POLITICAL AUTHORITY IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM
Political Science 248/IRGN 290
Winter Quarter 2014

Professor Miles Kahler
Tuesdays, 3-5:50 PM
Social Sciences Building 104

The seminar investigates the variety of forms that political authority takes in the international system. Sovereign territorial states co-existing in a state of anarchy are not taken as the international norm; rather, that configuration is presented as one form of political authority among many.

Course requirements:

• 25% of final grade: Attendance at each session of the course; completion of the reading for each week, and participation in the seminar discussions.

  This is a course with substantial reading. Through the short written assignments (see next section) and pre-arranged assignments for opening discussion, seminar participants will be able to read in depth in certain topics. That division of labor does not exempt other participants from preparation for and participation in that week’s discussion. If you are unable to attend a session of the seminar, please let the instructor know in advance.

• 75% of the final grade: Completion of either (a) three short (5-7 pages) papers (summaries and critiques of the reading for a particular week, due at the beginning of class) or (b) one short paper and either an extended, critical review essay (on a topic different from the short paper) or a research paper (this may be an extended prospectus rather than a completed research project). The instructor strongly encourages you to undertake (b) with research paper option. All short papers must be scheduled at the beginning of the quarter to ensure distribution of student discussants.

Students are encouraged to purchase the following books:


One copy of this work will be placed on reserve at Geisel Library; they will not be available on E-Reserves. All of the other readings below will be placed on E-Reserves.

Week 1: January 7. Explaining configurations of political authority

• What is political authority and what are its sources?
• What sustains political authority?
• What changes the sites of political authority in world politics?


Lake, Hierarchy in International Relations, pp.17-44.


**Week 2: January 14. Unit Size and Number**

- How is variation in unit size and number explained?
- Why have the prospects for state survival increased after 1945?


**Week 3: January 21. From Sovereign Territorial State to Nation-state**

- Did warfare create the modern territorial state?
- What produces movement from polycentric to unified systems of governance (and the reverse)?
- What role did nationalism play in the emergence of the nation-state?
- Do the same units that dominated early modern Europe populate the contemporary international system?


Week 4: January 28. Modern Imperialism and its demise

• What is an empire? What distinguishes empires from other polities?
• Why do empires form?
• Why do they disintegrate – and with what consequences?


Week 5: February 4. Territorial disintegration and state failure

- Why do states break up?
- How do fragile states survive?
- How can the political authority of a state be rebuilt?


Kahler, Miles and David A. Lake, *Governance in a Global Economy*, pp. 60-135.

Week 6: February 11. Delegated authority: federations and decentralized polities

- Why do polities choose federation over other forms of cooperation?
- Does federation or political decentralization lower the probability of national disintegration (secession)?


Week 7: February 18. Pooled sovereignty: The EU and regional governance

- Does the European Union remain an intergovernmental organization?
- How significant are the enfranchisement of individual citizens and non-state actors within the EU?
- Why is Europe the only region that has developed regional institutions with substantial delegated authority?


Kahler, Miles and Andrew MacIntyre, eds., *Integrating Regions: Asia in Comparative Context*, pp. 31-77,142-169, 195-221.

Week 8: February 25. Global Governance: Supranational Delegation and Hierarchies

- How has global economic integration influenced the sites of governance?
- When and why do states delegate authority to international institutions?
- Does the end of formal imperialism mean the end of hierarchy in international relations?
- How do hierarchies vary, and why?


Lake, David A. *Hierarchy in International Relations*, pp. 45-92.


**Week 9: March 4. Global Governance: Networks**

- Why do networked forms of governance appear in some domains and not in others?
- How does the structure of international networks affect international collaboration?
- How is power distributed in governance networks?


- How do actors choose among different forms of global governance?
- What role do non-state actors play in global governance?
- Does the authority exercised by private actors in global governance differ from that of states?
- What variation in modes of governance is likely in the future?


