postcolonial Settings**


11 October:  **National Identity**


b. Select other chapters divided up.

18 October:  **Transformation of the American Empire and Surveillance State**


25 October:  **Opting Out**


1 November:  **International and World Society**


8 November: Wendtian Constructivism


15 November: World Society and Global Civil Society


22 November: State Socialization


>>> 3rd thought piece due by Wednesday, November 24th, at 3 pm <<<

29 November: Communication, the State, and Network Societies


13 December (Mon): Take-home final exam or research paper due by 12 noon in hard copy form