

GOVT Course: State Formation, Violence, and Borders in South Asia
Department of Government
Georgetown University

Spring 2014 | Professor Devin M. Finn

Email: dmf48@georgetown.edu

Course Description

How and why do states form, and what are the processes through which this occurs? Why do we observe variation in the forms of states and other modes of authority? The objectives of the course are threefold: 1) to present a history of the emergence of states and societies in South Asia; 2) to explore theories of the state and its formation, power, sovereignty, and alternative forms of authority and control; and 3) to integrate empirical and theoretical perspectives in exploring and reflecting on practices of domination, representation, and violence and their consequences—including how we conceptualize and study the state.

The partition of India was an experimental process of forging nation-states in the aftermath of empire. This course focuses on India as the discursive and political crux of colonial, post-colonial, and modern South Asia, and examines the experiences of Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The history of state power and popular resistance in the region is a shared narrative, and practices of shaping political authority—including empire, evasion, and insurgency—have implications for consequent forms of “the state.” The examination of the processes of state formation, then, is an integrated and comparative study. The first part of the course focuses on theories of the state and society and political difference in South Asia and beyond, and incorporates these ideas into the study of multiple forms of imperial authority, the struggle for an independent India, and the implications that borders and borderlands had for this sometimes violent process.

The second phase of the course turns to the social and political aspects of emergent state power and activities in post-Partition India and the region. No longer subjects, individuals participate as citizens; communal identities and divisions threaten social order, and the state adapts variant roles in shaping and responding to these dynamics. We will reflect on violence not as a social aberration or a product of institutional failure, but as a phenomenon intimately linked to the institutions and implementation of political and economic liberalization. Studying borders and borderlands provides nuance in problematizing states and sovereignty as the epistemological and ontological basis of social science, while taking into account traditional “‘heartland’ practices” (van Schendel 2005) and transnational linkages.

Students will become familiar with discussing theoretical “big questions” of state formation, democracy, and war, in addition to up-to-date research and commentary on the region. This includes studies that span disciplines and weave together themes such as administration and revenue; violent conquest; civil war; agricultural practices in the periphery; and nationalism. This course on state and society in South Asia is oriented to students who take a keen interest in the focus of Georgetown University as an intellectual community on political, cultural, and educational exchanges with India.

Course Requirements

Participation in class discussion is essential for a productive and engaging seminar. Students are expected to have carefully completed the required readings and be prepared to discuss each in detail. Participation accounts for 20% of the course grade.

A **research paper** of no more than 20 pages (double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins) is due at the end of the semester. The paper should address a major question in the study of state formation, violence, and South Asia with a literature review, theoretical argument, and evaluation of the theory. Students will consult directly with me on topic selection. The paper will account for 35% of the grade.

A **mid-term exam**, which will include multiple essay questions, will be distributed at the beginning of Week 7. Students will “take home” the exam and complete it within one week. It accounts for 25% of the grade.

Students will write **two argumentative essays** (4 pages each) over the course of the semester. They are short, critical analyses of the week’s material in which students make an argument, *not summarize* a set of texts. Students will submit their essays online so that other participants may read them before class. Students choose which two weeks they would like to write a critical essay. Together the essays account for 20% of the grade.

All readings with the exception of the required course texts will be made available electronically. Students are encouraged to watch Gandhi (1982) on their own.

Course Texts (for purchase)

Khan, Yasmin. *The Great Partition* (2007)

Gandhi, Mohandas. *Hind Swaraj*. Parel, Anthony, ed. (1997)

Scott, James C. *The Art of Not Being Governed* (2009)

van Schendel, Willem. *The Bengal Borderland* (2005)

Course Content

Session 1: Introduction: Course Overview, Introductions

Session 2: What is the State?

Nettl, J.P. 1968. “The State as a Conceptual Variable,” *World Politics* 20 (4): 559-592.

Tilly, War and State-making as Organized Crime. 169-191. In Evans, P. et al, eds. *Bringing the State Back In*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Weber, Max. Politics as a Vocation. In *Essays in Sociology*. 1991. p. 77-128. (Skim for definition of “the state”)

Krasner, Stephen. 1984. “Approaches to the State: Alternative Conceptions and Historical Dynamics,” *Comparative Politics* 16(2): 223-246.

