

# PS 328 State Theory: Law, Politics & Space

Seminar Leader: Boris Vormann

Office Hours: by appointment

Course Times: Thursdays, 14:00-17:15 CET

## Course Description

Law and politics are embedded in space and its many territorial categories. However, the spatial dimensions of law and politics are not always made explicit in the respective disciplinary traditions. Jurisdiction, sovereignty, non-intervention, even human rights – all these terms are relevant for contemporary debates and would be difficult to operationalize without a clear understanding of their spatial dimension. In the past decades, the importance of territoriality has also been called into question, for instance through processes associated with digitalization and globalization. And yet, the importance of territory persists. At the intersection of legal studies and political science, this course explores key issues and concepts pertaining to space and territoriality through a historical lens and with a view to a critical re-assessment of their contemporary importance. In the core section, American Political Development (APD) will be used as a central context to explore the interrelationship of statecraft, space, and law. The last section of the course will be offered in cooperation between the Politics Section of Bard College Berlin (Professor Boris Vormann) and the Department of Law at Freie Universität Berlin (Professor Helmut Philipp Aust).

## Requirements

### Reading material

- Class Reader (available at the library)

### Class preparation

In preparation for class, read the texts thoughtfully and engage with their core argument. Take notes while reading and try to identify questions in advance: Why do the authors argue as they do? How do they raise and substantiate their claims? How does their line of argumentation relate to earlier readings and discussions in class?

### Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

### Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation. Every unexcused additional absence from a 90-min session lowers the participation

grade by one step (i.e., from B+ to B).

Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

### Assignments, Grade Breakdown and Essay Deadlines

#### *Oral*

- **Classroom Participation (2\*15%)** **30% (of overall grade)**

This seminar involves thoughtful and active participation in class discussions, reflections on current themes, and working groups. The classroom is a protected space and you should feel free to voice your arguments and comments. Please do not hesitate to address the seminar leader if you feel that this is not the case.

- **Workshop Lead** **10%**

Each student (or group of two) will present a case study that highlights a particular aspect or compares a given idea or empirical phenomenon in a variety of (geographical and historical) contexts for one of the subjects in weeks 11-14. The short presentation component should be no longer than 15 minutes and should be interactive, engaging, and analytically insightful. Students in charge of a workshop are also expected to develop questions and a deeper-going expertise on the subject to be able and guide the ensuing discussion. The workshop is supposed to be no longer than 45 minutes.

#### *Written*

- **6 Response Papers (each ~850 word; 6\*10%)** **60%**

Each student is required to write 6 response papers (1.5-spaced, 12 pt., Times New Roman): 3 on sessions of their choice (one until week 3, five more until spring break). I expect an analysis that embeds the reading in earlier class discussions, and the articulation of one central synthetic question that engages the issues and debates addressed in the reading as a starting point for broader discussion.

- Response papers need to be submitted per email by the beginning of the respective session. **Late submissions will not be accepted!**
- Indicate your name, the number of the response paper, and the date of submission in the header of the document.

### Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

## Schedule

Thursdays,  
14:00-17:15

Assignments

### I. State Formations and Transformations

1  
Feb 3

**The State: Concept and Origins**  
Held, *Political Theory and the Modern State*, Ch. 1  
Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, I  
Wallerstein, *The Rise of the States System*

2  
Feb 10

**The Modern State and its Colonial Dimensions**  
Mann, *The Autonomous Power of the State*  
Dickens, *The State Really Does Matter*  
Kelly and Mahoney, *The Emergence of the New World States*  
Lange, *State Formation and Transformation in Africa and Asia*

1 Response  
Paper

3  
Feb 17

**States and Space**  
Scott, *Seeing like a State*  
Blouet, *Geopolitics and Globalization*  
Harvey, *Spatial Fix*  
Schouten et al., *States of Circulation*

### II. Spaces of American Empire

4  
Feb 24

**American Exceptionalism?**  
Hardt and Negri, *Empire*  
Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire*  
Richter, *Transportation in America*  
Brownlee, *Funding the Modern State*

5  
Mar 3

**The Early Republic and Westward Expansion**  
Holton, *The Capitalist Constitution*  
Parenti, *Radical Hamilton*  
Adler, *Engineering Expansion*  
Katznelson, *Flexible Capacity*

6  
Mar 10

**Civil War and Reconstruction**  
Skowronek, *Building a New American State*  
Bensel, *Yankee Leviathan*  
Balogh, *A Government out of Sight*

5 Response  
Papers until  
spring break

7  
March 17

**Progressive Era and New Deal**  
Karl, *The Uneasy State*  
Sparrow, *From the Outside in*  
Orenstein, *Out of Stock*, Ch. 3

8  
March 24

**Cold War**  
Crenson and Rourke, *American Bureaucracy since World War II*  
Chung, *From Korea to Vietnam*  
Khalili, *Infrastructural Power of the Military*

9  
March 31

**Rescaling after the Fall of the Wall**

Sassen, *The Global City*  
Therborn, *The Idea of Stateless Cities*  
Curtis, *Global Cities and Global Order*

**Neoliberal Statecraft**

Cerny, *The Competition State*  
Orren and Skowronek, *The Policy State*  
Mazzucato, *The Entrepreneurial State*  
Hacker and Pierson, *American Amnesia*

10  
April 7

**Spring Break**  
**(April 11-18)**

**III. Widening the Lens: International Law and Space**

11  
April 21

**\*\*\*Guest Prof. Helmut Aust\*\*\***

**Territoriality and Sovereignty**

*Workshop 1: Defining Sovereignty*  
*Workshop 2: The Spatial Turn*

Feihle, *Territoriality*  
Sassen, *Losing Control?*  
Bethlehem, *The End of Geography*

12  
April 28

**\*\*\*Guest Prof. Helmut Aust\*\*\***

**Imperialism and its Implications**

*Workshop 3: Decolonization*  
*Workshop 4: End of the Cold War*

Anthony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law*  
James Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law*

13  
May 5

**\*\*\*Guest Prof. Helmut Aust\*\*\***

**Splintering Sovereignty**

*Workshop 5: Devolution and Subnational Politics*  
*Workshop 6: Belt and Road Initiative*

Rodiles, *Infrastructure project*  
Roberts et al., *Toward a Geoeconomic Order in International Trade and Investment*

14  
May 12

**A Changing International System**

Optional Workshop 7  
Optional Workshop 8  
Concluding Session