POLITICAL AUTHORITY IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM
Political Science 248/IRGN 290
Winter Quarter 2011

Professors Miles Kahler and David Lake
Tuesdays, 3-5:50 PM
Social Sciences Building 104

The seminar presents and explains 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 are extensive readings (see below) in preparation for each week's session; active participation in those seminar discussions; and the 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 a research paper. The instructors strongly encourage you to undertake option (b). All short papers must be scheduled at the beginning of the quarter to ensure an even distribution across weeks.

We encourage students to purchase the following books on-line, where they will be available at lower cost than at the bookstore:


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One copy of these works will be placed on reserve at the IR/PS library; they will not be available on E-Reserves. All of the other readings below will be placed on E-Reserves.

Week 1, January 4: Political Authority and its Emergence

• What is political authority and where does it “come from”?
• What sustains political authority?
• How does authority emerge from pre-legal societies?

Lake, Hierarchy in International Relations, Chapter 1 (pp.17-44).
Week 2, January 11: The Unit Problem

- How is variation in unit size and number explained?
- What produces movement from polycentric to unified systems of governance (and the reverse)?
- Why have the prospects for state survival increased after 1945?


Comisso, Ellen. “Empires as Prisons of Nations versus Empires as Political Opportunity Structures: An Exploration of the Role of Nationalism in Imperial Dissolutions in

Week 3, January 18: From Sovereign Territorial States to Nation-states

- Did warfare create the modern territorial state?
- What role did nationalism play in the emergence of the nation-state?
- Is the contemporary international system populated by the same units that dominated early modern Europe?


Comisso, Ellen. “Empires as Prisons of Nations versus Empires as Political Opportunity Structures: An Exploration of the Role of Nationalism in Imperial Dissolutions in


Week 4, January 25: 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?

Keene, Edward. Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism, and Order in World Politics. New York: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 3 (pp. 60-96).
Cooley and Spruyt. Contracting States, Chapter 3 (pp.48-99).

Week 5, February 8: Territorial Disintegration

- Why do states break up?
- Why do states fail?
- Can international trusteeship work?

Kahler and Lake, Governance in a Global Economy, Chapters 3-5 by Hiscox, Garrett and Rodden, and van Houten (pp. 60-135).
Week 6, February 15: Global Governance

- How has global economic integration influenced the sites of governance?
- When and why do states delegate authority to international institutions?
- What role do non-state actors play in global governance?

Kahler and Lake, *Governance in a Global Economy*, Chapters 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 15 (pp.1-59, 136-198, 226-252, and 386-438).


Week 7, February 1: Contemporary Hierarchies in International Relations

- Does the end of formal imperialism mean the end of hierarchy in international relations?
- How do hierarchies vary, and why?
- Is the international system anarchic?


Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*. Chapters 2-Conclusion (pp.45-190).

Cooley and Spruyt. *Contracting States*, Chapter 4 (pp.100-141).


Week 8, February 22: 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 does Europe remain the only region that has developed regional institutions with substantial delegated authority?


Cooley and Spruyt. *Contracting States*, Chapter 5 (pp.142-185).


**Week 9, March 1:** Authority without Territory: Networks and Private Authority

• Why do networked forms of governance appear in some domains and not in others?
• How is power distributed in governance networks?
• Does the authority exercised by private actors in global governance differ from that of states?


**Week 10, March 8:** Explaining Choice Across Alternative Governance Structures

• How do actors choose between different forms of governance?
• Why is there so little supranationalism in the contemporary international system?
• What variation in modes and sites of governance are likely in the future?


Kahler, Miles and David A. Lake, “Globalization and Changing Patterns of Political Authority” in Kahler and Lake, eds., *Governance in a Global Economy*, Chapter 16 (pp. 412-438).