Vu, Tuong. 2010. Studying the State Through State Formation. *World Politics* 62(01): 148-175.

Week 2

Session 1: Origins of the State and State Formation in India

Rudolph, Lloyd I. and Suzanne Hoerber Rudolph. 1987. *In Pursuit of Lakshmi*. State Formation in India: Building and Wasting Assets, p. 60-87.

Asher, Catherine and Cynthia Talbot. 2006. *India Before Europe*. Cambridge U. Press. Ch. 4, North India Between Empires, p. 181-221. (Skim).

Jalal, Ayesha. 1995. “State formation and political processes in India and Pakistan, 1947-1971,” in *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective*. Cambridge University Press.

Session 2: Conceptions of State Formation and Culture in East and West

Anderson, Perry. *Lineages of the Absolutist State*. London: Verso, 1974. 15-42.

Tilly, Charles. 1991. *Coercion, Capital, and European States: AD 990-1992*. 1-37.

Said, Edward. 1979. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books. Introduction, p. 1-28.

Tin-bor Hu, Victoria. 2004. Toward a dynamic theory of international politics: Insights from comparing ancient China and Early Modern Europe. *International Organization* 58(01): 175-205.

Week 3

Session 1: State and society

Migdal, Joel. 2009. Researching the State. In Lichbach and Zuckerman, eds., *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*. p. 162-183.

Mitchell, Timothy. 1991. The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics. *The American Political Science Review* 85(1): 77-96.

Scott, James C. 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. Yale University Press. Introduction, p. 1-8; and "Authoritarian High Modernism," p. 87-102.

Session 2: Philosophies of state, self, and nation in South Asia

Gandhi, Mohandas K. *Hind Swaraj*. In Ed. Parel, A. p. xiii-xxxii; p. 1-lviii; Ch. IV, What is Swaraj?; Ch. VII, Why was India lost? Ch. XIII, What is true civilization?; and Ch. XX, Conclusion ("emancipation").

Vajpeyi, Ananya. 2012. Swaraj, The Self's Sovereignty, *The Righteous Republic: the Political Foundations of Modern India*. p. 1-48. (Skim carefully).

Tagore, Rabindranath. 2011. *The Essential Tagore*, eds. F. Alam and R. Chakravarty. The Disease and the Cure, p. 141-145, 1908; and Nationalism in the West, p. 170-182, 1917.

Ambedkar, B.R. The Revolution against Caste and other selections. In Guha, *Makers of Modern India*, p. 187-208.

Jinnah, Muhammad Ali. The Steps Toward a Muslim Nation. In Ramachandra Guha, *Makers of Modern India*. Harvard U. Press, 2011. p. 209-221.

Week 4

Session 1: Conquest and state-making in South Asia: Ancient and Mughal Empires

Basham, A.L. 1959. *The Wonder That Was India: A Survey of the History and Culture of the Indian Sub-continent Before the Coming of the Muslims*. New York: Grove. p. 79-136.

Richards, John F. 1995. *The Mughal Empire*. Durham: Duke U. Press. Ch. 3. Autocratic centralism, and Ch. 4, Land revenue and rural society. p. 58-93.

Ali, M. Athar. 1978. Towards an Interpretation of the Mughal Empire. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1: 38-49.

Lorge, Peter A. 2008. *The Asian military revolution: from gunpowder to the bomb*. Chs. 5-6: South Asia to 1750; The military revolution in South Asia: 1750-1850). p. 112-153.

Session 2: British colonialism and the anti-colonial struggle

Peers, Douglas M. 2006. *India Under Colonial Rule: 1700-1885*. Pearson Ed. Limited Press. p. 11-63.

Goswami, Manu. 2004. *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space*. U. Chicago Press. Chs. 1-2.

Guha, Ranajit. 1999. [1983]. *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*. Duke U. Press. Introduction, p. 1-17; Ambiguity, p. 77-108.

In-class FILM: *Lagaan* (2001)

Week 5

Session 1: Partition of India: Migration, nation-building, and blood on the tracks

Khan, Yasmin. 2007. *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*. Yale U. Press. p. 1-103.

Session 2

Khan, *The Great Partition*, p. 104-210.

