Course Description

This course examines the process of state formation and state building and seeking to analyze historic processes of state formation to understand contemporary issues related to the governance of politically complex spaces. The course begins with a general theoretical overview of the problem of state failure and the prospects of state building giving special attention to our limited tools to understand and control this process in diverse parts of the world. The course then moves on to an in-depth analysis of state formation and building patterns in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa. This is then followed by an examination of specific recent cases of state building. It concludes with a discussion of policy making in politically complex spaces.

Learning Outcomes

1. Practical Understanding of State Formation and State Building: Students completing this class should have an understanding of some of the key debates around state building and state formation at both the theoretical and practical level.

2. Writing and Speaking on these issues: Students will gain experience writing and presenting on issues related to peace operations and state building.

3. Research on State Building and Peace Operations Issues: Students should develop skills in research, analyzing, and writing about state formation and state building issues.

Readings

Readings will be available through the library and online.

Assignments

- Final Paper: 35%
- Mid-Term Paper: 30%
- Reaction Paper: 20%
- Presentation: 5%
- Participation: 10%

All students will complete the following assignments:

1. Final Paper (40%): Students will complete a final 15 page paper focused on state building and governance issues in a particular place. Students will provide specific recommendations in the paper that may be relevant to policymakers in making decisions about how to improve governance in that locale.
2. **Mid-Term Paper (30%)**: Each student will write one ten page mid-term paper focused on the practical implications of state formation for complexly governed and emerging sovereign spaces today.

3. **Reaction Papers (15%)**: Each student will write one 5-page reaction paper. This paper will focus on critically assessing, comparing, and engaging at least two of the readings for one class.

4. **Presentation (5%)**: Students will present their reaction paper to the class and initiate discussion of the readings they have written on.

5. **Participation (10%)**: Students are expected to participate actively in class.

**Statement on Special Needs:**

Students with disabilities requiring accommodation should contact the Disability Resource Center at 993-2474.

**Class Policies:**
Grading will follow the standards of the School of Public Policy and the University.

**Late Assignments**: All assignments must be turned in on time. Late Assignments will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade for every day they are turned in late (i.e. an A becomes as A- after one calendar day). Students needing an extension should speak to the instructor in advance. No extensions will be given after the due date.

All assignments, unless otherwise noted, should be completed independently and within the academic standards of the School of Public Policy and the University. Students should properly cite all works they reference. All citations should be consistent with Chicago Manual of Style or some other approved style that the student has previously discussed with the instructor. Students who have doubts about proper citations styles should consult the School of Public Policy’s website at http://popp.gmu.edu.

**Absences**: Students are required to attend all classes. Students may miss two classes without penalty. Additional absences will count against the student’s grade. Students with more than six total absences will fail the course. If students arrive after roll is called they are responsible for informing the professor of their attendance after class. If students arrive after roll is called on more than two occasions future late arrivals will be recorded as absences. Once attendance has been recorded it will not be changed at a later date.

**Recording**: All recording or class meetings, digital, analog, audio, video or any other type or format, is forbidden without the express approval of the instructor. If you would like to record any class session you must speak directly with the instructor. Lectures and other class materials provided to you are the intellectual property of the instructor. All recordings that the instructor may allow are expressly for the personal use of the individual student who has sought the permission of the instructor and may not be distributed to other students either free of charge or for profit.
**Correspondence:** Under university policy students should only correspond with faculty through their GMU e-mail account. Please e-mail the professor using these accounts.

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:** All work for this class, unless otherwise noted in writing by the instructor, is the responsibility solely of the student who should undertake such work unaided by others.

All students must turn in assignments in electronic form. Student papers will be evaluated for plagiarism through the *turnitin.com* service as well as through any other means the professor deems reasonable.

This course will fully adhere to the School of Public Policy’s policy on plagiarism. That policy indicates:

“The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the School of Public Policy. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable.”

“Plagiarism is the use of another's words or ideas presented as one's own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another's work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources are essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.”

“Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one's professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.”

“The faculty of the School of Public Policy takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of "F." This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the university. This dismissal will be noted on the student's transcript. For foreign students who are on a university-sponsored visa (e.g. F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.”

“To help enforce the SPP policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The SPP policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it.”

**Resources:**
For psychological and social services students should contact university Counseling and Psychological Services at http://caps.gmu.edu/

Students whom may need tutoring or other help with academic skills may consider contacting learning services at http://caps.gmu.edu/learning-services/

For assistance with writing and efforts to improve writing students should contact the Writing Center at http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/

Course Calendar:

August 31
Week 1: Introduction


September 7
Week 2: Theories of State power


September 14
Week 3: Historical State Formation in Europe


September 21
Week 4: State Formation in Asia


September 28
Week 5: State Formation in Latin America


October 5
Week 6: State Formation in Africa


Simulation Exercise 1
**October 12**  
**Week 7: External State Building**  


**Paper 1 Due**

**October 19**  
**Week 8: State Building Strategies, Dynamics, and Pitfalls**


**October 27**  
**Week 9: State Building in Post-Genocide Rwanda**


**Mid-Term Paper Due**

*November 2*

**Week 10: State Building in Post-Genocide Rwanda**


*November 9*

**Week 11: State Building in Post-Conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina**


James Dobbins et. al., *Americas Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq*, Rand (Santa Monica), ch. 6 (freely available online).


*November 16*

**Week 12: State Building in Iraq**


**November 23**
**Week 13: Coping: Policymaking in Sites of Complex Governance**


**November 30**
**Week 14: Coping: Policymaking in Sites of Complex Governance**


**December 7**
**Week 15 7:30 to 10:15 PM: Simulation Exercise 2**

**December 14  Final Exam / Make-Up Class / Final Paper Due**
Mid-Term Paper Assignment

Due Date: October 227th

Length: 10 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins

Overview: This goal of this assignment is to analyze the literature on states and state formation, a highly theoretical and historical set of works, and evaluate their relevance to contemporary policymaking and state building in complexly governed spaces. The students will build on the simulation on state formation to consider the dynamics of state formation. Using the literature from the first segment of the class as well as your reflections on the simulation exercise please consider the factors that drive state formation in different contacts. Draw on readings from different regions for empirical support for your argument.
Final Paper Assignment

Due Date: December 14th. This date coincides with the final exam date for the class and is subject to change should the university change date of the class’ final exam.

Total Pages: 15, double spaced, 12-point font

Overview: This assignment requires the student to produce a fifteen-page paper that examines a particular case of weak, incomplete, or complex governance and makes recommendations for policymaking and state building in that locale. The audience for the paper can be either local or international policymakers. Students should choose a case other than one of the three that received special attention during the semester (Bosnia, Iraq, and Rwanda). Examples from different global regions include Georgia, Ukraine, Nigeria, South Sudan, Congo (DRC), Somalia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Philippines, Haiti, Honduras, and Colombia. This list is not exhaustive and students may choose subnational cases. The student, in addition, should take on a particular area of state building discussed in the course of the class. These may include building political institutions, generating cultural cohesion, providing security, and forming local governance systems.

Key Points: While this is a policy paper, students should see the paper in the broader academic tradition. Any good paper will have a clear and cogent thesis statement or argument. Moreover policy recommendations should stem from and reference key works we have discussed in class or other similar work done on these issues. At the same time, the paper needs to distill policy recommendations synthesizing this academic knowledge and presenting it to a policy audience.

Necessary components: Outside the introduction and conclusions, all papers should include but should not necessarily be limited to the following sections: 1. A brief, but cogent, background of the case; 2. An identification of the main challenges faced in the case; 3. A discussion of the relevant theoretical literature to help understand the case; 4. A discussion of the key recommendations and the reasoning behind those recommendations. Students should pay special attention to writing an effective introduction to their paper where they make clear the central thesis or argument of the document.