Week 6

Session 1: Borders and States

Chatterji, Joya. 2007. *Spoils of Partition, Bengal and India, 1947-1967*. Cambridge U. Press. p. 1-19; and 209-260.

Session 2: Borderlands and Periphery

van Schendel, Willem. 2005. *The Bengal Borderland: Beyond State and Nation in South Asia*. London: Anthem Press. p. 1-38; 210-235; 332-355.

Scott, James C. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. p. 1-40, Hills, Valleys, and States: An Introduction to Zomia.

Week 7

Session 1: Post-colonial politics, legacy of empire, and “stateness” in India

Brass, Paul R. 2001. *The Politics of India since Independence*. Cambridge University Press. Political change, political structure, and the functioning of government; Parties and politics, p. 35-115.

Sarkar, Sumit. 2001. Indian democracy: the historical inheritance. In Atul Kohli, ed., *The Success of India's Democracy*. Cambridge U. Press. 23-46.

Kohli, Atul. 1987 . *The state and poverty in India*. "State formation and state consolidation", p. 51-72; and "Conclusion," p. 223-236.

Rudolph, L.I. and S. H. Rudolph, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi*, p. 103-118.

Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka: Violence, war, and origins of governance

Session 2: MID-TERM EXAM. Students pick up mid-term exam, which is a take-home assignment.

BANGLADESH

Baxter, Craig. 1998. *Bangladesh: From a Nation to a State*. Boulder: Westview Press. Chs. 5-9, p. 35-129.

Alam, S.M. Shamsul. 1995. *The State, Class Formation, and Development in Bangladesh*. Lanham, MD: U. Press of America. p. 64-98.

Alavi, Hamza. The State in Post-Colonial Societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh. *The New Left Review* 1, no. 74 (1972): 59-81.

Week 8

Session 1: PAKISTAN

Cohen, Stephen. 2004. *The Idea of Pakistan*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press. "The state of Pakistan," p. 39-96.

Haqqani, Husain. 2005. *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* Washington, DC: CEIP. 51-86; and 87-129 (Skim).

Nawaz, Shuja. 2008. *Crossed Swords: Pakistan, Its Army, and the Wars Within*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chs. 4-6.

Verkaiak, Oscar. 2004. *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan*. Princeton U. Press. Ch. 3, Pakka Qila.

Session 2: SRI LANKA

DeVotta, Neil. 2004. *Blowback: Linguistic Nationalism, Institutional Decay, and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka*. Stanford U. Press. 1-72.

Peebles, Patrick. 2006. *The History of Sri Lanka*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. p. 27-55; and 109-137.

Krishna, Sankaran. 1999. *Post-Colonial Insecurities*. U. of Minnesota Press. p. 31-58; and 167-205. "Producing Sri Lanka from Ceylon" and "Narratives in Contention".

Mampilly, Zachariah. 2011. *Rebel Rulers*. Ithaca: Cornell U. Press. p. 93-128.

[Students turn in take-home mid-term exams.]

Week 9

Session 1: Nationalisms in South Asia

Bose, Sumantra. 1997. 'Hindu Nationalism' and the Crisis of the Indian State: A Theoretical Perspective. In *Nationalism, Democracy and Development State and Politics in India*, ed. Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Varshney, Ashutosh. 1992. "Three Compromised Nationalisms: Why Kashmir has been a Problem," In *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia*, ed. Raju C. Thomas. Boulder: Westview Press. p. 191-234.

Nandy, Ashis. 1998. "Nationalism versus Patriotism," in *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism, in Return from Exile*. p. 1-8.

Goswami, *Producing India*. Swadeshi and Swaraj, and Conclusion; p. 242-286.

Session 2: Participation, resistance, and power in India: Interactions with the state

Moore, Barrington. 1993. *Social origins of dictatorship and democracy: lord and peasant in the making of the modern world*. Boston: Beacon Press. 314-352. ("India and the price of peaceful change")

Katzenstein, Mary et. al. "Social Movement Politics in India: Institutions, Interests, and Identities." In *The Success of India's Democracy*, ed. Atul Kohli, 242-69. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Das, Veena. 1989. Subaltern as Perspective. *Subaltern Studies No. 6 Writings on South Asian History and Society*, ed. Ranajit Guha. p. 310-325.

Kennedy, Jonathan and Sunil Purushotham. 2012. Beyond Naxalbari: A Comparative History of Maoist Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Independent India. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54(4): 832-862.

Week 10

Session 1: Institutions, democracy, and citizens

Mitra, Subrata K. 2001. Ballot Box and Local Power: Elections in an Indian Village. In *Democracy in India*, N.G. Jayal. ed. p. 419-440.

Gorringe, Hugo. 2005. *Untouchable Citizens: Dalit Movements and Democratisation in Tamil Nadu*. P. 85-111; and p. 328-348.

Banerjee, Abhijit and Lakshmi Iyer. 2008. Colonial Land Tenure, Electoral Competition, and Public Goods in India. *Working paper, Harvard Business School* 8(62).

Chandra, Kanchan. 2011. Why is Democracy in India so Violent? *Seminar* 620: 2-5.

Session 2: Identity politics, communal conflict, and the state

Brass, Paul R. 1997, *Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence*. Princeton U. Press. 32-96. (“Background” and “Theft of an Idol”)

Wilkinson, Steven. 2004. *Votes and Violence: electoral competition and ethnic riots in India*. Cambridge University Press. p. 1-62 (skim Ch. 2).

Chatterjee, Partha. 1997. *A Possible India: Essays in Political Criticism*. Secularism and Toleration, p. 228-262.

Tambiah, Stanley J. 2011. Reflections on Communal Violence in South Asia. In *Perspectives on Modern South Asia: A Reader in Culture, History, and Representation*, ed. Kamala Visweswaran. Blackwell. 177-186.

Week 11

Session 1: Rebels, politics, and the construction of authority

Pereira, Anthony. 2003. Armed Forces, Coercive Monopolies, and Changing Patterns of State

Formation and Violence. In D. Davis and A.W. Pereira, eds., *Irregular Armed Forces and Their Role in Politics and State Formation*. Cambridge U. Press. p. 387-407.

Staniland, Paul. 2012. States, Insurgents, and Wartime Political Orders. *Perspectives on Politics* 10(2): 243-264.

Shah, Alpa. 2010. *In the Shadows of the State: Indigenous Politics, Environmentalism, and Insurgency in Jharkhand, India*. Duke U. Press. p. 162-191.

van Schendel, Willem, *The Bengal Borderland, Rebels and Bandits*, p. 256-282.

Session 2:

FILM: Hazaar chaurasi ki maa (Mother of 1084), based on a novel by Mahasweta Devi.

Week 12

Session 1: Institutional Order and State Evasion in Southeast Asia

Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, State Space: Zones of Governance and Appropriation p. 40-63; and Keeping the State at a Distance: The Peopling of the Hills p. 127-177.

Slater, Daniel. 2010. *Ordering Power*. Cambridge U. Press. To Extract and to Organize; States and the Regimes that Run Them, p. 3-54.

Session 2: Power, performance, and the state

Geertz, Clifford. 1980. *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali*. Princeton U. Press. p. 11-44.

Debord, Guy. 1994. *Society of the Spectacle*. New York: Zone Books. Ch.1, Separation Perfected.

Krishna, *Post-colonial Insecurities*, “Hegemony as Spectacle” p. 129-165.

Week 13

Session 1: Post-colonial Processes of State Formation and Violence

Taylor, Brian D. and Roxana Botea. “Tilly Tally: War-Making and State-Making in the Contemporary Third World,” *International Studies Review* 10,1 (2008): 27-56.

Centeno, Miguel Angel. 2003. Limited War and Limited States. In D. Davis and Pereira, eds., *Irregular Armed Forces and Their Role in Politics and State Formation*. 82-95.

Thies, Cameron G. "State Building, Interstate and Intrastate Rivalry: A Study of Post-Colonial Developing Extractive Efforts, 1975-2000," *International Studies Quarterly* 48,1 (January 2004): 53-72.

Rudolph, Suzanne Hoerber. 1987. Presidential Address: State Formation in Asia: Prolegomenon to a Comparative Study. *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46(4): 731-746.

Session 2: Reflections on political difference, modernity, and the state

Chatterjee, Partha. 2011. *Lineages of Political Society*. Columbia U. Press. p. 1-26; 235-252.

Conclusions.